



SONYA

KOVALEVSKY

A. CARLOTTA

LEFFLER

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Alfred the Great

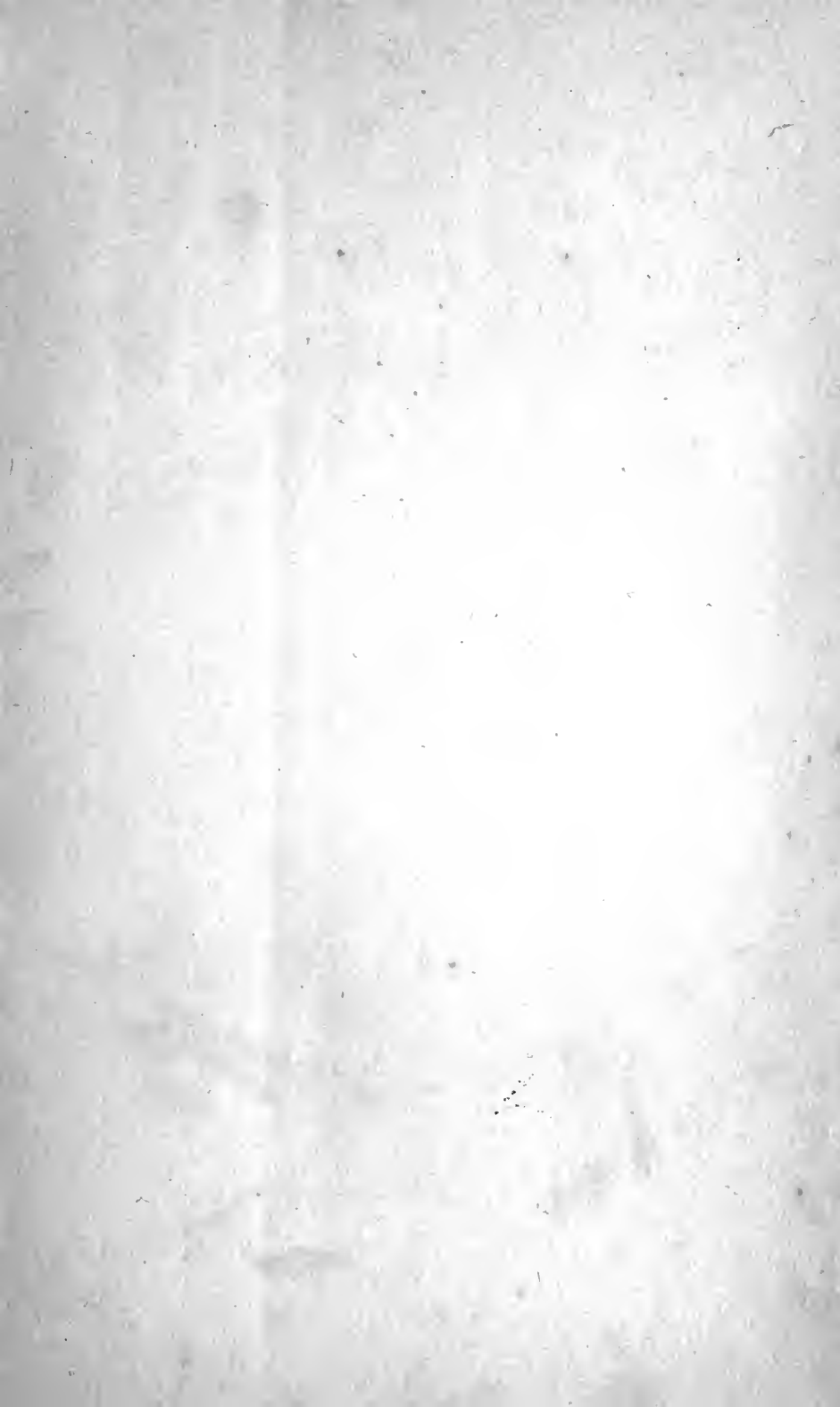


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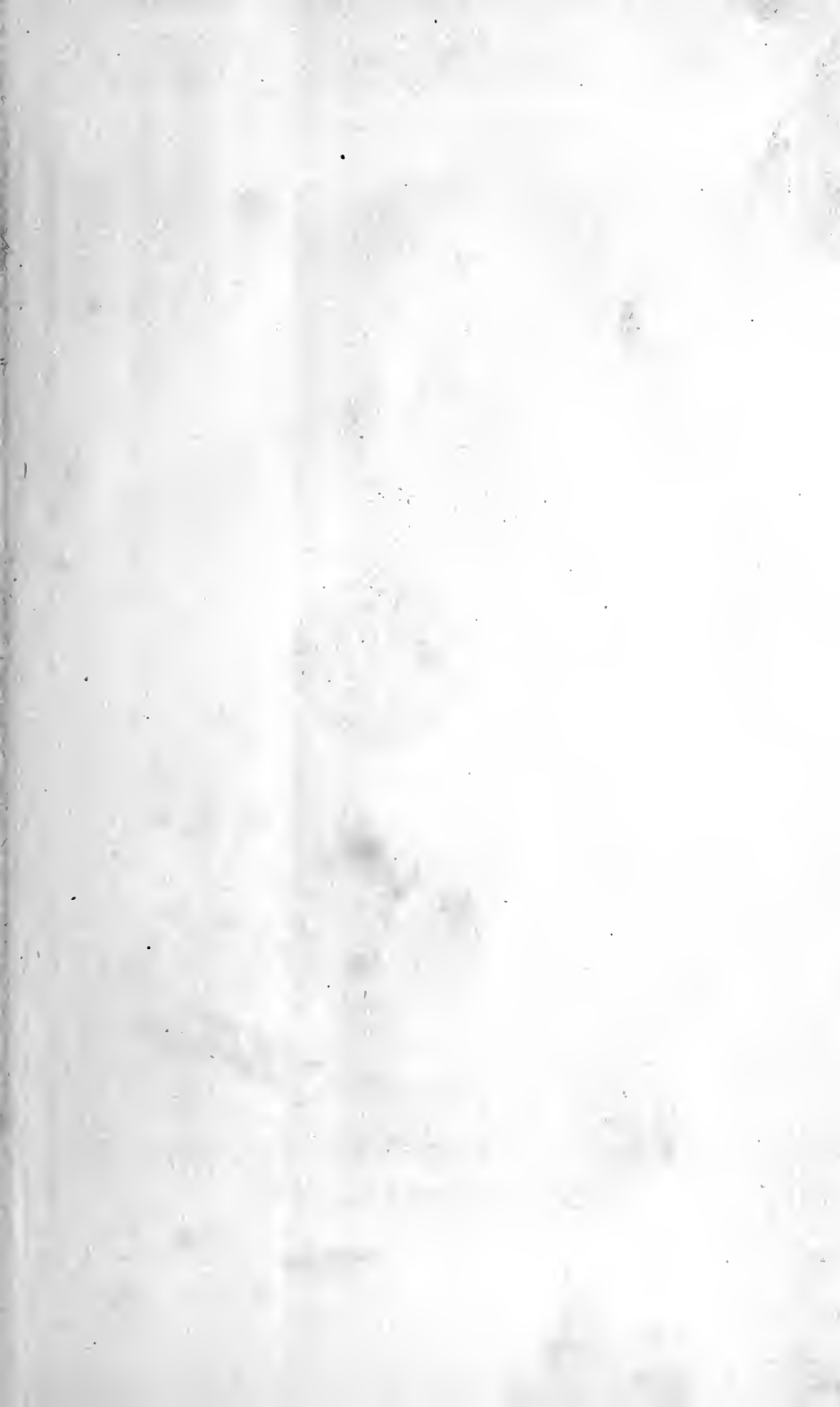






SONYA KOVALEVSKY







Lemercier Photograph Paris

*Anna-Carlotta Repple*  
*D. H. Silajane ill.*

Printed by Lemercier Paris

**S**ONYA KOVALEVSKY  
A BIOGRAPHY BY ANNA CARLOTTA  
LEFFLER DUCHESS OF CAJANELLO

AND SISTERS RAJEVSKY  
BEING AN ACCOUNT OF HER  
LIFE BY SONYA KOVALEVSKY

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BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE BY LILY WOLFFSOHN

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## INTRODUCTION.

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**I**MMEDIATELY on receiving the news of Sonya Kovalevsky's sudden and unexpected death, I felt that it was a duty incumbent upon me to continue, in one form or another, the reminiscences of her early life, which had been published in Swedish under the title of "The Sisters Rajevsky."

There were many reasons which made me consider this my special duty ; but the chief one was the fact, that Sonya had always entertained a feeling that she would die young, and that I should outlive her ; and over and over again she made me promise to write her biography.

Introspective and self-analysing as she was to an extraordinary degree, she was accustomed to dissect minutely her own actions, thoughts and feelings ; both for her own benefit, and, during the three or four years in which we were together almost daily, for mine also. She always tried to classify her ever-changing moods and disposition according to a given psychological system. This habit of self-criticism was so strong that she often unconsciously transformed the

actual facts. But, however keen and at times unmerciful her self-analysis might be, there was blent with it the natural impulse to self-idealisation. She saw herself as she wished to be seen; hence the picture she drew of herself was in many details unlike what others found her to be. Sometimes she judged herself more harshly, sometimes more leniently, than others judged her.

Had she, as she intended, continued the reminiscences of her childhood by writing the whole history of her life, the picture would have been the one which she outlined and filled in for me in our many long, psychological conversations.

Unfortunately she cannot complete this work; which would undoubtedly have been the most remarkable autobiography in the world of literature.

It falls, then, to my lot to draw, in faint outline, the picture of Sonya's life, feeling that, limned by her own hand, it would have been deeply and intensely imbued with her own personality.

From the first I knew that the only way in which I could succeed in my task, would be to write, so to speak, under her suggestion. I felt I must endeavour to identify myself with her as I used to do while she still lived. I must strive to be again what she so often called me, her "*second I*." I must depict her, as far as possible, in the light in which she showed herself to me. Meanwhile I could not decide to publish the reminiscences which I began to write down shortly after Sonya's death, and I allowed a year to pass without doing so. During that year I conversed with

many of her friends, both of former and of recent date. I corresponded with those who were absent in foreign lands whenever I could find them; and thus sought to supplement my own memory in all things concerning Sonya's external life. I have quoted from my correspondence all that seemed important as casting light upon her character, but always, of course, from the point of view I have indicated: that of elucidating her own interpretation of herself.

As will be seen, I have not sought to sketch the life-history of my friend from an objective point of view. But is the objective standpoint necessarily the true one, when we deal with the interpretation of character?

Many may contest the justice of my estimate and interpretation; many may judge Sonya's actions and feelings in quite another light: but this in no way concerns me, from my point of view.

The data which I have submitted are as accurate as I can make them. It is only when such data seem to have been slightly distorted by imagination, that I have failed to adhere closely to Sonya's guidance.

When I met Henrik Ibsen last summer, and told him that I was writing a memoir of Sonya Kovalevsky, he exclaimed—

“Is it her biography in the ordinary meaning of the word which you intend to write? or is it not rather a poem about her?”

“Yes,” I answered; “that is to say, it will be her own poem about herself as revealed to me.”

“That is right!” he replied. “You must treat the subject romantically.”

This remark strengthened and cheered me, encouraging me to follow out the plan which had presented itself to me.

Let others, who can, describe Sonya objectively. I cannot attempt anything but a subjective delineation of my own subjective conception of her, derived from the vividly subjective interpretation which she herself gave me.

ANNA CARLOTTA LEFFLER,  
DUCHESS OF CAJANELLO.

NAPLES.

## CHAPTER I.

### GIRLHOOD'S DREAMS. NIHILISTIC MARRIAGE.

SONYA was about seventeen years of age when her parents took her with them to pass a winter in St. Petersburg. Just at that time, in the year 1867, a strong movement was making itself felt among the thinking portion of the rising generation in Russia.

This movement especially affected the young girls of Russia, and may be described as an ardent striving for the freedom and progress of their fatherland, and for the raising of its intellectual standard.

It was not a Nihilistic, scarcely a political, movement. It was an eager striving after knowledge and mental development; and it had spread so far and wide, that at that moment hundreds of young girls belonging to the best families betook themselves to foreign universities in order to study.

But as parents in general opposed such aspirations in their daughters, girls had, in order to effect their purpose, recourse to strange tactics, which were, however, characteristic of the times. They went through the form of marriage with young men devoted to the same ideas which they held sacred, and in this manner, as

married women, they escaped from parental authority, and were enabled to go abroad at the first opportunity.

Many of the Russian women-students in Zurich, who were afterwards recalled by an Imperial ukase (being suspected of Nihilistic tendencies, although they only thought of studying in peace), were married to men who had accompanied them to the universities and by mutual agreement had then left them free to pursue their studies.

This kind of coterie, with its abstract and ulterior motive, was very popular at the time in the circles in St. Petersburg to which Sonya and her sister belonged. Indeed, it seemed to Sonya, and to most of her friends, a far higher conception of the marriage state than the low and commonplace idea of a union between two persons for the mere satisfaction of their passions, or the purely selfish happiness of what is generally termed a "love-match."

According to the ideal which these young people cherished, personal happiness was altogether a subordinate consideration; the sacrifice of self for the general weal alone was great and noble. Study and self-development were the means by which these young people hoped to infuse new vigour into the fatherland they loved so dearly and to assist its struggle from darkness and oppression into light and freedom.

This was the passionate longing which filled the hearts of the daughters of old aristocratic families, who hitherto had been educated solely as women of the world, or as future wives and mothers.

No wonder that their parents were unable to under-



stand them, and were hostile to the symptoms of independence and determined rebellion which now and again broke through the mysterious reticence with which the young treated the old. "Oh, what a happy time it was!" Sonya would often exclaim, when talking of this period of her life. "We were so enthusiastic about the new ideas; so sure that the present social state could not continue long. We pictured to ourselves the glorious period of liberty and universal enlightenment of which we dreamt, and in which we firmly believed. Besides this, we had the sense of true union and co-operation. When three or four of us met in a drawing-room among older people, where we had no right to advance our opinions—a tone, a glance, even a sigh, was sufficient to show each other that we were one in thought and sympathy. And when we discovered this, how great was the inward delight at realising that close to us was some young man or woman, whom we had never seen before, and with whom we had apparently only exchanged some commonplace remark, yet whom we found to be devoted to the same ideas and hopes, ready for self-sacrifice in the same cause."

At that time no one noticed little Sonya in the circle which gradually gathered around her sister Anyuta, who was six years her senior, and the centre of a group of friends. Sonya was still a child in outward appearance, and it was only through Anyuta's affection for her shy little sister, with "the green-gooseberry eyes," that the girl was allowed to be present. How brightly those eyes sparkled at every warm and

enthusiastic word which fell from the older members of the circle, though Sonya kept herself in the shadow of her more brilliant sister !

Sonya admired this sister above all things, and believed her to be her superior in beauty, charm, talent, and intelligence. But in her admiration lay a certain amount of jealousy ; the jealousy which strives to emulate its object, not that which belittles and disparages it. This jealousy, of which Sonya speaks in her reminiscences, was characteristic of her throughout her life. She was apt to over-estimate the qualities she longed to possess, and the want of which she deplored. She was also greatly impressed by beauty and charm of manner. These qualities her sister appears to have possessed in a far greater degree than herself, and her day-dream was to surpass that sister in other matters.

From her childhood, Sonya had always been praised for her intelligence. Her natural love of study, and her thirst for knowledge, were now seconded by her ambition, and by the encouragement she received from her master in mathematics. She showed such extraordinary keenness and quickness of perception, and such fertility of origination, that her scientific gifts were not to be mistaken. Her father had only permitted this unusual and "unfeminine" study through the influence of one of his oldest friends (himself somewhat given to mathematics), who had discovered Sonya's uncommon aptitude for this science. But at the first suspicion that his daughter intended to take up the study seriously, the father drew back in dismay.

Her first shy hints that she wished to go to a foreign university were as unwelcome as had been, a few years previously, the discovery of Anyuta's authorship. It was regarded as a reprehensible tendency towards impropriety. Young girls of good family, who had already carried out similar plans, were simply regarded as mere adventuresses, who had brought shame and sorrow upon their parents. Thus, in the homes of the aristocracy, there existed two opposing currents; first, the hidden, secret and stifled, but rebellious and intense striving, which could not be resisted, and which found its own outlet like a natural force; and, secondly, the open and genuine conviction, on the parents' side, of their right to stem and hold in check, to regulate and to discipline, this same unknown and mysterious natural force.

Anyuta and one of her friends, who was also full of the desire to study abroad, and likewise prevented from doing so by her parents, now came to a definite determination. Either of them, it mattered little which, was to make one of the ideal and platonic marriages before alluded to. They hoped that this arrangement would give both of them their liberty. They thought, if one of them were married, the other would obtain permission from her parents to accompany her friend abroad. Such a journey would no longer appear in an objectionable light, but might be regarded as a mere pleasure-trip.

Sonya was to accompany her sister. She was so entirely Anyuta's shadow, that it was utterly impossible to imagine the one without the other. The plan once

made, the first step was to find the right man to help them to carry it out.

Anyuta and her friend Inez reviewed their circle of acquaintances, and their choice fell on a young professor at the university, whom they knew only slightly, but of whose honesty and devotion to the common cause they were convinced. So, one fine day, the three girls, Sonya as usual bringing up the rear, went to see the professor in his own house. He was seated at his writing-table when the servant introduced the three young ladies, whose presence there somewhat astonished him, for they did not belong to the circle of his more intimate lady friends. He rose politely and asked them to be seated.

Down they all three sat in a row on the sofa, and a moment's awkward pause followed.

The professor sat in his rocking-chair facing his visitors, and looked first at one and then at the other of them,—at the fair Anyuta (tall, slim, with a peculiar charm in her *svelte* and graceful movements), whose large and lustrous eyes, dark and blue, were fixed upon him fearlessly, and yet with a certain indecision,—at the dark Inez, stout and clumsy, with an eagle nose, and an intrepid look in her prominent eyes,—at the fragile Sonya, with her abundant curls, her pure, correct features, innocent childish forehead and strange eyes, full of passionate inquiry, of wonder, and of attention.

Anyuta at last commenced the conversation as they had intended. Without the least sign of timidity she asked the professor if he were willing to free them by going through the marriage ceremony with one of

them, accompanying them to a university either in Germany or Switzerland, and there leaving them. In another country, or under other circumstances, a young man could hardly listen to such a proposal from a handsome girl without, in his answer, showing some foolish gallantry, or expressing a touch of irony; but in this case the man was equal to the occasion. Anyuta had not been mistaken in her choice. The professor answered, quite seriously and coldly, that he had not the least inclination to accept such a proposal. And the girls?—One would suppose that they must have felt terribly humiliated by this flat refusal. Such, however, was not the case. Feminine vanity had nothing to do with the matter. The question of personally pleasing the young man had never entered into their project. They received his refusal as coolly as a young man might do whose friend had not accepted an invitation to travel abroad with him. So they all went off, shaking hands with the professor at the door, and did not meet him again for many years. They felt sure he would not abuse the confidence they had placed in him, for he belonged to the secret brotherhood which, though it was not a society in the ordinary sense of the word, still united in one indissoluble bond the hearts of all those who were devoted to the same cause. Some fifteen years later, when Madame Kovalevsky was at the height of her celebrity, she met the professor in St. Petersburg society, and jested with him about the rejected offer of marriage.

Just at this time one of Anyuta's friends committed the crime of a love-marriage. How they despised her,

and bewailed her lot! Sonya's heart more especially swelled with anger at such a mean failure of their ideals. Even the newly married couple were as shame-faced before their young friends as though they had committed a veritable crime. They never dared to talk to them about their wedded bliss, and the wife even forbade her husband to show the least sign of affection in their presence.

Meanwhile an unexpected circumstance occurred in Sonya's life. Anyuta and Inez, who still kept to their original plan, not allowing themselves to be defeated by their first rebuff, had chosen another young man as their liberator. He was only a student, but an exceptionally clever one, who also desired to go to Germany to complete his studies. He was of good family, and generally considered to be a rising man. They therefore hoped that, if it came to pass, neither Inez nor Anyuta's parents would have any serious objection to urge against the marriage. This time the proposal was made in a less formal manner. Once, when they met, as they often did, at the house of mutual friends, Anyuta took the opportunity of putting her proposal to the young man during the course of conversation. He replied, much to her astonishment, that he quite agreed to the suggestion, with, however, a slight variation in the programme. He would like to marry Sonya. This declaration caused much anxiety to the three conspirators. How could they induce Sonya's father to allow her, hardly more than a child, to marry, while her elder sister, already twenty-three years of age, remained unmarried? They knew that if

a moderately suitable match had been proposed for the latter, her father would not have been obdurate. In fact, Anyuta gave him much anxiety by her capricious and uncertain temperament. She was, moreover, of an age at which she ought to have been married. Certainly the student Kovalevsky was young, but he had before him a promising future, and no doubt he would have been accepted willingly enough for the *eldest* daughter. But with regard to Sonya, it was altogether a different matter.

The proposal now made to the father was absolutely refused without appeal ; and a return to the country place of the family, Palibino, was immediately arranged.

The girls were in despair at returning to Palibino, for this meant the surrender of the hopes and interests which had been to them the very breath of life. It was a return to a prison, but without the charm of true martyrdom in a great cause. Indeed a real imprisonment would have been easier for them to bear than the unpoetic banishment with which they were now threatened.

The timid Sonya took a bold resolution. The tender young girl, who could not bear an unkind glance or a word of disapproval from those she loved, became at this critical moment like steel. For though of a delicate, sympathetic, and affectionate nature, she had within her a vein of sternness and flint-like inflexibility, which came to the fore at any crisis. She who, dog-like, would nestle up and fondle any one who smiled kindly upon her, could, when roused to battle, trample every feeling under foot, and wound in cold blood those

on whom, a moment before, she had lavished the warmest tokens of affection.

This arose from her intensity of will. For her will was so strong, that it became an over-mastering force, even when it had to do with a purpose entirely unconnected with feeling. What she desired, what she wished, she desired with such painful intensity that she was almost consumed by it. Now she wanted to leave her parents' home, and continue her studies, cost what it might.

One evening there was to be a family gathering at her father's house. In the afternoon her mother had gone out to choose flowers for her table, or new music for her pianoforte. Her father was at his club, and the governess was helping the maid to decorate the drawing-room with plants.

The girls were alone in their room, and their pretty new dresses were lying ready for dinner. They were never allowed to go out of doors without being accompanied by the footman or the governess. But Sonya seized upon this moment, when every one was occupied, to slip out of the house. Anyuta, who was in the conspiracy, accompanied Sonya downstairs, and stood at the door until she was out of sight. She then ran back to her room with a beating heart, and began to put on her light blue dress.

It was already twilight, and the first gas-lamps were just being lighted. Sonya had drawn down her veil and pulled her Russian hood well over her face. She went hesitatingly down the broad empty street which she had never before traversed alone. Her pulses were beating high with the feverish excitement which always



accompanies and lends enchantment to great moments in the lives of romantic people. Sonya felt herself the heroine of the romance now opening. She, the little Sonya, who had hitherto been nothing but her sister's shadow! but the romance was of quite a different kind to the love-tales of which literature is full, and which she herself despised.

For this was no lover's tryst to which Sonya's light feet were speeding so rhythmically. It was no passionate love that made her heart beat, as, breathless with fright, and with foolish horror of the darkness; child that she was, she sped up the dark flight of steps to a dilapidated house in a miserable street. She rapped three nervous little taps on a certain door, which opened so quickly that it was clear the young man who presented himself had been on the watch, and was expecting her. He immediately led her into a simple study, where books were piled up in every direction, and where a sofa had been evidently emptied of them to receive her.

The young man was not quite an ideal hero of romance. His large red beard and prominent nose gave him, at first sight, an ugly aspect. But, once you met the clear glance of his deep blue eyes, you found in them such a kindly, intelligent, and honest expression, that they grew most attractive. His manner to this young girl, who showed such strange confidence in him, was quite that of an elder brother. The two young people sat down excitedly on the sofa, listening for angry footsteps on the stairs. Sonya started up, turning red and white, each time she thought she heard a movement in the corridor.

Meanwhile her parents had returned home, but only just in time—as the girls had well calculated—to dress for dinner before their guests arrived. They therefore did not notice Sonya's absence until all the guests were assembled in the dining-room, and were about to sit down to table.

“Where is Sonya?” they both asked in the same breath, turning to the pale Anyuta, who seemed more self-conscious than usual, with her defiant glance, and nervous, expectant air.

“She is out,” she answered in a low voice, the trembling of which she could not conceal, and averting her eyes from her father.

“Gone out? What does she mean by it? And with whom?”

“Alone. There is a note for you on her dressing-table.”

The footman was sent to fetch the note, and the company sat down to dinner amid a deathlike silence.

Sonya had calculated her blow better than she perhaps knew. It was more cruel than she could have dreamt. In her childish defiance, and with the selfishness of youth, which knows neither mercy nor consideration, understanding so little the pain inflicted, she had wounded her father in his most tender point. In the presence of her nearest and dearest relatives, the proud man was forced to swallow the humiliation of his daughter's wrong-doing.

The note contained only these words: “Father, forgive me, I am with Vladimir, and beg you will no longer oppose our marriage.”

General Krukovsky read these lines in silence. He rose immediately from the table, murmuring an excuse to those who sat near him. Ten minutes later Sonya and her companion, who had been listening more and more intently, heard the angry steps for which they had watched. The door, which had not been locked, sprang open without any previous knock, and General Krukovsky stood before his trembling daughter.

Just before the close of the dinner the General and his daughter, accompanied by Vladimir Kovalevsky, entered the dining-room.

“Allow me,” said the General, in an agitated voice, “to present to you my daughter Sonya’s *fiancé*.”

## CHAPTER II.

### IN THE UNIVERSITY.

IN the foregoing words Sonya used to relate to me the most dramatic incidents of her peculiar marriage. Her parents forgave her, and shortly after, in October, 1868, the marriage was celebrated at Palibino. The newly wedded couple went immediately to St. Petersburg, where Sonya was introduced by her husband to circles interested in political events ; and thus one of her great desires was fulfilled.

A lady, who afterwards became her most intimate friend, relates, in the following words, the impression which Sonya made on her new acquaintances.

“ Among these women, married and unmarried, who were also deeply interested in politics—women who were more or less worn out and harassed by life—Sonya Kovalevsky made a peculiar impression. Her childish face procured her the name of ‘the little Sparrow.’ She was just eighteen, but looked much younger. Small, slender, with a round face and short curly chestnut hair, she had very mobile features. Her eyes, especially, were exceedingly expressive—sometimes bright and dancing, sometimes dreamy and full of melancholy.

Her whole expression was a mixture of childish innocence and deep thought. She attracted every one by the unconscious charm which was her principal characteristic at this period of her life. Old and young, men and women, all were fascinated by her. Natural in manner, without the least trace of coquetry, she never seemed to notice the homage lavished upon her. She took no pains about her personal appearance or dress, the latter being as simple as possible, even showing a tendency to slovenliness, a trait which remained with her to the last."

In connection with this peculiarity, the same friend relates the following characteristic little incident :

"I remember, shortly after our acquaintance began, how once, when I was talking enthusiastically to Sonya about something which interested us both—in those days we never could talk otherwise than enthusiastically—she occupied herself the whole time in pulling off the trimming of her left sleeve, which had become unsewn ; and when at last she managed to tear it all off, she threw it on the ground as if it were of no value and she was only too glad to be rid of it."

After having lived during six months in St. Petersburg, the young couple left for Heidelberg in the spring of 1869 ; Sonya to study mathematics, and her husband to study geology. After they had matriculated there, they went to England, where Sonya had the opportunity of making acquaintance with the most celebrated persons of the day, George Eliot, Darwin, Spencer, Huxley, and others.

In George Eliot's diary, published in Mr. Cross's biography of his wife, we find the following remarks,

dated October 6, 1869: "On Sunday an interesting Russian pair came to see us, M. and Mme. Kovalevsky; she, a pretty creature with charming modest voice and speech who is studying mathematics (by allowance through the aid of Kirchhoff) at Heidelberg: he, amiable and intelligent, studying the concrete sciences apparently, especially geology, and about to go to Vienna for six months for this purpose, leaving his wife at Heidelberg!"

This plan was not immediately realised, and Vladimir stayed for one term in Heidelberg with his wife. Their life at this period is described by the friend already quoted, who had, we may remark in passing, received through Sonya's intervention, her parents' permission to study.

"A few days after my arrival in Heidelberg, in October, 1869, Sonya and her husband arrived from England. She seemed very happy and pleased with her journey. She was as fresh, rosy and joyous as when I first saw her. But there was an increased fire and sparkle in her eyes. She felt within her the development of new vigour and energy in the pursuit of the studies she had barely begun. Her serious aspirations did not prevent her, however, from finding enjoyment even in the simplest things. I well remember our walk together the day after their arrival. We had wandered about in the neighbourhood of the town, when we came to a level road, we two young girls began to run races like children. Oh! how fresh are those memories of the early days of our University life! Sonya seemed to me so very happy, and that in such a noble way; yet,

when in after years she spoke of her youth, it was always with a deep bitterness, as though she had wasted it. At such times I remembered those first happy months in Heidelberg ; those enthusiastic discussions on every kind of topic, and her poetical relationship to her young husband, who in those days adored her with quite an ideal love, without any mixture of less noble feeling. She seemed to love him in the same way, and both were innocent of those lower passions which usually go by the name of love. When I think of all this, it seems to me that Sonya had no reason to complain. Her youth was really filled with noble feelings and aspirations, and she had at her side a man, with his feelings completely under control, who loved her tenderly. This was the only time I have known Sonya to be really happy. A little later, even a year later, it was no longer quite the same.

“Immediately after our arrival at Heidelberg, the lectures began. During the day we were all three at the University, and the evenings were also devoted to study. We had rarely time, during the week, to take walks, but on Sundays we always made long excursions outside Heidelberg, and sometimes we went to the theatre at Mannheim.

“We had very few acquaintances, and very seldom called on any of the professors’ families. From the first Sonya attracted the attention of her teachers by her extraordinary talent for mathematics. Professor Konigsberger, and the celebrated scientist Kirchhoff, whose lectures on practical physics she attended, both spoke of her as something quite marvellous. Her fame

spread so widely in the little town that people sometimes stopped in the streets to look at the wonderful Russian. Once she came home and told me laughingly, how a poor woman, with a child on her arm, had stopped and pointed to her, saying aloud to the child, 'Look ! look ! there is the girl who is so diligent at school !'

"Retiring and bashful, and almost awkward in her manner to her fellow-students and professors, Sonya always entered the University with downcast eyes ; she never spoke to her companions, if she could avoid it, during the time of study. Her behaviour enchanted the German professors, who always admire bashfulness in a woman, especially in one so young and charming, a student moreover of so abstract a science as mathematics. This bashfulness was not in the least put on, but entirely natural to Sonya at that time. I remember very well when she came home one day and told me how she had discovered an error in the demonstration which some pupil or professor had made on the blackboard during the lesson. He got more and more confused and could not find out where the mistake lay. Sonya told me how her heart beat when at last she had the courage to rise and go up to the blackboard, pointing out where the error lay.

"But our life *à trois*, so happy and so full—for M. Kovalevsky was deeply interested in all subjects, even those which did not touch on science—did not last long.

"Sonya's sister and her friend Inez arrived at the beginning of the winter. They were both many years



our seniors. As we had not much room, Kovalevsky decided to move, and give up his room to them. Sonya visited him very often, constantly spending the whole day with him, and they often took walks together without us. It naturally was not pleasant for them to be surrounded by so many women, especially as the two new-comers were not always amiable towards Kovalevsky. They had their peculiar ideas, and thought that as the marriage after all was only a formal one, Kovalevsky ought not to have tried to give a more intimate aspect to his intercourse with his wife. This interference caused irritation, and spoiled the good understanding of our little circle.

“After a term spent thus, Kovalevsky decided to leave Heidelberg, where he no longer felt at ease. He went first to Jena, and then to Munich. There he lived for study alone. He was richly endowed by nature, exceedingly industrious, very simple in his habits, and with no desire for recreation. Sonya very often said that a book and a glass of tea was all that he needed to content him. This characteristic was not quite pleasing to Sonya. She began to be jealous of his studies when she found that they made up for the loss of her company. We sometimes went with her to pay him a visit, and in the holidays they always travelled together. These trips seemed to give Sonya great pleasure. But she could not accustom herself to live apart from her husband, and she began to worry him with continual demands. She would not travel alone, but he must come and fetch her and take her where she wanted to go. Just when he was most busy with

his studies, he had to undertake commissions for her, and help her in all those trifles which he had of his own accord very good-naturedly taken upon his own shoulders, but which seemed to worry him now that he was absorbed by scientific study."

When Sonya, later on, recalled her past life, her complaint was always "No one has ever loved me truly;" and if I pleaded, "But your husband loved you truly," she would reply, "He loved me only when he was with me, but he got on so well without me that he could quite well live apart from me."

It seemed to me a very simple explanation of the matter, that he preferred, under the circumstances, and busy as he then was with study, not to spend too much time near her. But Sonya did not see it in this light. She had always, from childhood to her very last hour, strange craving for unnatural and strained relationships; she wanted to own without being owned by any one.

I believe that in this characteristic lies the clue to her life's tragedy. I will again allow myself to quote further observations, made by the same friend and fellow-student, to show that even in her early youth this idiosyncrasy, which became the source of all Sonya's inner struggles and sufferings in after life, was already developed.

"Sonya valued success to a very great degree. When she had once an aim, nothing could withhold her from its pursuit, and when her feelings were not in question she always compassed her end. When her heart was concerned, curiously enough, she lost her

clear judgment. She required too much from those who loved her and whom she loved, and thought to gain by force what would have been given to her spontaneously, had it not been demanded. She had an intense yearning for tenderness and intimate friendship. She also needed to have some one near her, who would never leave her, and was interested in all that interested herself ; but she made life unbearable to all who lived with her. She was herself too restless, too ill-balanced in temperament, to be satisfied with such loving companionship, although it was her ideal. Her own individuality was far too pronounced for her to live in harmony with others. Kovalevsky was also, in his way, restless by nature ; always full of new ideas and plans. It is impossible to say whether these two, both so rarely endowed, could ever, under any circumstances whatsoever, have lived happily together for any length of time."

Sonya remained two years in Heidelberg, until the autumn of 1870, when she went to Berlin to continue her studies under Professor Weierstrass' direction. Her husband had meanwhile received his doctor's degree in Jena, and written a treatise which attracted much attention. He thus gained great celebrity and became a scientist of importance.

## CHAPTER III.

### STUDIES UNDER WEIERSTRASS. VISITS TO PARIS DURING THE COMMUNE.

PROFESSOR WEIERSTRASS, much to his astonishment, one day found a young and beautiful woman standing before him, asking him to take her as a pupil in mathematics. The University of Berlin was closed to female students then as now. But Sonya's enthusiastic desire to be directed in her studies by the man regarded as the father of modern mathematical analysis, induced her to entreat him to give her private lessons. The professor looked at his unknown visitor with a certain amount of incredulity. He promised to try her, and gave her some of the problems to solve which he had set for his more advanced students in mathematics. He was convinced she would not succeed, and gave the matter no further thought. Indeed, her appearance, at the first interview, had made no impression on him whatever. Badly dressed, as she always was at this period of her life, she wore, on this special occasion, a hat which quite hid her face, and might have suited a woman twice her age.

Professor Weierstrass himself told me later, that he had no idea at the time either of her extreme youth, or of the highly intellectual expression of face which usually predisposed every one in her favour.

A week later she came to him again, saying she had solved all the problems. He would not believe her, and bade her sit down beside him and go through her solutions point by point. To his great astonishment, not only was everything quite right, but the solutions were eminently clear and original. In her eagerness she took off her hat, and her short curly hair fell over her brow. She blushed vividly with delight at the professor's approbation. He, no longer young, felt a sudden emotion of tenderness for this child-woman, who was gifted with the intuition of genius in a degree he had seldom found among even his older and more mature students.

From that hour the great mathematician was Sonya's friend for life, and the most faithful, tender counsellor she could have desired. She was received in his family like a daughter and sister, and continued her studies under his guidance for four years. Most important was the influence thus exercised on her future scientific activity, which ever after pursued the direction given it by Weierstrass. All her scientific writings are applications or developments of her master's theses.

Sonya's husband had followed her to Berlin, but left her to live alone there with her friend from Heidelberg, visiting her, however, very frequently. The relations between them continued peculiar, and provoked some astonishment in the Weierstrass family,

where her husband never showed himself, though his wife was on an intimate footing with all its members. Sonya never mentioned her husband, nor did she introduce him to the professor, but on Sunday evenings, when she went to Weierstrass (he coming to her once a week besides), her husband went to the door when the lesson was finished, rang the bell, and told the servant to inform Madame Kovalevsky that the carriage was waiting.

Sonya had always been shy about the unnatural relations between her husband and herself. One of the Heidelberg professors used to tell how, when he happened to meet Kovalevsky at his wife's house, she would introduce him in a vague way as a "relation."

Her friend before quoted says of their life in Berlin : "Our life there was even more monotonous and lonely than in Heidelberg. We lived all by ourselves. Sonya was busy at her problems the whole day long, and I was at the Laboratory till the evening, when, after partaking together of a hasty repast, we again sat down to work. Excepting Professor Weierstrass, who was a constant visitor, we never saw any one within our doors. Sonya was always in low spirits. Nothing seemed to give her pleasure, and she was indifferent to everything but study. Her husband's visits always brightened her up, but the joy of meeting was clouded by frequently recurring misunderstandings and reproaches, though they seemed to be very fond of one another, and constantly took long walks together.

"When Sonya was alone with me, she never wanted to leave the house, not even for a walk, nor for the

most necessary shopping, far less to go to the theatre or any place of amusement. At Christmas time we were invited to the Weierstrasses', who had a Christmas-tree in our honour. Sonya was absolutely in need of a dress, but could not be induced to go and buy one. We nearly quarrelled about this dress, for I would not buy it alone. (Had her husband been there, all would have been well, for he always looked after her and chose both the material and pattern of her dress.) Finally she decided on allowing her hostess to choose and order the dress, so that she need not stir out of doors about it. Her power of endurance when at the most difficult mental work, sitting hour after hour immovable at her desk, was almost phenomenal. In the evening, when she finally put up her papers, she would be so absorbed in her own thoughts that she would begin walking rapidly up and down the room, often ending in a run ; and she often talked aloud to herself, and sometimes even burst into laughter. At such times she seemed to be altogether beyond earthly things, and to be carried away from the world on the wings of imagination. But she would never tell me what her day-dreams were about. She did not sleep much at night, and, when asleep, was always restless. Sometimes she would wake suddenly, roused by some fantastic dream, and then would frequently ask me to keep awake also. She liked to relate her dreams, which were often interesting and peculiar. They were generally of the nature of visions, and she believed them to be to a certain extent prophetic, and certainly they did sometimes prove true.

“On the whole Sonya had a highly nervous tempera-

ment. Never quiet ; always having some deeply involved aim before her, she longed intensely for success, yet never have I seen her more depressed than just when she had attained some object for which she had worked. Reality seemed so poor compared with her expectations. While striving to obtain her object she was often far from agreeable to others, being intently absorbed in her work. But when depressed and unhappy in the midst of success, she aroused quite involuntarily one's deepest pity. This continual variation of light and shadow in her temperament rendered her most interesting. But on the whole, our life in Berlin, spent in uncomfortable rooms, bad air, and amid unceasing wearing mental labour, without any interval of recreation, was so devoid of pleasure, that I often looked back on our early Heidelberg days as on a lost Paradise.

“When, in the autumn of 1874, Sonya had obtained her doctor's degree, she was so worn out, physically and mentally, that, on her return to Russia, she could not do any work for a long time.”

The want of delight in her work above mentioned was peculiar to Sonya when she had any scientific labours in hand. She always overdid herself, and in no way could enjoy life or the work itself ; and *thought*, instead of being her servant, was her tyrant. At such times she experienced none of the joy of creating. It was different later on, when she took up literary work. This always gave her delight, and put her into good spirits.

Other causes, besides Sonya's overstrain at her work, contributed to make her stay in Berlin far from



agreeable. To begin with, there was her position with regard to her husband. The sense of its strangeness had been aggravated by the interference of her parents. They had visited her several times, had even taken her back to St. Petersburg; had found out how matters stood, had reproached her for her behaviour, and tried to bring husband and wife together. But Sonya would not hear of it. Secondly, Sonya was displeased with her isolated position. She had already that hunger for a fuller life which afterwards consumed her. In her inmost heart she was as little as possible the female pedant which her manner of life suggested. But bashfulness, or a want of practical sense; the feeling of the strangeness of her own circumstances; the fear of allowing herself to be compromised in her lonely position—all conduced to the isolation she so greatly regretted when speaking, in after life, of her early youth.

The want of practical knowledge in her friend, too, contributed greatly to make their merely material life together unbearable. They always chanced on the most miserable lodgings, the worst servants, the worst food. Once they fell into the hands of a whole gang of thieves, who systematically plundered them. They had noticed that one of the maid-servants had been stealing their things for a long time. When they reproached her, she grew impertinent, and they were obliged to dismiss her at a moment's notice. The same evening, as they sat alone, having no one to help them to make their beds for the night, some one knocked at the window, which was on the ground-floor. Looking out, they saw a strange woman peering in. They called

out anxiously to know what she wanted. She replied she wanted to enter their service. She impressed them disagreeably, but such was their helplessness, that, frightened though they were, they engaged her. This woman tyrannised over them, and plundered them so outrageously, that they had to call in the police before they could get rid of her.

Sonya was, however, very indifferent to the material side of life. She barely noticed whether her food was good or bad, or if her room was tidy, or whether her clothes were in good order or torn. It was only when things got to be quite unbearable that she became conscious of them. But, when she had no practical friend at hand, this happened pretty often.

In January, 1871, Sonya was obliged to break off her studies with Weierstrass to set forth on a most adventurous expedition.

Anyuta had wearied of her monotonous life at Heidelberg, and had gone to Paris without her parents' permission. She wanted to educate herself as an authoress, and naturally felt no interest in a circumscribed life with Sonya in a student's chamber. She wished to study the world and the theatre, and live in literary circles.

As soon, therefore, as she was free from parental control, she definitely took her own way. It was impossible for her to write and tell her father that she was living alone in Paris, so she gave full license to her desire to live her own life independently, and deceived him. She wrote to him through Sonya, so that her letters always bore the same postmark as those of her sister. She originally intended to make but a short stay in Paris,

and quieted her conscience by the plea that she would explain her conduct by word of mouth.

But she soon drifted into a position and entanglement from which it was impossible for her to extricate herself. Every day she remained in Paris it became more difficult to communicate honestly with her parents. She linked her fortunes with those of a young Frenchman, who later became one of the Communist leaders ; and she thus found herself immured in Paris during the whole of the siege.

Sonya was much disturbed as to the fate of her sister, and deeply impressed with the responsibility which rested on her own shoulders for having abetted her secret journey. Immediately the siege was raised, she and her husband tried to enter Paris in order to search for Anyuta.

Sonya could never speak of this journey in later years without congratulating herself, and marvelling at their success in getting into the town right through the German army. She and Vladimir wandered on foot along the Seine till they came to a deserted boat, drawn up upon the shore. Of this they at once took possession, and rowed off. But hardly were they at a little distance from the shore, than a sentinel saw and challenged them. For reply they rowed away with all their might, and by good luck, owing to the carelessness and dilatoriness of the sentinel, they reached the opposite side, whence, unobserved, they slipped into Paris. They thus chanced to arrive there at the very commencement of the Commune.

Sonya had intended, later on, to publish her ex-

periences during this epoch, but, alas! like so many other plans, this lies with her in the grave. Among other things she intended to write a novel to be entitled "The Sisters Rajevsky under the Commune." In it she meant to describe a night with the ambulance-corps, for she and Anyuta served in it. Here, too, they found other young girls who had formerly moved in their own circle in St. Petersburg.

While bombs were whizzing round them, and wounded men were being constantly brought in, the girls talked in whispers of their life in Russia, so unlike their present surroundings that it seemed to them like a dream. And like a dream, to Sonya, at least, like a fairy-tale, were all the strange incidents which now pressed upon her. She was still at the age of intense fervour of feeling, and the events of world-wide historic interest that were taking place around her impressed her more than the most exciting romance. She watched the bursting bombs without the least trepidation; they only excited a not unpleasant fluttering of the heart, and a secret delight that she was in the very midst of the drama.

For her sister she could at this moment do nothing. Anyuta took an active interest in the political disturbances, and asked for nothing better than to risk her life for the man to whom she had irrevocably linked her fate.

Shortly after, the Kovalevskys left Paris, and Sonya resumed her studies in Berlin. But after the suppression of the Commune, Sonya was again called to Paris. This time it was her sister who sent for her, entreating

her intervention with her father. Anyuta longed for his forgiveness, and was anxious that he should use his influence to extricate her from the desperate trouble into which she had now fallen. The man, for whom she had forsaken all, was a prisoner and doomed to death.

When one recalls the picture which Sonya has given of her father in the memories of her childhood, one can easily realise how terrible a blow it was to him to learn the whole grim truth of the deception of his children, and the fact that his eldest daughter had taken her own course in a manner calculated to wound most deeply all his instincts and principles.

Years before, he had been almost out of his mind with grief and deep annoyance on the discovery that Anyuta had secretly written a novel and had received money for it. He said to her at the time, "You sell your work now, but I am not at all sure that the day will not come when you will sell yourself." Strangely enough, he was much more gentle on hearing the truth now, when his daughter had given him a far more terrible cause of grief. Both he and his wife, accompanied by Sonya and her husband, hastened at once to Paris, and when Krukovsky met his erring daughter, he was most generous and forgiving. His daughters, who knew that they deserved quite other treatment, devoted themselves to him from that hour with a tenderness they had never before evinced.

I cannot, alas ! give the whole story of this troublous time. General Krukovsky was acquainted with Thiers ; he therefore turned to him to procure a pardon for his

future son-in-law. Thiers answered that no one could obtain this favour; but one day, in course of conversation, he related, as if accidentally, how the band of prisoners, among whom was Monsieur J——, would be moved the following day to another prison. They were to pass by a building in which there was an exhibition, and just at an hour when there would be a good many people about. Anyuta went to the spot, and mixed with the crowd. The instant the prisoners appeared, she slipped unnoticed amongst the soldiers who surrounded them, and, catching Monsieur J—— by the arm, disappeared with him through the crowd into the exhibition. From there they escaped by one of the other doors, and reached the railway station in safety.

This tale sounds wild and improbable, but I have only been able to write it down as I, and many of Sonya's friends, remember it. When people we love are dead, how bitterly we regret that we have not stored up in memory their least word, noted down all the interesting things they have told us. In the present case I have all the greater cause for regret, because Sonya often said to me that I must write her biography when she was dead. But who thinks, at the moment of confidential talk, that the day may come all too quickly when one will stand alone—with merely the memory of the living bond which united one with the departed? Who is not inclined to hope that the morrow will bring richer opportunities for supplying the gaps which so often occur in rapid conversation, when thoughts run on from point to point!

In 1874 Sonya received a doctor's degree from the University of Göttingen on account of three treatises which she had written under the guidance of Weierstrass; and more especially on account of the one entitled "Zur Theorie der partiellen Differentialgleichungen" (*Crelles Journal*, vol. 80). It is considered one of the most remarkable works she ever published. She was exempted by special dispensation from the *viva voce* examination. The following letter to the Dean of the Philosophical Faculty in Göttingen shows the characteristic motive which led Sonya to crave so rare and exceptional a favour :—

"Your Honour will graciously permit me to add something to the letter in which I present myself for admission to the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in your faculty. It is not lightly that I have decided on this step, which compels me to forsake the retirement in which I have hitherto lived. It is only the wish to satisfy my dearest friends which makes me desire thus earnestly some decisive test. I wish to give them an incontestable proof that, in devoting myself to the study of mathematics, I follow the determined bent of my nature, and that, moreover, this study is not without result. It is this which has made me overcome my scruples. I have been told that, as a foreigner, I can obtain the degree *in absentia*, if I can show works of sufficient importance, and produce recommendations from competent authorities.

"At the same time, I hope your Honour will not misconstrue me, if I acknowledge openly that I do not know whether I have sufficient aplomb to

undergo an *examen rigorosum*, and I fear that the unusual position, and having to answer, face to face, men with whom I am altogether unacquainted, would confuse me, although I know the examiners would do all they could for me. In addition to this, I speak German very badly. When I try to speak it, it seems to escape me, though, when I am at leisure, I can use it in all my mathematical work. My German is faulty because, though I began to speak it five years ago, I spent four of those years quite alone in Berlin, never having any occasion to speak or hear the language, except during the few hours my honoured master devoted to me. For these reasons I venture to request your Honour kindly to intervene so that I may be exempted from the *examen rigorosum*."

This petition, but above all the great merit of her work and her excellent testimonials, enabled Sonya to gain the rare privilege of receiving a doctor's degree without appearing in person.

Shortly after, the whole family Krukovsky was once more united in the old ancestral home at Palibino.



## CHAPTER IV.

### LIFE IN RUSSIA.

HOW that family had changed since the days of Sonya's childhood as described in her writings! The two young girls who had dwelt in the quiet home, dreaming of the strange world of which they were so ignorant, met there once more as grown-up women, tried and developed by the experiences which each had gone through alone.

Life, for them, had indeed been different from the life of which they had dreamed.

It had, however, been full and varied enough to give rise to long conversations round the fire during the long winter evenings spent in the large drawing-room, with its red damask furniture, the samovar singing on the table, its home-like sound mingling with the dismal hunger-song of the wolves in the forest without.

The world beyond these precincts no longer seemed to the two girls so vast and immeasurable. They had seen it close at hand, and realised its proportions more fully.

Anyuta, on the one hand, had led a life full of excitement, and her craving for emotion had been

more than gratified. She, at least, no longer indulged in such cravings. She was passionately in love with the husband who sat beside her, with a weary, satirical expression on his face. Nay, she was even jealously attached to him, and her life was still so full of excitement that no extra stimulus was needed.

Her younger sister had hitherto lived entirely with her brain. She had so completely satisfied her thirst for knowledge that she was satiated, and mental work was now impossible. She spent most of her time reading novels and playing cards, and otherwise sharing in the social life of her neighbours, who had no higher or more intellectual pursuits.

Sonya's greatest joy, at this period of her life, was in the change which had come over her father. He belonged, as did Sonya herself, to the small class of individuals who are able, by sheer force of purpose and will, to modify and develop their own characters. The harshness and despotism which had been his chief characteristics were much subdued by the severe trials to which his daughters had subjected him. He had learned that no one being can really rule the destiny of others by force—not even in the case of a father with his children. He bore, with a tolerance marvellous in one of his nature, the socialistic and radical assertions of his Communist son-in-law, and the materialistic tendencies of the other son-in-law, the scientific professor. This was the most cherished memory Sonya kept of her father, and one which was the more deeply impressed on her mind because it was associated with the last winter of his life.

Her father died unexpectedly and without warning from heart disease. The blow was terrible to Sonya. She had, during the last few months, been on terms of tender intimacy with her father, and had, indeed, always loved him more than she did her mother.

This mother had a bright and winning nature. Every one was kind to her, and she was kind to every one. But, just in consequence of this, Sonya was little in sympathy with her mother. She fancied herself less of a favourite with her than the other children. But her father had always preferred her to the others, and, after his death, she felt utterly sad and lonely.

Anyuta had her husband, on whose neck she could weep out all her grief. But Sonya had no one to turn to for comfort. She had always kept at a distance the man whose highest ambition was to be her comfort and support. But now this distance seemed to her painful and unnatural; and thus her desire for affection induced her to overcome her prejudices. During the silent hours of sorrow, the barrier between husband and wife was broken down.

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During the next winter the whole family went to St. Petersburg. There Sonya soon found herself the centre of an intellectual circle such as could be hardly found elsewhere—a circle alert and wide awake; mentally, so to speak, on the *qui vive*. Enlightened and liberal-minded Russians are, it is generally agreed,

far more many-sided, freer from prejudice, and broader in their views, than other people.

This was the experience, not only of Sonya, but of all who have ever moved in that circle. Ever in the van of advanced thought in Europe, and the first to discover the dawn of fresh light, these Russians are also more enthusiastic, and have a greater faith in ideals, than the educated thinkers of other nations.

In this circle Sonya at last felt herself appreciated and understood.

After five long years spent in severe study, and utterly devoid of amusement, there was now to her, in the full prime of her youth, something captivating and enchanting in the sudden change. All her brilliant gifts developed as if by magic, and she threw herself heartily into the whirl of intellectual gaiety, with its *fêtes*, theatres, lectures, receptions, picnics, and other pleasures.

The circle which now surrounded her was more literary than scientific in its interests. With the natural longing to be in full sympathy with her environment, which was one of Sonya's strongest sentiments, she now threw herself into literary pursuits. She wrote newspaper articles, poetry, and theatrical criticisms. But her writings were always anonymous. She also wrote a novel entitled "Privat-docenten," a tale of a small German university town. It was considered to show great promise.

Anyuta, who, during these years, lived in St. Petersburg with her husband, now came definitely to the fore as an authoress, and with much success ;

while Vladimir Kovalevsky was busy translating and publishing popular scientific works, such as "The Birds" of Brehm.

The legacy left to Sonya by her father was small, for he willed the bulk of his fortune to his wife. But the life into which Sonya had plunged demanded a certain amount of luxury and style. Perhaps it was this which first induced her to indulge in monetary speculations. Her husband, who was personally utterly indifferent to luxury, allowed himself to be drawn into these transactions, for he was of a lively, imaginative, and also somewhat of a yielding nature.

Venture followed upon venture. The Kovalevskys built houses, a hydropathic establishment, and extensive hothouses in St. Petersburg. They published newspapers, launched new inventions of every kind, and for a time it looked as though fortune would smile upon them. Their friends prophesied a brilliant future; and in 1878, when their first child, a daughter, was born, she was hailed as a future heiress.

But, as usual, Sonya had even then premonitions of coming evil. One of her friends recalls to mind, that on the day on which the foundation-stone of their first house was to be laid, Sonya remarked that the occasion was spoiled for her by a dream she had had on the previous night.

She dreamed that she was standing on the spot where the stone was to be laid, surrounded by the throng assembled to witness the ceremony. Suddenly the crowd parted, and she saw her husband in the midst struggling with a diabolical being who strove

to trample him under foot, and who, on succeeding, laughed sardonically.

This dream affected Sonya so powerfully that she became depressed and low-spirited for some time ; and truly it was a dream which, later on, verified itself in a terrible manner.

When, one after another, these vast speculations failed, Sonya's fortitude and energy showed themselves in all their greatness.

She had for a while, it is true, permitted her imagination to be fired by the common temptation of using her intelligence and creative genius for the acquisition of a fortune, but her soul could not long be wedded to so paltry an ambition. She was able to lose millions at one blow without suffering a sleepless night or acquiring a new wrinkle on her brow. She could behold all prospect of wealth vanish without one regret. She had desired to be rich because life, in all its forms, tempted her. Her passionate and imaginative nature made her wish for a full experience. But when she found that she could not succeed in this, she withdrew at once, and summoned up all her energy and fortitude in order to comfort her husband.

Strange to say, this simple-minded man, to whom money for its own sake had never been a temptation, and who had never been attracted by the advantages it could offer, had thrown his whole soul into their undertakings, and it seemed as if, to his nature, defeat and failure were absolutely crushing. Sonya, on the other hand, with rare courage, not only bowed to the inevitable, but also threw herself with renewed zeal into fresh pursuits.

She succeeded in averting the impending crisis in their finances. She shunned neither effort nor humiliation. She went round to the friends who had been interested in their ventures, and offered terms which satisfied all parties. She thus earned her husband's intense gratitude and admiration. Again their fortunes seemed secured, but the diabolic being who had terrified Sonya in her dream now crossed their path in dread reality.

An adventurer, with whom Kovalevsky had come into contact through his ventures, tried to involve him in new and yet more dangerous speculations.

Sonya, who read character well at first sight, contracted such an immediate and strong aversion to this man, that she could not endure his presence in her house. She entreated her husband to break with him, and to return to scientific pursuits. But in vain. Vladimir, in 1881, was made Professor of Palæontology at the University of Moscow, and there he settled with his family; but he could not tear himself away from speculation, which now took wilder flights than ever. Petroleum springs in the interior of Russia attracted his attention. He hoped to gain millions for himself while increasing and developing Russian industries. He was so blinded by his coadjutor that he would not listen to his wife's warnings. As he could not induce her to adopt his view of the matter, he refused her his confidence, and carried out his ideas alone. This was most painful to Sonya, and quite unbearable to a person of her character.

After sorrow had drawn her closer to her hus-

band, she had done everything to deepen and intensify their relations to one another. It was her nature to give herself up with passionate devotion to that which, for the time being, was foremost in her life. She also drew marked lines between what was important and what was unimportant, and this trait in her character made her superior to others of her sex, for she never neglected primary for secondary duties, and never took a narrow view of life. She could not put up with half-heartedness where feelings were concerned. She would sacrifice everything to secure a deep whole-hearted union. She strove to the utmost to rescue her husband from the danger she foresaw. One of her friends describes her struggles thus: "Sonya tried to interest Kovalevsky again in science. She studied geology, helped to prepare his lectures, and tried to make home-life delightful to him, so that he might recover his mental balance. But it was of no avail. My notion is that Kovalevsky was at that time not in a normal state of mind. His nerves had been overwrought, and he could not recover himself."

The adventurer, of course, could wish for nothing better than to foster the misunderstanding that now arose between husband and wife. He made Sonya believe that Kovalevsky's reserve and inaccessibility were due to other causes, and that she had good cause for jealousy.

Through Sonya's own book "The Sisters Rajevsky," we know that, as a child of ten, she already showed signs of being possessed by consuming jealousy. To



touch that chord was to awaken the strongest passion of her stormy nature. Through it, Sonya now lost her critical judgment, and was not in a fit state to inquire whether this charge against her husband were true or not. Later on in life she became almost convinced that it had been a pure invention. But at the moment she felt only a strong inclination to get away from the humiliation of feeling herself neglected ; fearing lest her passion should make her condescend to the pettiness of spying upon her husband's movements, or lead to distressing scenes. She dreaded living with a man whose love and confidence she believed she had lost, or to see him go to his ruin without being able to save him.

Such anxieties were too much for a nature to which resignation was almost impossible. In matters of feeling she was as uncompromising and exacting as she was lenient and easy to satisfy in all material things. She had, without loving him, accepted him as her husband, and made his interests her own. She had striven to bind him to herself with all the exquisite tenderness which a nature like hers bestows upon, but also requires from, the man who was her husband and the father of her child.

When, despite all, she saw her husband turn from her, and believed he had put another in her place, the network of tenderness, which she had purposely woven around him, broke. Her heart contracted and shut out the picture of him whom she had determined to love, and once more she was alone.

She decided to make a future for herself and her little daughter entirely by her own endeavours, and she left husband, home, and country, to resume once more her student life abroad.

## CHAPTER V.

### ADVENTURES. BEREAVEMENT.

WHEN the train had moved out of the station, and Sonya lost sight of the friends who had come to bid her farewell, she gave vent to the feelings she had hitherto suppressed, and broke into uncontrollable sobbing. She wept for the lost years of happiness; for the lost dream of full and perfect union with another soul; she trembled at the thought of the lonely student's room, which once had contained her whole life, but which could not satisfy her any longer, now that she had experienced the joy of being beloved in her own home, and by a circle of appreciative friends.

She tried to console herself by the thought of resuming her mathematical studies. She dreamed of writing a book which should make her celebrated, and bring glory to her sex. But it was useless! These joys paled before the personal happiness which during the last few years had been the purpose and aim of her heart.

The paroxysms of tears became more and more violent, and she shook from head to foot.

She had not noticed that an elderly gentleman, sitting opposite to her in the carriage, was watching her with sympathy.

“I cannot see you cry in this way!” he exclaimed at last. “I suppose it is the first time you have gone out into the world alone. But you are not going into the midst of cannibals. A young girl like yourself will always find friends and help when she needs them.”

She had allowed this stranger to witness her despair, though hitherto she had hidden her wounds from her nearest and dearest. It was a relief when she noticed that he had not the least idea who she was. During the conversation which followed, it became evident that he took her for a little governess going abroad to earn her living in a strange family.

She kept up his illusion, only too happy to preserve her incognito, and even amused at playing a little comedy which served to distract her thoughts. It was not difficult for her to conceive her rôle so completely as to identify herself in imagination with the supposed poor little governess.

With downcast eyes she received advice and comfort from her good-natured travelling companion. So strong was the fantastic element in her character, that despite her great sorrow, she began to enjoy the mystification.

When the gentleman proposed that they should stop in the town they were passing through, and see whatever it might afford that was interesting, she consented to do so. They spent a couple of days there, and then parted without having even learned each other's name or position.

This little episode is characteristic of Sonya's love of adventure. The stranger had been sympathetic to her. His kind interest in her sorrow touched her. She felt alone in the world ; why not accept this bright gleam which chance had thrown in her way? Another woman might doubtless have compromised herself hopelessly in a man's eyes by such conduct. Two days' intercourse with a man from morning to evening, a man who did not even know who she was! But to Sonya, so long accustomed to the student life she had shared with her husband, it seemed quite simple. She knew well how to draw the line whenever she chose. No man ever presumed to cross it.

A few years later she entered into equally strange and peculiar relations with a young man in Paris.

The keeper of the lodging-house in the suburbs of that city where she lived, must hardly have known what to think. Time after time, this woman saw a young man leave the house at two in the morning, and climb over the palings surrounding the garden. As this young man spent all his days with Sonya, and often stayed till late at night, and as, at this time, she had no other friends, it certainly did seem a rather doubtful proceeding. Nevertheless, the friendship existing between these two was of the most ideal kind imaginable.

The young man was a Pole, and a revolutionist. Moreover, a mathematician and a poet. His and Sonya's souls were two fiery flames merged in one glow. No one had ever understood her so well and sympathised with her so much as he. No one had so entered into every word, thought, and dream. They

were almost constantly together, and yet they employed the few moments during which they were parted in pouring forth to each other, in writing, their inmost thoughts. They composed poetry together, and began writing a long romance. They indulged in the idea that every human being has its twin soul, so that every individual man or woman is but half a creature. The other half, which is to complete the soul, is always to be found somewhere on the earth. But rarely in this life do they meet. It is usually in a future state only that they find one another. Where could one find any more full-blown romance? In this life these two souls which had met could never be united, for circumstances had destroyed the possibility for them of true union. Even if Sonya had still been free, yet she had been married; and he had consecrated himself to one who was in future to be his only love.

Neither did Sonya feel it right to belong to any one but her husband, for the bond which united her to him had not been entirely dissolved. They still wrote to each other occasionally. There was a possibility of their meeting again, and she was still fond of him in the depths of her heart.

So the intercourse between her and the Pole was only that of a responsive interchange of thought, and an abstract analysing of feeling. They used to sit opposite each other and talk on without stopping; intoxicating themselves with the increasing stream of words so characteristic of the Slavonic race. But in the midst of their visionary fervour, Sonya was crushed by a great misfortune.

Her husband had not been able to survive the discovery that he had been shamefully cheated, and had ruined his family. This highly gifted scientist, so simple and unostentatious, who had never desired the delights which wealth can bestow, was the victim of a financial fraud under circumstances utterly opposed to his character and to the tendencies of his whole life.

The news of his death stretched Sonya on a sick-bed. She lay for a long time suffering from a dangerous nervous fever. She arose again broken in spirit, with the feeling that an irremediable sorrow had drawn a line across her life.

She reproached herself deeply for not have remained with her husband, even though by so doing she must have doomed herself to an almost unbearable struggle. She was agonised by the thought that nothing could now retrieve the past.

During this illness the freshness of youth vanished. She lost her clear complexion, and a deep furrow, never more to be effaced, was drawn by care across her brow.

## CHAPTER VI.

### FIRST CALL TO SWEDEN.

**D**URING Sonya's stay in St. Petersburg in 1876, she had made an acquaintance which was to have a decisive influence on her future life. Mittag Leffler, a pupil of Weierstrass, had heard a great deal of Sonya's unusual talent from their mutual teacher, and came to see her.

On this occasion Sonya had no premonition of the influence he would afterwards exert on her life. She only felt rather unwilling to receive her visitor when he was announced. She had at that time given up all studies, and did not even correspond with her former master.

During the conversation, however, her former interests were aroused. She showed so much acuteness of judgment and quickness of perception in the most difficult mathematical problems, that her visitor felt almost confounded when he looked at the girlish face before him. The impression she made on him as a woman-thinker was so strong that several years later, when he became professor of mathematics in the new University of Stockholm, one of his first steps was to induce



the authorities to appoint "Fru" Kovalevsky as his lecturer.

Sonya, a few years before her husband's death, had expressed a wish to become a teacher at a university. Professor Mittag Leffler, who was greatly interested in the university recently established in his native town, and who also took a warm interest in the woman question, was eager to secure for his university the glory of attracting to it the first great woman-mathematician.

As early as 1881 Sonya wrote to Mittag Leffler, then at Helsingfors, the following letter:—

BELLEVUESTRASSE, BERLIN, *July* 8, 1881.

"I thank you none the less for the interest you take in my possible appointment to Stockholm, and for all the trouble you have given yourself for this purpose. I can assure you that, if a lectureship were offered to me, I should accept it gratefully. I have never looked for any other appointment than this, and I will even admit that I should feel less bashful and shy, if I were only allowed the possibility of applying my knowledge of the higher branches of education. I may in this way open the universities to women, which have hitherto only been open by special favour—a favour which can be denied at any moment, as has recently happened in the German universities. Without being rich, I have still the means of living independently. The question of salary is, therefore, of no importance to me in coming to a decision. What I wish, above all, is to serve the cause in which I take so great an interest;

and, at the same time, to be able to live for my work, surrounded by those who are occupied with the same questions;—a piece of good fortune I have never enjoyed in Russia, but only in Berlin. These, dear Professor, are my personal feelings on the subject, but I think I ought to tell you even more. Professor W—— believes that, as far as he can judge of Swedish matters, it is not possible for the Stockholm University to accept a woman even as a teacher. What is of still greater importance, he is afraid that if you insist on introducing such novelties, it may injure your own position. It would be selfish of me if I did not let you know the opinion of our beloved teacher. And you can easily understand how unhappy I should be, if, after all, I injured you, who have always shown so much interest in me, and helped me so greatly; you for whom I feel so sincere a friendship. I believe it would be wiser, therefore, not to do anything at present, but to wait till I have finished the papers on which I am at present engaged. If I succeed in completing them as well as I intend and hope, it would in every way help towards the aim I have in view.”

It was after this that the dramatic episodes in Sonya's life occurred: the separation from her husband; the Polish romance; her husband's death and her long illness.

All this delayed the completion of the papers mentioned in her letter, so that it was not until August, 1883, that she could inform Mittag Leffler that the

first of these was completed. She writes to him from Odessa on August 28, 1883 :—

“ I have at last succeeded in finishing one of the two works on which I have been busy during the last two years. My first wish, as soon as I found it satisfactory, was to let you know. But Herr W——, with his usual kindness, has taken that trouble, letting you know the result of my researches. I have just received a letter from him, saying that he had told you about it, and that you have answered him with your usual kindness, asking me to go to Stockholm, and to begin there a course of private lessons. I cannot tell you how grateful I am to you for the friendship you have always shown me, and how happy I am to be able to enter a career which has ever been the cherished object of my desires. At the same time, I feel I ought to tell you that in many respects I feel but little fitted for the duties of a ‘docent,’ and at times I so much doubt my own capacity that I feel you, who have always judged me leniently, will be quite disillusioned when you find, on nearer inspection, how little I am really good for. I am truly grateful to Stockholm, which is the only European university that will open its doors to me, and I am already prepared to be in love with that city, and to attach myself to Sweden as though it were my native home. I hope that, if I do come there, it will be to find a new ‘foster-land.’ But just because of this, I should not care to go there before I feel prepared to deserve the good opinion you have of me, and to make a good impression. I have written to-day to W—— to ask whether he does not think it would

be good for me to spend another two or three months with him, in order to grasp his ideas better, and to fill up the gaps which are still to be found in my mathematical knowledge. These few months in Berlin would also be useful to me, for I should then come into contact with young mathematicians just beginning their career as lecturers, many of whom I knew pretty well during my last stay in Berlin. I could even arrange with them that we should correspond on mathematical subjects. I could then no doubt expound Abel's 'Theory of Functions,' which they do not know, and which I have studied deeply. This would give me some opportunity of lecturing, which, up to this time, I have never had. Then I should arrive in Stockholm much more sure of myself."

This plan was not realised, and on November 11th of the same year Sonya left St. Petersburg and started for Stockholm *viâ* Hangö.

## CHAPTER VII.

### ARRIVAL IN STOCKHOLM. FIRST IMPRESSIONS.

AS is natural, now that Sonya is dead, my first meeting with her is vividly recalled to my mind, even in its most minute details. She arrived from Finland in the evening by boat, and came as a guest to my brother Leffler's house. I went there the day after her arrival. We were prepared to be friends, for we had heard much of each other, and were eager to become acquainted. Perhaps she had expected more from the meeting than I, for she felt a great interest in that which was my special aim and object. I, on the other hand, rather fancied that a woman-mathematician would prove too abstract for me.

She was standing in the window when I arrived, turning over the leaves of a book. Before she could turn, I had time to see a serious and marked profile; rich chestnut hair arranged in a negligent plait, and a spare figure with a certain graceful elegance in its pose, but not well proportioned, for the bust and upper part of the body were too small in comparison with the large head. Her mouth was large and most expressive, her lips full, fresh, and well curved. Her hands were small,

almost like a child's; exquisitely modelled, but rather spoiled by prominent blue veins. Her eyes were the most remarkable feature of her face, and gave to her countenance the look of lofty intellect which so greatly impressed all who observed her. Their colour was uncertain; they varied from grey to green and brown. Unusually large, prominent, and luminous, they had an intensity of expression which seemed to pierce the furthest corner of your soul when she fixed her eyes upon you. But though so piercing they were soft and loving, and full of responsive sympathy, which seemed to woo those, on whom their magnetising power rested, to tell her their inmost secrets. So great was their charm, that one scarcely noticed their defect. Sonya was so short-sighted, that when she was very tired she often squinted.

She turned to me with a quick movement, and came across the room to meet me with outstretched hands. There was, however, a certain shyness about her which made our greeting rather formal.

Our first conversation turned on the bad toothache she had unfortunately suffered from during the voyage. I offered to take her to the dentist. A pleasant object, indeed, for her first walk in a new town! She was, however, the last person to bestow too much attention or time on so trivial an incident.

I was at that moment thinking out the plot of my play, entitled "How to Do Good," but had not yet written it down. So great was Sonya's power of giving an impetus to one's inner thoughts, that, before she had reached the dentist's, I had told her the whole play,

worked out in far greater detail and breadth than I was conscious of.

This was the commencement of the great influence she exercised later on my writings. Her power of understanding and sympathising with the thoughts of others was so exceptional, her praise when she was pleased so warm and enthusiastic, her criticism so just, that, for a receptive nature like mine, it was impossible to work without her approbation.

If she criticised unfavourably anything I had written, I rewrote it until she was pleased. This was the commencement of our collaboration. She used to say that I should never have written "Ideal Women" if I had not done so before her arrival in Sweden. This work, and my novel "At War with Society," were the only books of mine that she disliked. She disapproved of "Bertha's" struggle to try and secure the remnant of her mother's fortune, for she considered that when a woman has once given herself to a man, she must not for a moment hesitate to sacrifice her fortune to the very last farthing if he needs it. This criticism was so like her; she was always so subjective in her judgments of literary work. If the thought and feeling in a book were in accordance with her own sympathies, she was prone to value it highly, even if it was only mediocre. If, on the other hand, it contained any opinion in which she did not share, she would not admit that the book had any merit at all.

In spite of this prejudice, she was as broad in her views as the most highly gifted individuals of her age. Of the prejudices and conventionalities of ordinary

mortals she had not a trace. Her comprehensive genius and her high culture raised her far above the boundaries by which tradition limits most minds.

Limitations she found, but only in the strong individuality of her nature, the pronounced sympathies and antipathies of which withstood both logic and discussion.

On this first occasion we did not see much of each other, and our acquaintance did not deepen into friendship, for within a month of her arrival I went abroad for some time. Before that, however, she had learned enough Swedish to read my books. Immediately after her arrival she began to take lessons in that language, and for the first week she really did nothing but study it from morning till night.

My brother, as soon as she arrived, told her that he wanted to give a *soirée* in order to introduce her to all his scientific friends. But she begged him to wait until she could speak Swedish. This seemed to us rather optimistic, but she kept her word. In a fortnight she could speak a little, and during the first winter she had mastered our literature, and had read Frithiof's Saga with delight.

This unusual talent for languages had its limitations. She used to say that she had no real talent that way, and had only learned several languages from necessity and ambition. It is quite true that, notwithstanding the quick results she obtained when she first learned a language, she never acquired it to perfection, and always forgot one language as soon as she learned another. Though she was in Germany when quite a young



girl, she spoke the language very brokenly, and her German friends used to laugh at the ridiculous and often impossible words she coined. She never allowed herself to be stopped in the flow of her conversation by any such minor considerations as the correct choice of words. She always spoke fluently, always succeeded in expressing what she wanted to say, and in giving an individual stamp to her utterances, however imperfectly she spoke the language she was using. When she had learned Swedish she had nearly forgotten all her German, and when she had been away from Sweden a few months, she spoke Swedish very badly on her return. One of her characteristics was that when tired or depressed she had great difficulty in finding words; but when in good spirits she spoke rapidly and with great elegance. Language, like everything else with her, was under the influence of her personal moods.

During the last autumn of her life, when she returned from Italy—where she spent a couple of weeks, and fell in love with that country, as every one who goes there does—she spoke Italian fairly; but on the other hand, she spoke Swedish very badly, because she was out of harmony with Sweden.

French was the foreign language she spoke best, though she did not write it quite correctly. It was said that, in Russian, her style showed a certain foreign influence.

She often complained that she could not speak Russian with her intimate friends in Sweden. She used to say, "I can never quite express the delicate *nuances* of thought. I have always to content myself with the

next-best expression, or say what I want to say in a roundabout way. I never find the exact expressions. That is why, when I return to Russia, I feel released from the prison in which my best thoughts were in bondage. You cannot think what suffering it is to have to speak always a foreign language to your friends. You might as well wear a mask on your face."

In February, 1884, I went to London, and did not meet Sonya again till the following October. While in London I had only one letter from her. In it she describes her winter at Stockholm. The letter has no date, but it was evidently written in April, and, like the former letters quoted, was in French.

"What shall I tell you about our life in Stockholm?" she says. "If it has not been very *inhaltsreich*, it has at least been very lively, and lately very tiring. Suppers, dinners, *soirées*, and receptions, have succeeded each other, and it has been difficult to find time to go to all these parties, and also to prepare meantime my lectures, or to work. To-day we have suspended our lectures for the Easter fortnight, and I am as happy as a school-girl at the prospect of a holiday. The 1st of May is not far distant, and then I hope to go to Berlin, *viâ* St. Petersburg. My plans for next winter are still undecided, as they do not depend upon me. As you can easily imagine, people talk constantly about you. Every one wants to hear about you. Your letters are read, commented upon, and make quite a sensation. The leading ladies of Stockholm seem to have very few subjects of conversation, and it is really a charity to give them something to talk about. I enjoy beforehand and

yet tremble over the effect of your play when it is put on the stage next autumn."

In April, Sonya finished her course of lectures, and left for Russia. She writes as follows to Mittag Leffler :—

"RUSSIA, *April 29, 1884.*

" . . . It seems a century since I left Stockholm. I shall never be able to express or to show all the gratitude and friendship I feel for you. It is as if I had found in Sweden a new foster-land and family at the moment when I most needed them. . . ."

The course of lectures Sonya had given that year in German at the University of Stockholm had been quite private. The lectures had raised her greatly in public estimation, and Mittag Leffler was enabled to collect privately the funds necessary to give her an official appointment, which was to last, in the first instance, for five years. Several persons bound themselves to pay a lump sum of about £112 a year. The University gave about the same sum, so that Sonya had £225 a year. Her pecuniary position was such that she could no longer give her work gratis, as she had at first generously offered to do. But it was not only the pecuniary question which had raised difficulties in the way of her official appointment.

The conservative opposition which naturally arose in many directions against the employment of a woman as a university professor had to be overcome. No other university had set the example. The funds might possibly have been found to furnish a life-appointment

But the considerations urged against such an appointment appearing to be insurmountable, Professor Leffler decided to postpone the attempt till a more convenient season. At the end of the first five years he succeeded in obtaining for Sonya a life-appointment, which she enjoyed just one year.

On July 1, 1884, Mittag Leffler had the pleasure of telegraphing to Sonya, who was then in Berlin, that she had been appointed professor for five years. She answered the same day in the following terms :—

“BERLIN, *July* 1, 1884.

“ . . . I need hardly tell you that your and Ugglas' telegrams have filled my heart with joy. I may now confess that up to the last moment, I believed and feared that the matter could not be carried through. I thought that at the critical moment some unexpected difficulty would arise, and that all our plans would come to nothing. I am also sure that it is only owing to your perseverance and energy that we have been able to attain our end. I only hope that I may have the strength and capacity requisite for my duties, and to help you in all your undertakings. I firmly believe in my future, and shall be glad to work with you. What joy and happiness it is that we met ! ” . . .

Further on she says : “ W—— has spoken to several officials here about my wish to attend lectures. It is possible that the thing may be arranged, but not this summer, as the present Rector is a decided opponent of woman's rights. I hope, however, it may be arranged

by December, when I return to spend my Christmas holidays here.”

The University at Stockholm had already appointed Fru Kovalevsky professor, while in Germany it was still impossible for her, as a woman, to attend even lectures.

Another person might have been somewhat perturbed by the uncertainty of the appointment she now accepted. But the future never harassed Sonya. If the present were satisfactory, that was all she required. She was ready at any moment to sacrifice a brilliant future if by doing so she could secure a happier and fuller present.

Before going to Berlin, Sonya had paid a visit to her little daughter, who was living with the friend of Sonya's youth in Moscow. Thence she wrote a letter to Mittag Leffler, which may be taken as an exposition of her ideas of a mother's duty, and which describes the conflict between her duties as a mother and as an official personage ; as a woman, and as a bread-winner.

“Moscow, *June* 3, 1884.

“I have had a long letter from T——, in which she expresses a warm wish that I should bring my little girl with me to Stockholm. But, in spite of all the considerations which might incline me to have my little Sonya with me, I have almost decided to let her spend another winter in Moscow. I do not think it would be in the child's interest to take her away from this place, where she is well cared for, and to carry her back with me to Stockholm, where nothing is prepared for her, and where I shall have to devote my whole time

and energy to my new duties. T—— says, among other things, that many people will accuse me of indifference to my child. I suppose that is quite possible, but I confess that I do not care in the least for that argument. I am quite willing to submit to the judgment of the Stockholm ladies in all that has to do with the minor details of life; but in serious questions, especially when I do not act in my own interests but in those of my child, I consider it would be unpardonable weakness on my part were I to let the shadow of a wish to play the part of a good mother in the eyes of Stockholm petticoats, influence me in the least.”

On her return to Sweden, in September, Sonya went to Södertelje for a few weeks, in order to finish in peace the work commenced so long ago, “*Ljusets brytning in ett kristalliniskt medium.*” Mittag Leffler and a young German mathematician, whose acquaintance Sonya had made at Berlin during the summer, were with her at Södertelje, and the young mathematician assisted her by correcting her German.

On my first visit to her on my return from England, I was astonished to find her looking younger and handsomer. I at first thought it was the effect of her having left off her mourning, for black was very unbecoming to her, and she herself hated it. The light-blue summer dress she was now wearing made her complexion look brighter, and she also wore her rich chestnut hair in curls. But it was not only her outward appearance which was changed. I soon noticed that the melancholy which had enveloped her during her former sojourn in Stockholm had given place to

sparkling gaiety, a side of her character which I now for the first time learned to know. She was in such a gay mood, sparkling with joy, dancing with life ; a shower of wit, half satirical, half good-natured, sparkled round her. One daring paradox followed another, and it was well for any one not quick at repartee to keep silence on such occasions, for she did not give people much chance of retort.

She was, at this time, occupied with preparing her lectures for the new term. These she read to the young German mathematician, saying sportingly that he must be her "pointer," a rôle which otherwise fell to Mittag Leffler.

Sonya's bright mood lasted through the autumn. She led a social life, and was everywhere the centre of a magic circle. The strong satirical vein in her character and the deep contempt she felt for mediocrity (she belonged to the *haute noblesse* of the intellectual world, and worshipped genius) was, in her, wedded to a poet's ready sympathy with all human conflicts and troubles, however unimportant they might be.

This made her take a lively interest in everything that concerned her friends. All the household worries of her married friends were confided to her, and young girls asked her advice about their dress, etc. The usual verdict passed upon her by those who knew her was that she was simple and unpretentious as a school-girl, and in no way thought herself above other women.

But, as I have already said, this was not a true estimate of her character, just as the impression of frankness and affability given by her manners was

delusive. She was in reality reserved, and she considered few people her equals. But the mobility of her nature and intelligence, the wish to please, and the psychological interest which as an author she took in all human things, gave her the sympathetic manner which charmed all who saw her. She seldom displayed her sarcastic vein to her inferiors unless they were really uncongenial to her. But she used it freely amongst those whom she looked upon as her equals.

Meanwhile it did not take her long to exhaust the social interest in Stockholm. After a time she said she knew every one by heart and longed for fresh stimulus for her intelligence. This was a great misfortune to her, and accounts for the fact that she could not be happy in Stockholm, nor, perhaps, in any place in the world. She was continually in want of stimulus. She desired dramatic interests in life, and was ever seeking after high-wrought mental delights. She hated with all her heart the grey monotony of everyday life.

Bohemian by nature, as she often called herself, she hated the virtues generally described as "*bourgeois*." She herself attributed this trait in her character to her descent from a gipsy woman who, I believe, married her father's grandfather—a marriage by which that gentleman forfeited his title of "prince," then possessed by the family.

All this was not only a peculiarity of temperament in Sonya; it underlay her intellectual nature. Her talents were of the productive order, and at the same time she was very receptive by nature, and required stimulus from the genius of others in order to do productive work herself.



This is the reason why her whole scientific career was occupied solely with the development of the ideas of her great teacher. In literature she absolutely required an interchange of ideas with persons similarly occupied.

With such a substratum underlying her whole character and intelligence, it was only natural that life in such a small town as Stockholm should be altogether monotonous to her. She could only really *live* in the great European capitals. There and there only could she find the mental stimulus she needed.

She spent the Christmas of 1884 in Berlin. On her return thence she made use, for the first time, of the expression she afterwards "used every year, and which so wounded and hurt her friends. "The road from Stockholm to Malmö," she said, "is the most beautiful line I have ever seen; but the road from Malmö to Stockholm is the ugliest, dullest, and most tiresome."

My heart bleeds when I think how often she had to take that journey with an ever-growing bitterness in her heart which at last brought her to an early grave.

A letter to my brother, written from Berlin during that Christmas, shows how deeply melancholy her mood really was, despite all outward show of cheerfulness. Her friends have told me that she was happier and more joyous during that Christmas than they had ever seen her. She regretted that during her real youth she had neglected youth's pleasures, and she now wanted to avenge herself, and began to take lessons in dancing and skating. She did not wish to expose her first awkward attempts at skating, so one of

her friends and admirers arranged a private skating-ground for her in the garden of one of the Berlin villas. Her lessons in dancing were also taken in a similarly private fashion, with two admirers as cavaliers.

She rushed from one entertainment to another, and was much fêted, an experience she always enjoyed.

But this happy mood was short-lived. A month later it had been chased away by the news of her sister's illness, and by a love-affair, which, as usual with her, took no happy turn. The latter caused both her supreme joyousness and the deep despondency which followed it.

She writes on December 27, 1884: "I feel in very low spirits. I have had very bad news from my sister. Her illness makes terrible progress, and now it is her sight which is affected. She can neither read nor write. This is caused by the faulty action of her heart, which gives rise to clots of blood and paralysis. I tremble at the thought of the loss which awaits me in the near future. How sad life is after all! and how dull it is to go on living! It is my birthday,<sup>1</sup> and I am thirty-one to-day. It is terrible to think I may perhaps have as many years still to live! How beautiful it is in dramas and novels! As soon as any one has found out that life is not worth living, some one or something comes on the scene and helps to make the passage to the 'other side' easy. Reality is in this detail inferior to fiction. One hears much of the perfection of the organisms as developed by living

<sup>1</sup> This is a fiction, for it was neither her birthday, nor was she the age mentioned: see Introduction.

creatures through the process of natural selection. I think that the highest perfection would be the power to die quickly and easily. In this matter man has certainly degenerated. Insects and the lower animals can never choose to die. An articulated animal can suffer unheard-of tortures without ceasing to exist. But the higher you rise in the animal scale, the easier life's transit. In a bird, a wild animal, a lion or a tiger, almost every illness is fatal. They have either the full enjoyment of life—or else death, but no suffering. Man in this particular is more like an insect. Many of my acquaintances make me involuntarily think of insects whose wings have been torn off, their bodies crushed, or their legs injured. Yet, poor things, they cannot decide to die. Forgive me for writing to you in such low spirits. I really am in a very gloomy mood. I feel no desire to work. I have not yet been able to settle down to prepare my lectures for the next term. But I have pondered much over the following problem.” (And here a mathematical working is given.)

I again quote the same letter: “I have received from your sister, as a Christmas present, an article by Strindberg, in which he proves, as decidedly as that two and two make four, what a monstrosity a woman professor of mathematics is, and how unnecessary, injurious, and out of place she is. I think he is right *au fond*. The only remark I protest against is, that there were plenty of mathematicians in Sweden better than I am, and that it was only chivalry which made them select me!”

## CHAPTER VIII.

### PASTIMES.

AMONG the crowd of skaters who that winter frequented the Nybroviken and the royal skating-ground at Skeppsholmen, a little short-sighted lady, clad in a tight-fitting fur-trimmed costume, her hands tucked into a muff, might be seen daily trying, with small uncertain steps, to move along on her skates. She was accompanied by a tall gentleman wearing spectacles, and a tall, slight lady, and none of them seemed very steady on their feet. While staggering along together they kept up a lively conversation, and sometimes the gentleman would draw a geometrical figure on the ice, not indeed with his skates—not being dexterous enough for that—but with his stick. The little lady would then instantly pause and study the figure intently. The two had come together from the University to the skating-ground, and were generally engaged in hot discussion arising from a lecture which one or the other had just given; a discussion which was usually continued after reaching the ground.

Sometimes the little lady would cry mercy, and beg to be excused from talking mathematics while skating,

as it made her lose her balance. At another time she and the tall lady would engage in talk on psychological topics, or communicate to each other some plot for a novel or drama. They even argued and sparred about their respective proficiency in the art of skating. In any other occupation they willingly admitted each other's superiority, but not in this.

Any one who met Madame Kovalevsky in society that winter might have imagined she was a very proficient skater ; one who could have carried off the prize in a tournament with the greatest ease. She spoke of the sport with great eagerness and interest, and was very proud of the smallest progress she made, though she had never shown any such vanity about the works which had brought her world-wide renown.

Even in the riding-school she and her tall companion might often be seen that winter, and it was evident they took great interest in each other's accomplishments. The celebrated Madame Kovalevsky was naturally much noticed wherever she made her appearance, but no little schoolgirl could have behaved more childishly than she did at her riding or skating lessons. Her taste for such sports was not seconded by the least facility for them. She was scarcely in the saddle, for instance, than she was overcome with fear. She would scream if her horse made the least unexpected movement. She always begged for the quietest and soberest animal in the stables. But she would afterwards explain why that day's riding-lesson had been a failure, alleging either that the horse had been fidgety or wild, or that the saddle had been uncomfortable. She never got

beyond a ten minutes' trot, and, if the horse broke into a good pace, she would call to the riding-master in broken Swedish, "Please, good sir, make the horse stop!"

She bore with great amiability all the teasing of her friends on this account, but when she talked to other people about the matter, they easily went off with the idea that she was an accomplished horsewoman who could boldly ride the wildest animal at a gallop. All this was no boasting; she thoroughly believed in it. She always intended to do something wonderful each time she went to the riding-school, and was continually proposing riding tours. Her explanation of her overwhelming fear when once mounted was, that it was not real fright, but only nervousness, which made her sensitive to every noise, so that the footsteps of the other horses upset her composure. Her friends often could not resist asking her what kind of noise it was that, when out walking, made her jump over hedges and ditches to avoid a harmless cow, or run away from a dog that merely sniffed at her.

She describes this kind of cowardice very well in an otherwise great character in her posthumous novel, "Vera Verontzoff":—

"In the learned circle in which he lived no one would have dreamt of suspecting him of cowardice. On the contrary, all his colleagues dreaded lest his courage should lead him into difficulties. In his own heart he knew himself to be far from courageous. But in his day-dreams he loved to imagine himself amid the most dangerous circumstances. More than once,

in the silence of his quiet study, he had fancied himself storming a barricade. In spite of this, he kept at a respectful distance from village curs, and declined to make any near acquaintance with horned cattle."

Sonya perhaps exaggerated her fear out of coquetry. She possessed to a high degree that feminine grace so highly appreciated by men. She loved to be protected.

To energy and genius truly masculine, and to a character in some ways inflexible, she united a very feminine helplessness. She never learned her way about Stockholm. She only knew perfectly a few streets, those which led to the University or to the houses of her intimate friends. She could neither look after her money matters, her house, nor her child. The latter she was obliged to leave in the care of others. In fact, she was so unpractical that all the minor details of life were a burden to her. When she was obliged to seek paid work, to apply to an editor or to get introductions, she was incapable of looking after her own interests. But she never failed to find some devoted friend who made her interest his own, and on whom she could throw all the burden of her affairs.

At every railway station where she stopped on her many journeys, some one was always waiting to receive her, to procure rooms for her, to show her the way, or to place his services at her disposal. It was such a delight to her to be thus assisted and cared for in trifles that, as I said before, she rather liked to exaggerate her fears and helplessness. Notwithstanding all this, there was never a woman who, in the deepest sense of the word, could be more independent of others.

In a letter written in German to the admirer who had taught her to dance and skate, Sonya describes her life in Stockholm during the winter of 1884-85.

“STOCKHOLM, *April*, 1885.

“DEAR MR. H.,—I am ashamed that I have not answered your kind letter sooner. My only excuse is the multifarious occupations which have filled up my time. I will tell you all I have been doing. To begin with there are my lectures three times a week in *Swedish*. I read and study the algebraic introduction to the theory of ‘Abel’s Functions,’ and in Germany these lectures are supposed to be the most difficult. I have a pretty large number of students, all of whom I retain, with the exception of at most two or three who have withdrawn. Secondly, I have been writing a short mathematical treatise, which I shall send to Weierstrass immediately, asking him to get it published in Borchardt’s Journal. Thirdly, I and Mittag Leffler have begun a large mathematical work. We hope to get a great deal of pleasure and fame out of it—this is a secret at present, so do not yet mention it. Fourthly, I have made the acquaintance of a very pleasant man, who has recently returned to Stockholm from America. He is the editor of the largest Swedish newspaper. He has made me promise to write something for his paper, and, so [you know,<sup>1</sup> *I can never see my friends at work without wishing to do exactly what they are doing*], I have written a number

The italics have been added by the friend who sends the letter.



of short articles<sup>1</sup> for him. For the moment I have only one of these personal reminiscences ready, but I send it to you, as you understand Swedish so well. Fifthly (last, not least), can you really believe, unlikely as it sounds, that I have developed into an accomplished skater! At the end of last week I was on the ice every day. I am so sorry you cannot see how well I manage now. Whenever I gain a little extra dexterity I think of you. And now I can even skate a little backwards!! But I can go forward with great facility and assurance!! All my friends here are astonished how quickly I have mastered the difficult art. In order to console myself a little, now that the ice has disappeared, I have taken furiously to riding with my friend. In the few weeks of the Easter holidays I intend to ride at least an hour every day. I like riding very much. I really don't know which I like best, skating or riding. But this is by no means the end of all my frivolities. There is to be a great fête on April 15th. It is a kind of fair or bazaar, and seems to be a very Swedish affair. A hundred of us ladies will dress in costume, and sell all sorts of things for the benefit of a Folk's Museum. I am, of course, going to be a gipsy, and equally of course a great guy. I have asked five other young ladies to share my fate and help me. We are to be a gipsy troop, with tents, and our 'marshals,' also in the costume of gipsy youths, will assist us. We are likewise to have a Russian samovar, and to serve tea from it.

<sup>1</sup> She had in reality only written *one* of the articles, but in her vivid imagination what she *intended* doing was already done.

“Now what do you say to all this nonsense, dear Mr. H.? This evening I am going to have a grand party in my own little room, the first I have given since I have been in Stockholm.”

In the spring of the year there was a suggestion made that Sonya should lecture on mechanics during the illness of Professor Holmgrens.

She wrote on this subject to Professor Mittag Leffler, who had then left Stockholm :

“STOCKHOLM, June 3rd.

“I have been to Lindhagen, who told me that the authorities of the University are of opinion that I ought to be Professor Holmgren’s substitute. But they do not wish this mentioned, as it might have a bad effect on Holmgren. He is really very ill, but does not yet seem to realise the fact. I replied to Lindhagen that I felt that this was quite fair, and that I am satisfied to know that the authorities think I should be Holmgren’s *locum tenens* in case he is not able to give his autumn lectures. But if, contrary to present expectations, he should have recovered before then, I should be so pleased with the happy turn of events, that I should not regret the work I should thus have missed. I am much pleased, my dear friend, that things have turned out so well, and I shall do my best to make my lectures as good as possible. Stories with a moral are always tiresome in books, but they are very encouraging and edifying when they occur in real life ; so I am doubly pleased that my motto, ‘*pas trop de zèle,*’ has been refuted in so brilliant and unexpected a manner. I do

hope you will have no reason to reproach me with losing courage. You must never forget, dear friend, that I am Russian. When a Swedish woman is tired, or in a bad humour, she is silent and sulky. Of course, the ill-humour strikes inwards and becomes a chronic complaint. A Russian bemoans and bewails herself so much that it affects her mentally as a catarrh affects her physically. For the rest I must say that I only bemoan and bewail when I am *slightly* unhappy. When I am in great distress, then I too am silent. No one can notice my distress. I may sometimes have reproached you with being too optimistic, but I would not have you cure yourself of this on any account. The fault suits you to perfection, and, besides, the most striking proof of your optimism is the good opinion you have of me. You can easily understand that I should like you to be right in this detail."

Shortly after this, Sonya went to Russia to spend the summer, partly in St. Petersburg with her invalid sister, and partly in the environs of Moscow with her friend and her little girl.

I here quote from a few letters written thence. They are not very full of interest, as she was not fond of writing. Our correspondence, therefore, was not lively, but her letters always contained fragments of her life-history. They are often, even in their brevity, characteristic of the mood which possessed her while writing them. They are thus of much value in depicting her character.

I was in Switzerland with my brother, and had

invited her to meet us there, when I received the following letter :—

“MY DEAR ANN CHARLOTTE,—I have just received your kind letter. You cannot imagine how I should like to start at once to meet you and your brother in Switzerland, and go on a walking tour with you to the highest parts of the Alps! I have a sufficiently lively imagination to enable me to picture how charming this would be. What happy weeks we might spend together! Unfortunately I am kept here by a whole string of reasons; the one more stupid and tiresome than the other. To begin with, I have *promised* to stay here till August 1st, and though I am, in principle, of the opinion that ‘man is master of his word,’ the old prejudices are so strong in me that I always return to them when I have a chance of realising my theories. Instead of the ‘*master*,’ I also am the slave of my word. Besides, there are a whole host of things which keep me here. Your brother (who knows me *au fond* and judges me rightly—only you must not tell him so for fear of flattering his vanity too much) has often said that I am very impressionable, and that it is always the duties and impressions of the moment which determine my actions. In Stockholm, where every one treats me as the champion of the woman-question, I begin to think it is my most important obligation to develop and cultivate my ‘genius.’ But I must humbly admit that *here* I am always introduced to new acquaintances as ‘*Foufi’s Mama*,’<sup>1</sup> and you cannot

<sup>1</sup> Sonya was staying at this time near Moscow with the friend who had charge of her little girl.

imagine what an effect this has in diminishing my vanity. It calls forth in me a perfect crop of genuine virtues, which spring up like mushrooms, and of which you would never suppose me capable. Add to this the heat which softens my brain, and you can then picture what I am like at this moment. In a word, the result is that all the small influences and forces which dominate your poor friend are strong enough to keep me there till August 1st. The only thing I can hope for is to meet you in Normandy, and to go on with your brother to Aberdeen. Write soon to me, dear Ann Charlotte. How happy you are! You cannot imagine how I envy you. Do at least write to me. I shall do my best to join you in Normandy.

*Bien à toi.* "SONYA."

As usual, there is no date to her letters, but at about the same time she wrote to my brother :—

"CHER MONSIEUR,—I have received your kind letter, No. 8, and I hasten to answer ; though I have little or nothing to tell you ; our life is monotonous to that degree that I lose the power, not only of working, but of caring for anything. I feel that if this lasts much longer I shall become a vegetable. It is really curious, the less you have to do the less you are able to work. Here I do *absolutely* nothing. I sit all day long with my embroidery in my hand, but without an idea in my head. The heat begins to be stifling. After the rain which we had at first, the summer has set in quite hot, a regular Russian summer. You could boil eggs in the shade !"

To her friend Mr. H., in Berlin, she also writes an amusing account of her life that summer.

“I am now staying with my friend, Julia L., on a small estate of hers in the neighbourhood of Moscow. I have found my daughter bright and well. I do not know which of us has been happiest in the reunion. We are not going to be separated any more, for I am going to take her back with me to Stockholm. She is nearly six, and is a very sensible child for her age. Every one thinks she is like me, and I really think she is like what I was in my childhood. My friend is very depressed ; she has just lost her only sister, so it is at present rather dull and dismal in this house. Our circle of acquaintances consists entirely of old ladies. Four old maids live with us, and as they all go about in deep mourning our house seems almost like a convent. We also eat a great deal, as people do in convents ; and four times a day we drink tea, with all sorts of jams, sweetmeats, and cakes—which helps us to get through the time nicely. I try to make a little diversion in other ways. For instance, one day I asked Julia to go with me to the next village without the coachman, persuading her that I could drive beautifully. We arrived safely at our destination. But coming home the horses shied, came into collision with a tree, and we were thrown into a ditch ! Poor Julia injured her foot, but I, the criminal, escaped unhurt from the adventure.”

A little later Sonya wrote to the same friend :—

“Our life here continues to be so monotonous that I have nothing to say beyond thanking you for your

letter. I have not even thrown any one out of a carriage lately, and life flows tranquilly as the water in the pond which adorns our garden. Even my brain seems to stand still. I sit with my work in my hand and absolutely think of nothing."

In connection with this, it is worth while referring to the extraordinary power Sonya had of being completely idle when not engaged in actual work. She often said she was never half so happy as during these periods of entire laziness, when it was an effort to rise from the chair into which she had sunk. At such times the most trivial novel, the most mechanical needlework, a few cigarettes, and some tea, were all she required. It was probably very lucky for her that she had this capacity for reaction against excessive brain-work and the incessant mental excitement to which she surrendered herself between whiles. Perhaps it was the result of her Russo-German lineage, each race by turns getting the upper hand and causing these sudden changes. Nothing came of all her projected travels. Sonya spent that whole summer in Russia, and it was not until September that we met in Stockholm.

## CHAPTER IX.

### CHANGING MOODS.

**D**URING the following winter the sentimental element began to play a great part in Sonya's life. She found nothing to satisfy and interest her in her social surroundings. She was not engaged on any special literary work. Her lectures failed to interest her much. Under these circumstances she was very often apt to become too introspective; brooded over her destiny; and felt bitterly that life had not afforded her what she most desired.

She no longer talked of "twin-souls," or of a single love which would rule her whole life, but, instead, dreamt of a union between man and wife in which the intelligence of the one was the complement to that of the other, so that together only could they realise the full development of their genius.

"Labouring together in love" was now her ideal, and she dreamt of finding a man who could, in this sense, become her second self. The certainty that she could never find that man in Sweden was the real origin of the dislike which she now took to this country—the land to which she had come with such hope and expect-



tation. This idea of collaboration was based on her secret craving to be in spiritual partnership with another human being, and on the real suffering caused by her intellectual isolation. She could scarcely endure to work without having some one near her who breathed the same mental atmosphere as herself.

Work in itself—the absolute search after scientific truth—did not satisfy her. She longed to be understood, met half way, admired and encouraged at every step she took. As each new idea sprang up in her brain she longed to convey it to some one else, to enrich with it another human being. It was not only humanity in the abstract, but some definite human being that she required ; some one who in return would share with her a creation of his own.

Mathematician as she was, abstractions were not for her, for she was intensely personal in all her thoughts and judgments.

Mittag Leffler often told her that her love of and desire for sympathy was a feminine weakness. Men of great genius had never been dependent in this way on others. But she asserted the contrary, enumerating a number of instances in which men had found their best inspiration in their love for a woman. Most of these were poets. Among scientists it was more difficult to prove her statement, but Sonya was never short of arguments to demonstrate her assertions. She put a clever construction upon facts which were not in themselves clear enough to support her. It is true that she succeeded in quoting several instances which went far to prove that a feeling of great isolation had been

the cause of intense suffering to all profound minds. She pointed out how this great curse of isolation rested on man. He whose highest happiness it is to merge his own in another's being nevertheless must in the innermost soul ever be alone.

I remember that the spring of 1886 was a specially trying one for Sonya. The awakening of nature—the restlessness and growth, which she depicted so vividly in “Væ Victis,” and later in “Vera Verontzoff,” exercised a strong influence upon her, and made her restless and nervous, full of longing and impatience.

The light summer nights, so dear to me, only enervated Sonya. “The everlasting sunshine seems to promise so much,” she would say, “but fails to fulfil the promise. Earth remains cold—development is retarded just when it has commenced. The summer seems like a mirage—a will-o'-the-wisp which you cannot overtake. The fact that the long days and light nights begin so long before full summer comes is all the more irritating, because they seem to promise a joy they can never fulfil.”

Sonya could not work, but she maintained with more and more eagerness that work, especially scientific work, was no good; it could neither afford pleasure nor cause humanity to progress. It was folly to waste one's youth on work, and especially was it unfortunate for a woman to be scientifically gifted, for she was thus drawn into a sphere which could never afford her happiness.

As soon as the term ended that year, Sonya hastened on “the short and beautiful journey *from* Stockholm”

to Malmö, and thence to the Continent. She went to Paris, and wrote thence only one letter to me. Contrary to her custom, it is dated.

“ 142, BOULEVARD D'ENFER, *June 26, 1886.*

“ DEAR ANN CHARLOTTE,—I have just received your letter. I reproach myself very much that I have not written to you before. I am ready to admit that I was a little jealous, and thought you no longer cared for me. I have only time for a few lines—if my letter is to be in time for to-day's post—to tell you that you are quite wrong in reproaching me for forgetting you when I am away. I have never felt so much how I love you and your brother. Every time I am pleased, I unconsciously think of you. I enjoy myself very much in Paris. Mathematicians and others make much of me (*font grand cas de moi*), but I long intensely to see the good-for-nothing brother and sister who are quite indispensable to my life. I cannot leave this before July 5th, and cannot get to Christiania in time for the Natural Science Congress.<sup>1</sup> Can you meet me (in Copenhagen) so that we may go home together? Please reply at once. I have taken your book<sup>2</sup> to Jonas Lie. He speaks of you very kindly. He has returned my call, but had not yet read your book. He also thinks you have more talent for novel writing than for the drama. I hope to see Jonas Lie once more before I leave. I send you my love and

<sup>1</sup> We had intended to meet in Norway and spend the rest of the summer together.

<sup>2</sup> “A Summer Saga.”

long to see you again, my dear Ann Charlotte. *Tout à toi.* "SONYA."

As usual, Sonya could not tear herself away from Paris till the last minute. She arrived at Copenhagen on the last day of the Congress. I was accustomed to her sudden changes of mood, but this time the contrast was amazing between the mood she was now in and that which had ruled her during the whole of the spring, when she was in Stockholm.

In Paris she had associated with Poincaré and other mathematicians. While in conversation with them she had felt a desire awaken within her to occupy herself with problems the solution of which was to bring her the highest fame, and to gain for her the highest prize of the French Academy of Science.

It now seemed to her that nothing was worth living for but science. Everything else—personal happiness, love, and love of nature—day dreaming, all were vain. The search after scientific truth was now to her the highest and most desirable of things. Interchange of ideas with her intellectual peers, apart from any personal tie, was the loftiest of all intercourse. The joy of creation was upon her; and now she entered one of those brilliant periods of her life, when she was handsome, full of genius, sparkling with wit and humour.

She arrived at Christiania at night, after three days' voyage from Havre. She had been very sea-sick all the time, but this did not prevent her—undefatigable as she always was when in good spirits—from joining the next day in a fête and picnic which lasted far into the

night. All the most distinguished men present thronged around her, and she was always on such occasions most amiable and unassuming ; so girlishly gentle in her manner that she took every one by storm.

We afterwards made a trip together through Telemarken, where we visited Ullman's Peasant High School, in which Sonya became warmly interested. It was this visit that gave rise to the article on Peasant High Schools which she published in a Russian magazine. The success of the article was so great that it brought a large increase in the number of subscribers to the journal.

From Siljord we walked up a mountain, and it was certainly the first time that Sonya had ever done any mountaineering. She was brisk and indefatigable in climbing, and was delighted with the beauty of nature. She was full of joy and energy, her pleasure being only now and then marred by fear of the cows near a *säter*, or by the loose stones we had to climb over, when she uttered little childish shrieks and exclamations which much amused the rest of the party. She had a true appreciation of nature in so far as her imagination and feelings were stirred by its poetry, by the spirit of the scenery, and its light and shadow. But as she was very near-sighted, and objected, out of feminine vanity, to wearing spectacles, the traditional mark of a blue stocking, she never could see any details of the landscape, and certainly would not have been able to tell what sort of trees or crops she had passed, or how the houses were built, &c. Notwithstanding this, in some of her works already mentioned she succeeds not

only in giving the spirit of the scenery, its *soul*, so to say, but also exact and delicate descriptions of purely material details. This she did, not from her own observation, but from purely theoretical knowledge. She had a very sound knowledge of natural history. She had helped her husband to translate Brehm's "Birds," and, as already mentioned, had studied paleontology and geology with him, and had been personally acquainted with the most eminent scientists of our time.

But she was not a very minute observer when it concerned the small commonplace phenomena of nature. She had no love of detail, and did not possess a finely cultivated sense of beauty. The most unattractive landscape might be beautiful in her eyes if it suited her mood. And she could be indifferent to the most exquisite outlines and colours if she were personally out of sympathy with the scene.

It was the same with the personal appearance of people. She was utterly devoid of all appreciation of purity of outline, harmony, proportion, complexion, and other outward requirements of beauty. People with whom she was in sympathy, and who possessed some of the external qualities she admired—these she considered beautiful, and all others plain. A fair person, man or woman, she could easily admire, but not a dark person.

In this connection I cannot help mentioning the absence of all artistic appreciation in a nature otherwise so richly gifted. She had spent years of her life in Paris, but had never visited the Louvre. Neither pictures, sculptures, nor architecture ever attracted her attention.

In spite of this, she was much pleased with Norway, and liked the people we met. We had intended to continue our trip in a *cariole* through the whole of Telemarken, over Haukeli Fjäll, and thence down to the west coast, where we meant to visit Alexander Kielland in Jäderén. But although Sonya had long dreamt about this journey, and was pleased with it; and though she had for some time desired to make Kielland's acquaintance, another voice was now so strong within her that she could not resist it. So while we were on a steamer in one of the long inland lakes which run up into Telemarken, and which resemble fjords cut off from the sea, she suddenly decided to go back to Christiania and Sweden, and settle down quietly in the country to work. She left me, stepped into another steamer, and was taken by it back to Christiania by way of Skien.

I could not remonstrate with her, nor did I blame her. I knew so well that when once the creative spirit makes its "*must*" heard, its voice will be obeyed. Everything else, however otherwise attractive, becomes insignificant and unimportant. One is deaf and blind to one's surroundings, and one listens only to the inner voice—which calls more loudly than the roaring waterfall, or the hurricane at sea. Sonya's departure was, of course, a great disappointment to me. I continued the journey with a chance companion; visited Kielland; returned eastwards and took part in a fête at Sagatun's Peasant High School which would certainly have pleased Sonya as much as it did me, had she been mentally at liberty.

I had several times noticed this trait in her. She

might be engaged in the most lively conversation at a picnic or party, and apparently be entirely occupied by her surroundings, when suddenly a silence would fall upon her. Her look at such times became distant, and her replies, when addressed, wandering. She would suddenly say farewell, and no persuasions, no previous plans or arrangements, no consideration for others could detain her. Go home and work she must. I have a note from her written in the spring of the year which is characteristic of her in this connection.

We had arranged a driving expedition in the neighbourhood of Stockholm with a few other friends, when she repented at the last moment, and sent me the following note<sup>1</sup> :—

“DEAR ANNA CHARLOTTE,—This morning I awoke with the desire to amuse myself, when suddenly my mother’s father, the German pedant (that is to say the *astronomer*), appeared before me. He drew forth all the learned treatises and dissertations which I had intended studying in the Easter holidays, and reproached me most seriously for wasting my time so foolishly. His severe words put the gipsy grandmother in me to flight. Now I sit at my writing-table in dressing-gown and slippers, deeply immersed in mathematical study, and I have not the slightest desire to join your picnic. You are so merry that you can amuse yourselves just as well without me, so

<sup>1</sup> This note is written in Swedish, as are all the other letters which follow unless otherwise indicated.



I hope you will enjoy yourselves, and pardon my ignoble desertion.

“Yours affectionately,  
“SONYA.”

There had been an arrangement that we should meet again in Jämtland later in the summer, where Sonya was staying with my brother's family. But scarcely had I arrived there before Sonya had to leave. She was called away by a telegram from her sister in Russia, who had a new and serious attack of illness.

When Sonya returned again in September, she brought her little daughter, now eight years old, with her. She now lived for the first time in a flat of her own in Stockholm. She was tired of boarding-houses. She was certainly most indifferent to any kind of comfort and domestic conveniences, and did not care what furniture she had, nor what food she ate. But, at the same time, she greatly wanted to be independent and master of her own time. She could no longer put up with the many ties which living with others always entails. So she got her friends to help her to choose a house, and a housekeeper who would also look after the child. She bought some furniture in the town, and ordered the remainder from Russia. She thus made a home for herself, which, however, retained the appearance of a temporary arrangement that might be upset at any moment.

The furniture sent from Russia was very characteristic. It came from her parents' home, and had the old aristocratic look about it. It had occupied a large

saloon, and consisted of a long sofa which took up a whole wall ; a corner sofa (part of an old milieu), with floral decorations in the centre, and a deep armchair. It was all of rich carved mahogany, upholstered in bright red silk damask, now old and tattered. The stuffing was also spoiled and many of the springs broken. Sonya always intended to have this furniture repaired, newly polished, and newly upholstered, but this was never done, partly because, to Sonya with her bringing up, tattered furniture in a drawing-room was nothing astonishing,<sup>1</sup> and partly because she never felt sufficient interest in Stockholm to have things put to rights, feeling sure that her home there was but a halfway-house, and she need not therefore trouble to spend money on it.

Sometimes, when she was in good spirits, a sudden frenzy would seize her, and she would amuse herself by ornamenting her small rooms with her own needlework.

One day she sent me the following note :—

“ANNA CHARLOTTE!—Yesterday evening I had a clear proof that the critics are right who maintain that you have eyes for the bad and ugly but not for the good and beautiful. Each stain, each scratch, on one of my venerable old chairs, even if hidden by ten antimacassars, is very certain to be discovered and denounced by you. But my really lovely new rocking-chair cushion, which was *en évidence* the whole evening, and which endeavoured to draw your attention to itself, was not honoured by you with even a single glance!

“Your SONYA.”

<sup>1</sup> It may be remembered that in her childhood's home the nursery was papered with newspapers.

## CHAPTER X.

HOW IT WAS, AND HOW IT MIGHT HAVE BEEN.

SCARCELY had Sonya got her possessions into some kind of order in her quaint ramshackle house, than she was again summoned to Russia. She had to go in mid-winter by sea to Helsingfors, and thence by rail to St. Petersburg, in order to reach her suffering sister, who continued to hover betwixt life and death. On such occasions Sonya was never frightened, nor was she to be deterred by any difficulty. She was tenderly devoted to her sister, and always ready to sacrifice herself for her sake. She left her little girl in my care during the two winter months she was absent.

In that time I only received one letter from her, which is of no interest beyond the fact that it shows how sad her Christmas holidays were that year.

“ST. PETERSBURG, *December* 18, 1886.

“DEAR ANNA CHARLOTTE,—I arrived here yesterday evening. To-day I can scarcely write these few words to you. My sister is fearfully ill, though the doctor thinks her better than she was some days ago. A long wearing illness like this is truly one of the most terrible

trials possible. She suffers untold agonies, and can hardly sleep or even breathe. . . . I do not know how long I shall remain here. I long so much for Foufi " (her child), "and also for my work. My journey was very trying and wearisome. Loving messages to you all.

Your affectionate friend,

"SONYA."

During the long days and nights that Sonya passed by her sister's sick-bed, many thoughts and fantasies naturally filled her mind. Then it was that she began to ponder on the difference of "how it was, and how it might have been." She remembered with what dreams and infatuations she and her sister had commenced life; young, handsome, and richly endowed as they both were. She realised how little life had given them of all that they had pictured to themselves in their day-dreams. Life had indeed been to them rich and varied, but in the depths of both their hearts was a bitter feeling of disappointment.

Ah! how utterly different, Sonya would say to herself, might it not have been but for the fatal errors both of them had committed! From these thoughts was bred the idea of writing two parallel romances which should depict the history of a human being in two different ways. Early youth, with all its possibilities, should be described, and a series of pictures followed up to some important event. The one romance was to show the consequence of the choice made at the critical moment, and the other romance was to figure "what might have been" had that choice been different. "Who is there

who has not some false step to regret," soliloquised Sonya, "and who has not often wished to begin life anew?"

She wanted, in this work, to give the reality of life in a literary form, if only she had talent enough to produce it. She did not then know that she possessed the power of writing. So when she returned to Stockholm she tried to persuade me to undertake the romance. At that time I had begun a book called "Utomkring-äktenskap," which was to be the history of old maids; of those who, for one reason or another, had never been called upon to become the head of a family. Their thoughts, their ideas of love and marriage, the interests and struggles of their lives, were to be described. In a word, it was to be the romance of women who are commonly believed to have no romance at all. A sort of counterpart to "Mandvolk," in which Garborg tells how bachelors live. I wished to describe the life of the lonely women of my day. I had collected materials and types, and was much interested in my design.

Then Sonya appeared with her idea; and so great was her influence upon me, so great her power of persuasion, that I forsook my own child in order to adopt hers. A few letters I wrote to a mutual friend at this time will best describe the hot enthusiasm with which this new project had inspired both Sonya and myself.

*"February 2, 1887.*

"I am now writing a new novel, entitled 'Utomkring-äktenskap.' Only fancy! I am so deep in it that the outside world, the world which is unconnected

with my work, no longer exists for me. The state, physical and mental, in which one finds oneself when writing something new, is wonderful. A thousand doubts as to its merits, and as to one's own value, assail one. In the depths of one's heart there is the joy of possessing a secret world of one's very own, in which one is at home, and the outworld becomes a shadow. . . . In the midst of all this I have a new idea. Sonya and I have got an inspiration. We are going to write a drama in two parts, which will occupy two evenings. That is to say, the idea is hers; and I am to carry it out, and fill up the plot. I think the idea very original. The first portion will show 'How it was,' and the second 'How it might have been.' In the first every one is unhappy, because, in real life, people generally hinder rather than further each other's happiness. In the second, the same personages assist each other, form a little ideal community, and are happy. Do not mention this to any one. I really do not know more of Sonya's idea than this mere sketch. To-morrow she is going to tell me her plot, and I shall be able to judge whether there be any dramatic possibilities in it. You will laugh at me for thus anticipating. I always do the *finale* from the *start*. I already see Sonya and myself collaborating in a work which will have a world-wide success, at least in this world, and perhaps in another. We are quite foolish about it. If we could only do it, it would reconcile us to everything. Sonya would forget that Sweden is the greatest *Philistia* on earth, and would no longer complain that she is wasting the best years of her life here. And I—well, I should

forget all that I am brooding over. You will of course exclaim : What children you are ! Yes, thank God ! that is just what we are. But fortunately there exists a realm better than all the kingdoms of earth, a kingdom of which we have the key—the realm of the imagination, where he who will may rule, and where everything is precisely as you wish it to be. But perhaps Sonya's plot, which was at first intended for a novel, will not do for a drama, and I could not write a *novel* upon some one else's plan, for in a novel you are in much closer relation to your work than in a drama."

I wrote on February 10th :—

"Sonya is overjoyed at this new project, and the fresh possibility in her life. She says she now understands how a man grows more and more deeply in love with the mother of his children. Of course, *I* am the mother, because I am to bring this mental offspring into the world ; and she is so devoted to me that it makes me happy to see her beaming eyes. We enjoy ourselves immensely. I do not think two women have ever enjoyed each other's society so much as we do—and we shall be the first example in literature of women-collaborators. I have never been so kindled by an idea as by this one. As soon as Sonya told me of it, it ran through me like lightning down a conductor. I was thunderstruck ! She told me her plot on the 3rd, but it had a Russian *mise en scène*. When she left me, I sat up half the night in the dark in my rocking-chair, and when I went to bed the whole plot lay clear before me. On Friday I talked it over with Sonya, and on

Saturday I began to write. Now the whole first portion, a prologue and five acts, is sketched out. That is to say, I did it in five days, working only two hours a day, for when working at high pressure one cannot sustain it long. I have never done anything so quickly. Generally I contemplate an idea for months, even for years, before I begin to write."

*" April 21st.*

"The most pleasant thing about this work is, as you will have noticed, that I admire it so much! This is the result of collaboration. I believe in it because it is Sonya's idea, for naturally it is much easier for me to believe that she is inspired, than to believe such a thing of myself. She, on the other hand, admires my work, and the spirit and artistic form which I give to it. It would be impossible to have a better arrangement. It is delightful to be able to admire one's own work without conceit. I have never felt so much confidence or so little misgiving. If we fail, I think we must commit suicide! . . . You wish to know Madame Kovalevsky's share in the work. It is quite true that she has not written a single sentence. But she has not only originated the whole, but has also thought out the contents of each act. She has given me besides several psychological traits for the building up of the characters. We read daily what I have done, and she makes remarks and offers suggestions. She asks to hear it over and over again, as children ask for their favourite tales. She thinks nothing in all the world could be more interesting."



On March 9th we read the play aloud for the first time to our intimate friends. Up to that moment our illusion and joy had been continually rising higher and higher. Sonya had such overwhelming fits of exultation that she was obliged to go out into the forest to shout out her delight under the open sky. Every day, when we had finished our work, we took long walks in *Lill Fans'* wood, close to our homes in the town. There Sonya jumped over stones and hillocks; took me in her arms and danced about; exclaiming that life was beautiful, and the future fascinating and full of promise! She cherished the most exaggerated hopes of the success of our drama. She fancied it would march in triumph from capital to capital in Europe. Such a new and original idea could not but prove a triumph in literature. "This is how it might have been." It is a dream which every one dreams; and seen in the objective light lent by the stage, it could not fail to prove entrancing. The very essence of the plot was the glorification of love as the only important thing in life; and the social community of the future lay in the vista it opened up, a community in which all should live for all, even as every two should live for each other. In this there was much of Sonya's own deepest feelings and her ideal of happiness.

The motto of the first part was to be, "What shall it profit a man if he gain the whole world and lose his own soul?" and of the second part, "He who loses his life shall save it."

But after the first reading to our friends, the work entered into a new phase. Up to then we had seen it *as it might have been* rather than as it was. Now all

the faults and shortcomings of the work, which had been written in such feverish haste, became apparent. And then began the tedious process of revision.

During the whole of that winter, Sonya could not bring herself to think of her great mathematical work, though the date of the competition for the *Prix Bordin* was already fixed. She ought to have been working for it with the utmost diligence. Mittag Leffler, who always felt a kind of responsibility for her, and knew that it was of the greatest importance to her to gain the prize, was in despair when, each time he called upon her, he found her embroidering in her drawing-room. Just then she had a perfect mania for needle-work. Like the Ingeborg of ancient romance, weaving the deeds of her heroes, so she embroidered in silk and wool the drama she could not indite with pen and ink. While her needle mechanically went in and out, her imagination was at work, and one scene after the other was pictured in her mind.

I, for my part, worked with the pen, and when we found that needle and pen had arrived at the same result, our joy was great. It certainly reconciled us to the differences of opinion to which we were sometimes led, when our imaginations worked in opposite directions. But this more frequently took place during revision, than in the first draft of our play. Many were the crises through which the drama passed at this period.

The following little note from Sonya is in answer to some communication from me on one of these occasions :

“ My poor child ! how often it has hovered between life and death ! What has happened now ? Have you

been inspired, or the reverse? I am inclined to think that you wrote to me as you did out of pure wickedness, so that I might lecture badly to-day! How can you imagine that I can think about my lecture when I know that my poor little bantling is going through such a dangerous crisis! I am glad I have played the part of father, so that I can feel what poor men must suffer from this miserable necessity of revision. I wish I could see Strindberg, and shake hands with him for once! . . .”

I wrote about our drama on the 1st of April to a friend:—

“I have tried to introduce a little change into the method of our work. To Sonya’s great despair I have forbidden her my study until I have rewritten the whole of the second part of the play. I was too much interrupted and worried before by the incessant collaboration. I lost both the survey of the whole, and all interest and intimate sympathy with my characters. The desire for solitude which is so strong in me has been denied me. My personality has been merged in Sonya’s by her powerful influence, and still her individuality has not had full expression. The whole strength of my working-power lies in solitude, and this is a chief objection to collaboration even with such a sympathetic nature as Sonya’s. She is the complement of my nature. She is ‘Alice’ in the ‘Struggle for Happiness,’ who cannot create anything nor embrace anything with her whole heart, unless she can share it with another. Everything she has produced in mathematical work has been influenced by some one

else, and even her lectures are only successful when Gösta is present."

Sonya often jestingly acknowledged this dependence on her surroundings, and once wrote a note to my brother, saying :—

"DEAR PROFESSOR,—Shall you come to my lecture to-morrow? Do not, if you are tired. I will try to lecture as well as if you were there."

Once, when I had sent her some birthday wishes in rhyme, she replied in the following verses, characteristic of herself, in which, as often before, she terms herself a chameleon—

"The changeful chameleon as every one knows,  
As long as he sits alone in his nook,  
Is ugly and dull and grey in his look ;  
But in a good light how brightly he glows.

"No beauty has he, but he always reflects  
What around him exists of beautiful hue.  
He can shimmer alike in gold, green, or blue,  
And of all his friends' hues there is none he rejects.

"In this creature, meseems, my likeness I see,  
For, dearest of friends, wherever you go  
I go in your steps ; for it is aye so,  
That I can't stay behind, nor be turned back from thee.

"To a friend such as you all my reverence is due,  
You write and you paint and you draw and what not.  
These things are to me but rubbish and rot,  
But, oh mercy on me ! you *poetize* too !"

In the character of "Alice," Sonya, as I have already remarked, thought to reproduce herself. Indeed, some

of the sentences in the book are so characteristic of her that they are almost reproductions of words which she actually spoke. In the great scene with Hjalmar (1st part, act iii. sc. 2), she has tried to give expression to her own ardent desire for tenderness, and union with another ; to her despairing feeling of loneliness, and the peculiar want of self-confidence which was always aroused in her when she felt herself less beloved than she desired.

“ Alice ” says : “ I am well accustomed to see others more beloved than myself. At school it was always said that I was the most gifted of the pupils, but I felt the irony of fate which bestowed upon me so many gifts only to make me feel what I might have been to others. But no one cared for my affection : I do not ask for much—very little—just sufficient to prevent any one from intervening betwixt me and the one I love. I have all my life wished to be first with some one. . . . Let me only show you what I can be when I am loved ! Poor me ! I am not, after all, utterly without resources. Look at me ! Am I handsome ? Yes, if I am loved. Then I become beautiful, not otherwise ! Am I good ? Yes ! if any one is fond of me I am goodness itself ! Am I unselfish ? I can be so utterly unselfish that my every thought is bound up in another ! ”

Thus touchingly and passionately could the admired and celebrated Sonya Kovalevsky entreat for a devotion which she never received. Not once was she the first nor the only one with any person, though she longed so passionately for this boon, and though one would have imagined she possessed all the gifts which could win and preserve such love.

"Alice" desires to participate in all "Karl's" interests. She grows bitter when, for various reasons, he draws back from her. She will not listen to reason. She tries to force him to put aside all other considerations and be true both to himself and his calling, and to his love. This is Sonya through and through.

When, in the second part of the drama, "Alice" breaks violently with her past life, and sacrifices riches and position to live and work with "Karl" in a garret, it is again Sonya as she pictured to herself what she would have been had she had the good luck to have such a choice. I do not doubt that if she had written the scene in which "Karl's" happiness is depicted, it would have been stronger, and have received a more personal and warmer colouring than is now the case.

"Alice's" dreams about the People's Palace at Herrhamra and about the great Labour Association; her remark "How different it would have all been had we received the same education, and had the same social traditions, so as to form a band of comrades," describe also Sonya's dreams, and are her own identical words.

Sonya idealised the Socialism of the future, and often described, in glowing and eloquent words, a happy commonwealth in which every one felt bound to each other by a common lot; a commonwealth in which there were no opposing interests; where the happiness of one would be the happiness of all; the sufferings of one the sufferings of all.

After her death, a friend of hers told me that once, when her husband telegraphed to Sonya that he believed

one of his speculations had resulted in a vast fortune, she immediately planned a socialistic community. It was her favourite dream, and she sought to give expression to it in the second part of the drama, the "Struggle for Happiness." Her dream was of both personal happiness and the happiness of mankind in general.

It is a pleasure to me to quote some sympathetic words of Hermann Bang, in a short sketch which he wrote of her whom we have lost, and published in a Danish review. Speaking of the above-mentioned drama, he says :—

"I admit that I love this strange play, which, with mathematical exactness, depicts the almighty power of love—and proves that love, and love alone, is everything in life, and alone decides growth or decay. In love alone lies development and strength, and alone through love can duty be fulfilled."

No one could have better formulated than in the above words the essence of the dramas which were the "confession" of Sonya's life. It only grieves me that they were written too late for her to feel the joy of being so fully understood.

With her characteristic wish to explain scientifically all the phenomena of life, Sonya had also invented a whole theory to account for the idea of this double drama. She wrote the outline of an unfinished prologue, which, even now and in spite of its fragmentary form, will, like everything which fell from her pen, be read with interest. She sent it to me accompanied by the following lines :—

“DEAR CARLOT,—I cannot help it. I cannot make it any better. But if you can link my stray thoughts together, it is well. If you cannot, we must let the book appear without a prologue. If any one attacks us we can explain later. Your SONYA.”

The prologue ran thus :—

“Every one, perhaps, has at one time or another given his imagination play, and pictured how different his life would have been had he acted differently at some decisive moment. In everyday life one often realises that one is the slave of outward circumstance. The even tenor of everyday life binds one with a thousand invisible links. Every one fills a given sphere in life. Every one has certain definite duties which are fulfilled almost automatically without any overstrain of energies. It matters little whether to-morrow one is a little better or a little worse, a little stronger or a little weaker, or a little more or less gifted than to-day. One cannot divert the current of one’s life from the channel it has taken, without, at the same time, presupposing the possession of qualities so unlike those which one really has, that it is impossible, except in a dream, to imagine oneself possessed of them without losing one’s feeling of identity. But when remembering certain moments in one’s life, the case is altogether different. At those moments the illusions of free-will become strangely intense. One fancies that if one could have tried a little harder, had been cleverer or more decided, one might have turned one’s destiny into another channel. On much the same ground stands our belief



in miracles. None but a mad person can think of asking the Creator to change the great laws of nature, to awaken, for instance, the dead. But I should like to put a test-question to orthodox people. Have they never, at any time, asked for a small change in the course of events, such, for instance, as recovery from sickness? Often a small miracle seems so much easier than a great one, and it requires quite an effort of the mind to realise that both are precisely alike. So it is with our thoughts about ourselves. It is almost impossible for me to realise what I should feel if I woke one morning with a voice like Jenny Lind's, with a body supple and strong as \* \* \* or with a \* \* \* ; but I can easily imagine that my complexion is \* \* \*. It is just such a critical moment which the authors attempt to describe in these dramas. 'Karl,' according to their idea, is one and the same person in either play, only gifted with such slight differences of character as one can easily imagine without losing the sense of individuality. In ordinary life such differences would scarcely be noticeable. Under most circumstances they would have no influence on the decision between two actions. Suppose, for instance, that all had gone well with our hero and heroine, that the father had lived a couple of years longer ; in that case 'Karl,' as described in either drama, would have had no different fate. The divergence of life under such circumstances would have been so small that it would not have affected the main current of events. But, as it was, a decisive moment arrived at a time that two different duties seemed to call in two different directions, and it was the slight

difference in character, above alluded to, that decided the choice of opposite ways, and, once made, caused their fates to diverge without ever meeting again. Or let us choose an example from mechanics. Think for a moment of a common pendulum, or, if you prefer it, a small heavy ball hanging, by a very slight but supple string, from a nail. If you give the ball a little touch, it will swing to one side, describe a given arc of a circle, rise to a given height, and return again, but not to stop at the starting-point; it swings to about the same height on the opposite side, and continues to oscillate for some time. Had the original impulse been a little stronger, the ball would have swung higher, and the rest of the movement would have been on the same scale. But if the original impulse has been so strong as to allow the ball to pass the highest point which the length of string permits, the ball will not swing as before, but will continue its course on the other side of the periphery, and in this case the movement would be utterly changed in character.

“Two similar impulses, one of which, however, is weaker and the other stronger than a certain average force, always produce two entirely different results. In mechanics one is accustomed to study just the extreme and critical moments, and it is evident, that if you want to gain a clear idea about phenomena, it is all-important to study them when near the critical point of balance. The authors of the double drama have deemed it might be interesting to depict the effect of such a critical moment on two individuals, similar but not identical. In order to understand the play perfectly, ‘Karl,’ in the

two parts, must not be imagined as one and the same person. But the difference in the two characters, though the one is rather more ideal than the other, and better able to distinguish between important and unimportant things, is so small that in everyday life it would be almost impossible to distinguish one Karl from the other. Had all gone well, had his father lived till his son had an established position, no doubt the destiny of the two Karls would have been almost identical. They would have become celebrated as scientists, married at the same age, and made the same choice. But trial comes at the critical moment, and the almost imperceptible advantage which the one has over the others enables him to surmount the critical point, while the other falls heavily back."

The revision of the work took much longer than the original composition, and when Sonya and I separated for the summer, it was not yet concluded.

## CHAPTER XI.

### DISAPPOINTMENTS AND SORROW.

SONYA and I had intended to spend the summer together. The new literary partners, "Korvin-Leffler" (Sonya and her biographer), intended to go to Berlin and Paris in order to make acquaintances in the literary and theatrical world, which might prove useful to them later on when the offspring of their genius was ready to make its triumphal progress through the world.

But all these dreams fell to the ground.

It had been decided that we should start in the middle of May. We were as happy in the prospect as though the whole world of success and interest lay safely before us, when once more sad news from Russia frustrated all our plans. Sonya's sister was again dangerously ill. Her husband had been forced to return unexpectedly to Paris. There was no help for it; Sonya was obliged to take a sorrowful journey to a painful sick-bed. Any thought of pleasure was out of the question, and all her letters of that summer show that she was in very bad spirits. She writes :—

"My sister continues in the same state as last winter.

She suffers much, and looks desperately ill. She has not strength enough to turn from side to side, but yet I think she is not quite without hope of recovery. She is so glad I am with her. She says constantly she must have died if I had refused to come. . . . I feel so depressed that I cannot write more to-day. The only thing that is pleasant is to think of our 'fairy dream' and of 'Væ Victis.' "

This alludes to the plan we had formed in the spring of uniting the works together. The "fairy dream" was mine, and was to be called "When Death Shall be no More." When I mentioned the idea to Sonya she seized upon it so vehemently, and worked it out in her imagination so fully, that she was a partner in its production. "Væ Victis" was *her* creation, and was to be a novel. Its idea and plot were very characteristic of her, but she did not think she could write it alone. She wrote to me :—

"You tell me I am of some importance in your life—and yet you have so much more than ever I had. Think, then, what you must be to me, who am so lonely, and who feel myself poor in affection and friendship."

Still later she wrote :—

"Have you never noticed that there are periods when everything in life, both for oneself and one's friends, seems to be covered as with a black veil? One hardly recognises one's dearest and nearest. The sweetest strawberries turn to dust in your mouth. The wood-fairy says that this always happens to little children who pay truant visits to his haunts. Perhaps we two had no permission to spend this summer together—

and yet we had worked so hard during last winter! I try, however, to make use of every moment I can spare. I think out my mathematical problem, and muse deeply upon ——e's disjointed treatise—so full as it is of genius. I am too depressed, and have no energy to do literary work. Everything seems so faded and uninteresting. At such moments mathematics are a relief. It is such a comfort to feel that there is another world outside oneself. One really does want to talk of something besides oneself, only you, my dear and precious friend, are always the same—and always dear. I can scarcely express in words how much I long for you. You are the dearest thing I possess, and our friendship must at least last all my life. I do not know what I should do without it."

Later on she wrote in French :—

"My brother-in-law has decided to remain in St. Petersburg till my sister is able to accompany him to Paris. I have thus sacrificed myself quite uselessly. If I knew you were free, I would join you in Paris, though I must say all this has quite taken away any wish to enjoy myself. I feel rather anxious to stay somewhere where I could write in peace. I have such a strong desire for some kind of work, either literary or mathematical. I want to lose myself in work, so as to forget myself and every one else. If you wanted to meet me as much as I want to meet you, I would go anywhere to join you. But if your summer is already, as is probable, planned out, I shall stay here, most likely, a couple of weeks and then return with Foufi to Stockholm, where I intend to live on the islands and to work with all my

might. I do not wish to make any arrangements for any pleasures. You know what a fatalist I am. I fancy I see in the stars that I am to expect no happiness this summer. It is better therefore to be resigned, and to use no more vain endeavours. . . . Yesterday, I wrote the beginning of 'Væ Victis.' *I shall most likely never finish it.*<sup>1</sup> Perhaps what I have written to-day may nevertheless be useful to you as material. In order to write about mathematics one must feel more at home than I do at this moment."

In a letter written later on when Sonya had settled down in the islands near Stockholm, she writes :—

"I enjoyed the last few weeks in Russia very much. I made some rather interesting acquaintances. But a conservative old mathematical pedant like me cannot write well away from home. So I returned to old Sweden with my books and my papers."

Later, from the same place :—

"I have been thinking a great deal about our firstborn. But, to tell the truth, I find very many faults in the poor little creature, especially in my share in its composition. As though in ridicule, fate has brought me into contact with three scientific men this year, all very interesting in different ways. One of them, in my opinion the least gifted, has already been successful. The other, who is full of genius in some ways and in others very *borné*, has just begun to struggle for fame. What the result will be I cannot say. The third, an interesting type, is already helplessly broken, mentally and physically, but most interesting for an author to study. The history

<sup>1</sup> The italics are the biographer's.

of these three men—in all its simplicity—seems to me much fuller than all we have written about ‘Karl’ and ‘Alice.’ In accordance with your brother’s wish, I have brought a volume of Runneberg’s poems to study here (‘Hanna,’ ‘Nadeschda,’ &c.), and I am now reading them. But I do not care for them much. They have all the same fault as Haydn’s ‘Creation.’ The *devil* is missing, and without some touch of this high power there is no harmony in this world.”

During this summer I received a jesting letter from Sonya, which I quote because it gives a fair sample of her satirical mood. As she did not shine in the habit of order in the keeping of her papers and other matters, she often received from me, in confidential letters, some sharp admonitions to be careful not to let such letters lie about. She consequently wrote me the following note :—

“POOR ANNA CHARLOTTE!—It seems to me that it is becoming a chronic malady with you to think that your letters are going to fall into other hands. The symptoms are getting more and more serious each time! I think any one who writes such an unintelligible hand as yours ought not to be uneasy about this matter. I assure you that, with the exception of the few people personally interested in what you write, you would hardly find any one who would have the patience to decipher your *pattes-de-mouche*. As to your last letter, it was of course lost in the post. When I finally did get it from the Dead Letter Office, I hastened to leave it open on the table



for the benefit of my maid and the whole G—— family. They all thought the letter rather well written, and that it contained rather interesting things.—To-day I intend to call on Professor Montan, in order to ask about translations from the Polish. I shall take your letter with me, and try my best to lose it in his reception room. I can do nothing better to make you a celebrity.

“Your devoted

SONYA.”

When we met in the autumn we began the final revision of our double drama. But the work was purely mechanical; all the joy, the illusion, the enthusiasm, had already vanished. By November the printing had begun, and we offered the work to the “Dramatic Theatre.”

The correction of the proofs occupied us till the winter. At Christmas the drama was published, and was cut to bits by Virsén and the Stockholm *Dagblad*, but shortly afterwards it was refused by the “Dramatic Theatre.” A note from Sonya on receiving the news of this check shows that she took it lightly:—

“What are you going to do now, you faithless, cruel mother? Divide the Siamese twins, and put asunder what nature has joined? You make me shudder. Strinberg was right in his opinion about woman; but in spite of this I will come to you this evening, you horrid creature!”

The fact was that we were rather indifferent as to the fate of the work now that we had done with it. We were so far alike that we only cared about “generations

yet unborn," and we were already dreaming of productions which were to have far better success. The difference between us was, that Sonya still clung with all her heart to the idea of collaboration, while in mine the idea was already dead, though I did not dare to acknowledge this to her. Who knows if it were not a secret craving to be once more mistress of my own thoughts and words which unconsciously contributed to the decision I now arrived at—that was, to go to Italy for the winter? This journey had been often discussed, but Sonya had always been against it as a treachery to our friendship. But that friendship, though in one way so precious to me and fecund with delight, now began to oppress me by its exactions. I mention the fact in order to throw light on the later tragedy of Sonya's love. Her idealistic nature sought for a completeness which life seldom gives, that perfect union of two souls which she never realised either in friendship or in love. Her friendship, as afterwards also her love, was tyrannical, in the sense that she would not suffer in any one she loved a feeling, an affection, or a thought, of which she was not the object. She wished to have such full possession of the person of whom she was fond as almost to exclude the possibility of individual life in that other person. Even in love, this is almost impossible, at least as regards two highly developed personalities, and naturally it is still more difficult in friendship. The very foundation of friendship must be the individual liberty of each friend.

To this peculiarity in Sonya is perhaps owing the fact that maternal love did not satisfy her craving for tenderness. A child does not love in the same way in

which it is loved. It does not enter into the interests of its parent. It takes more than it gives. Sonya desired and demanded self-sacrificing devotion.

I do not mean that she exacted more than she gave in her relations with those of whom she was fond. On the contrary, she gave full meed of sympathy, and was prepared to sacrifice herself to any extent. But she expected to get back as much as she gave. She wished to be met half-way ; and she considered herself of equal importance to her friend, as he or she was to her.

During this same autumn, besides literary disappointment, Sonya was called upon to bear a great and bitter sorrow. The sister to whose sick-bed she had so often hurried over land and sea, often sacrificing her own plans and wishes to the desire of being with her at the last, had been taken to Paris for an operation.

Sonya was at the time tied to the University by her lectures, but, had her sister sent for her, she would have gone even if it had cost her her professorship and livelihood. But she was told that there was no danger in the operation, and every hope of full recovery. She had already received news that the operation had been successful, when a telegram suddenly announced her sister's death. Inflammation of the lungs had supervened, and the weak state of the patient had caused her to sink almost immediately.

Sonya, as we learn in her "Sisters Rajevsky," had always loved this sister most dearly. To the sorrow of having lost her for ever, and of not being with her at the last, was added to her grief at the sad tragedy of Anyuta's life. She who had once been so brilliant, so

greatly admired, had been consumed by a most painful illness ; disappointed of everything she had hoped for ; unhappy in all her personal circumstances, hampered in her career as an author, and was now cut off by inexorable death in the very flower of her age ! To such a brooding nature as Sonya's all sufferings were magnified because she generalised them. Any misfortune which befell herself or those she loved became the misfortune of humanity. She not only bore her own sorrows, but those of the world at large.

It pained her much to think that with her sister's death the last link was broken which united her to the home of her childhood.

“ There is no one now who remembers me as the little Sonya,” she said. “ To all of you I am Madame Kovalevsky, the celebrated scientist. To no one am I any longer the little shy, reserved, neglected Sonya of my childhood.”

But the great self-command she possessed and the power of concealing her feelings enabled her to appear, in society, much the same as before. She did not even wear mourning. Her sister, like herself, had had a great aversion to crape, and Sonya considered it would be a false conventionality to mourn for her in that manner. But her inner anguish showed itself in intense irritability. She would cry at the least annoyance, for instance, if any one happened to tread on her foot, or if she tore her dress. She would burst into a flood of angry tears at the least contradiction. In analysing herself, as she always did, she said :—

“ My great sorrow, which I try to control, shows

itself in such petty irritability. It is the tendency of life in general to turn everything into pettiness, and one never has the consolation of a great and complete suffering."

Sonya hoped that her sister might somehow appear to her, either in dreams or in an apparition. She had all her life maintained that she believed in dreams as portents, as we have already learned from the friend of her youth, and she believed also in forebodings and revelations of other kinds.

She knew long before whether a year was to be lucky or unlucky. She knew that the year 1887 would bring her both a great sorrow and a great joy. She already foretold that the year 1888 would be one of the happiest of her life, and that 1890 would be the saddest. 1891 was to bring her the Dawn of Light—this dawn was that of death.

Sonya had always troubled dreams when any one whom she loved was suffering, or when something happened which would bring her sorrow. The last night before her sister's death she had very bad dreams—to her great astonishment, for she had just had good news. But when the telegram arrived announcing Anyuta's death, Sonya said she ought to have been prepared for it.

But the vision or apparition of her sister, which she expected and hoped for after death, never came.

## CHAPTER XII.

### TRIUMPH AND DEFEAT—ALL WON, ALL LOST.

I LEFT Sonya in January, 1888, and we did not meet again till September, 1889. Two years had not passed, yet both our lives during those months had gone through their most decisive crises. We met again like changed beings. We could not be as intimate as formerly, for each of us was engrossed in her own life's drama, and neither could speak to the other of the conflicts through which she had passed.

As it is partly the object of this Memoir to relate what Sonya said about herself, I shall, with regard to this last tragedy of her life, narrate only what she herself told me. It will naturally be imperfect and indefinite in detail, because she no longer allowed me to read her inmost heart.

Shortly after my departure, she had made the acquaintance of a man whom she said was, in her opinion, more full of genius than any one she had ever known. She had from the first been attracted to him by the strongest sympathy and admiration, which, little by little, had developed into passionate love. He, on his side, had admired her warmly, and had asked her to be his wife.

But she felt that he was drawn to her more by admiration than by love, and naturally refused to marry him. She now threw her whole soul into the endeavour to win him completely, and awaken in his soul the same devotion which she felt for him. In this struggle we have the story of her life during the long period in which we were separated. She worried herself and the man she loved with exactions. She made "scenes"; was jealous and irritable.

They parted several times in anger and bitterness, and then Sonya was torn to pieces by despair. They met again, forgave each other, and parted once more as violently as ever.

Her letters to me at this time show very little of her inner life. She was reserved by nature where her deepest feelings were concerned, and more especially when touched by sorrow. It was only under the influence of personal intercourse that she melted into confidence. It was only on my return to Sweden that I learned what I know of this portion of her life.

Shortly after my departure from Stockholm in 1888 she wrote :—

"This story about E." (referring to an incident in her circle in Stockholm) "inclines me to take up again, directly I regain my freedom, my first-born 'Privatdocenten.' I believe if I re-wrote it I could make something good of it. I really feel quite proud that while yet quite young I understood so well certain sides of human life. When I now analyse E.'s feelings to G., I feel I have depicted the relations between my 'Lecturer' and his professor admirably.

What a capital opportunity I shall have for preaching socialism! Or at least for developing the theory that the democratic but *not* socialistic state is the greatest horror possible."

Shortly after this she writes :—

"Thanks for your letter from Dresden. I am always so glad when I get a few lines from you, though your letter on the whole gave me a melancholy impression. What is to be done? Life is sad. One never gets what one likes, or what one thinks one needs. Everything else, but not just that one thing. Some one else will get the happiness I desire, and get it altogether unwished for. The service in Life's Banquet is badly managed. All the guests seem to get the portions destined for others. Nansen, at least, seems to have got the position he desired. He is so kindled with enthusiasm about his voyage to Greenland, that no 'sweetheart' could, in his eyes, be of any importance compared with it. So you must refrain from writing to him the brilliant idea which occurred to you. For I am afraid you do not know that not even the knowledge that ——— would keep him from visiting the souls of dead heroes which the Lapland Saga says hover above the icefields of Greenland. For my part, I work as hard as ever I can at my prize-treatise, but without any special enthusiasm or pleasure."

Sonya had shortly before made the acquaintance of Frithiof Nansen, while he had been in Stockholm. His whole personality and his bold enterprise had made a great impression on her. They had met only once, but they were so delighted with each other during that



one meeting, that later on they both thought it would have been possible, had nothing else intervened to dim the impression, that it might have deepened into something more decided and life-long.

In Sonya's next letter, in January, 1888, she writes again on the same subject :—

“I am at this moment under the influence of the most exciting book I have ever read. I got to-day from Nansen a little pamphlet with a short outline of his projected wanderings through the icefields of Greenland. I got quite depressed by it. He has just received a subscription of 5,000 kröner from a Danish merchant named Gamel, and I suppose no power on earth could now keep him back. The sketch is so interesting that I shall send it to you as soon as you forward me a definite address, but only on the understanding that I get it back immediately. When you have read it you will have a very fair idea of the man himself. To-day I had a talk with B. about him. B. thinks his works full of genius. He also thinks him much too good to risk his life in Greenland.”

In her next letter appears the first sign of the crisis now impending in her life. The letter is not dated, but was written in March of the same year. She had now made the acquaintance of the man who was to exercise an all-powerful influence on the rest of her career. She writes :—

“You also ask me other questions, which I do not even wish to answer to myself—so you must excuse me if I do not answer them to you. I am afraid of making

plans for the future. The only thing that unfortunately is certain, is that I must spend two months and a half at Stockholm. But perhaps it is just as well for me to realise how really I am alone in life."

I had written to Sonya that I had heard from some Scandinavians in Rome that Nansen had been already engaged for several years. In answer to this, I received the following merry letter :—

"DEAR ANNA CHARLOTTE,—

" 'Souvent femme varie,  
Bien fole est qui s'y fie.' "

If I had received your letter with its awful news a few weeks ago, it would no doubt have broken my heart. But now I confess, to my shame, that when I read your deeply sympathetic lines yesterday, I could not help bursting out into laughter. It was a hard day for me, for burly M. was leaving that evening. I hope some of the family have already told you of the change in our plans, so that I need not mention that subject to-day. On the whole, I think this change of plan good for me personally. For if burly M. had stayed longer, I do not know how I should have got on with my work. He is so great, so *gross-geschlagen* according to K.'s happy expression—that he really takes too much room up on the sofa and in one's mind. It is simply impossible for me, in his presence, to think of any one or anything else but him. During the ten days he spent in Stockholm we were constantly together, generally *tête-à-tête*, and spoke of scarcely anything but ourselves, and that with a frankness which would have

amazed you. Still I cannot, in spite of all this, analyse my feelings for him. I think I could best give my impressions of him in music set to Musset's incomparable words:—

‘Il est très joyeux—et pourtant très maussade ;  
 Détestable voisin—excellent camarade ;  
 Extrêmement futile—et pourtant très posé ;  
 Indignement naïf—et pourtant très blasé ;  
 Horriblement sincère—et pourtant très rusé.’

He is into the bargain a real Russian. He has more genius and originality in one of his little fingers than you could squeeze out of both yours put together, even if you put them under a hydraulic press.”

(The rest of the letter only contains the outlines of Sonya's plans for the summer's trip, which were not realised, so I only quote the most important parts of it.)

“I cannot believe I shall go to Bologna” (to the Jubilee, at which she had always intended to be present), “partly because such a journey, including dresses and everything, would be too expensive, and partly because all such celebrations are tedious and not at all to my taste. It is also very important that I should be in Paris for a short time. I intend to stay there from May 15th to June 15th. After that we shall come with burly Mr. M. to meet you in Italy, and, as far as I can see, shall certainly spend ten months there together. That is the chief thing, but *where* is a matter of detail which affects me less. I, for my part, propose the Italian lakes or Tyrol. But M. would prefer to make us accompany him to the Caucasus, *viâ* Constantinople.

I admit that this is very tempting, especially as he assures me that it would not be very expensive. But on that point I have my doubts, and I think it would be more suitable for us to keep to well-known and civilised countries. There is another reason, which, to my mind, is in favour of the first plan. I should like, during the summer, to write down some of my dreams and fancies, and you must also begin to work after three months' rest. This is only possible if we settle down in some quiet place and lead a regular idyllic life. I have never been so tempted to write romance as when with burly M. Despite his vast proportions, which, by the bye, are quite in keeping with the character of a Russian *boyar*, he is still the most perfect hero for a novel (a realistic novel, of course) that I have ever met with. I believe that he is also a good critic, with a spark of the sacred fire."

Nothing came of our plans for meeting that summer. Sonya joined her new Russian friend in London at the end of May, and later in the summer she went to the Harz mountains, and looked up Weierstrass in order to get his advice on the final editing of her work. She had sent it in the spring to the Academy in a half-finished condition, with a request to be allowed to send in a fuller definition of the problem before the awarding of the prize. The short letters which I received at this time show how feverishly she was at work during the whole spring. A note from Stockholm was addressed jointly to my brother and myself, as we were then together in Italy:—

“MY DEAR FRIENDS,—I have no time to write long letters. I am working as hard as I can, and indeed as hard as any one could. I do not yet know whether I shall have time to finish my treatise or not. I have come to a difficulty which I cannot yet get over.”

Towards the close of May, while on the way to London, she writes the following :—

“BELOVED ANNA CHARLOTTE,—Here I am in Hamburg, waiting for the train which is to take me to Flushing, and thence I go to London. You can hardly imagine what a delight it is to me to be mistress of myself and my thoughts once more, and not be obliged to concentrate myself forcibly on one subject, as was the case during the last few weeks.”

During her visit to the Harz mountains she often complained of the restriction her work exercised on her thoughts. There a group of younger mathematicians had gathered round the old veteran Weierstrass—Mittag Leffler, the Italian Volterra, the German Cantor, Schwartz, Hurvitz, Hettner, and others. Of course, among so many representatives of the same science, much interesting conversation took place, and Sonya grumbled that she was obliged to sit over her work instead of enjoying this interchange of thought. She was jealous of those who had more time to enjoy the inspiring suggestiveness of their honoured teacher's conversation.

Shortly after, she returned to Stockholm, and during

the autumn months she lived in a perpetual state of over-excitement and exertion, which broke down her health for a time.

This year, 1888, was, she had long been forewarned, to bring her to the summit of success and happiness. It bore within it, also, the germ of all the sorrows and misfortunes which were to break upon her with the new year. But that Christmas, at the solemn *séance* of the French Academy of Science, she received in person the *Prix Bordin*, the greatest scientific honour which any woman has ever gained ; one of the greatest honours, indeed, to which any one can aspire.

The man in whom she had found such "full satisfaction," as she declared, in whom she found all that her soul thirsted for, all that her heart desired, was present on that occasion. At that supreme moment, all she had dreamt of as the highest joy of life became hers. Hers was the highest acknowledgment of her genius—hers, the object of her truest devotion.

But she was the princess into whose cradle the fairies had placed every good gift, but always to be neutralised by the baneful gift of the single jealous fairy. She indeed gained all that she most desired, but it came at the wrong moment, and under circumstances which embittered it to her. In the midst of her intense striving for the prize which her scientific friends knew was a matter of honour for her to win, there had come into her life this new element ; an element for which she had often longed.

During the last few months before the essay was despatched to Paris she had lived in a frightful state

of excitement, torn by two conflicting claims—she was at once a woman and a scientist. Physically she nearly killed herself by working exclusively at night; spiritually she was racked by the two great claims now pressing upon her: the one requiring her to finish an intellectual problem, the other demanding her self-surrender to the new and powerful passion which possessed her. It is a conflict which every one must undergo in some degree who gives himself up to creative work. This is one of the strongest objections that can be made to intellectual talent in woman, because the exercise of it prevents that self-surrender in matters of affection, which every man demands of his wife.

For Sonya it was in any case a terrible trial to feel that her work stood in the way between her and the man to whom she would fain have devoted her every thought. She felt dimly, though she never gave it expression in words, that *his* love was chilled by seeing her, just when they were most closely drawn together, engrossed by a scheme which perhaps seemed to him a mere ambitious striving for honour and distinction, a mere outcome of vanity.

Such an honour naturally does not increase a woman's value in men's eyes. A singer or an actress, covered with laurels, will often make a triumphal entry to a man's heart, as Sonya herself remarked. So also may a social beauty who wins admiration by her charms. But the woman who studies seriously until her eyes are red and her brow furrowed, in order to win an academic prize—what is there in *that* to catch a man's fancy? Sonya said to herself, with bitterness and irony, that

she had acted unwarrantably! She ought, she thought, to have sacrificed her ambition and vanity for that which was so much more to her than worldly success. But still she could not do it. To withdraw at the very verge of success would have been to give the world a striking proof of woman's incompetence. The force of circumstances and her own nature carried her forward to the goal she had set before her. Had she known what the delay which had taken place in finishing her treatise was to cost her, she would never have wasted precious time in writing "A Struggle for Happiness," the composing of which made her own struggle for happiness so much more difficult than it might otherwise have been.

However, she arrived in Paris, and received the prize. She was the heroine of the hour. Speeches were made in her honour which she was obliged to acknowledge in like manner. She was interviewed and received visits all day long, and had scarcely a moment to give to the man who had come thither in order to be present at her triumph. In this way both the happiness of her love and the triumph of her ambition were spoiled. Separately they would have given her great joy. Her tragic destiny gave her all she desired in life, but under such circumstances that, as she herself complained, the sweetness was turned to gall.

But perhaps this was also due to the peculiarity of her nature, divided always between the world of thought and that of feeling; between her need of yielding herself to another, and her need of having herself in



her own keeping. This eternal dualism enters of necessity into the life of every woman of genius, as soon as love arrives and makes itself felt as a force.

To this were joined the complications engendered by Sonya's jealous tyrannical temperament. She exacted from her lover such absolute devotion and self-abnegation, as must have surpassed the powers of all but a few very exceptional men. On the other hand, she could not decide to cut her life in two at one blow, surrender her work, and become merely a wife.

On the impossibility of reconciling such different claims, their love suffered its final shipwreck.

About this time Sonya met in Paris a cousin whom she had not seen since she was a girl. He was a rich proprietor in the interior of Russia, where he led a happy life with a beloved wife and large family. In his youth he had had certain artistic inclinations which he had afterwards abandoned. He and Sonya used to discuss ambition. Now he beheld her in her full triumph, surrounded and fêted as the heroine of the day, and that in Paris, where any personal triumph becomes more intoxicating than elsewhere. No wonder a faint feeling of bitterness came over Sonya's cousin when he thought of his own life. She had won all of which they had dreamed. But he! He had sunk into a mere insignificant country gentleman, and the happy father of a family.

Sonya looked at his handsome, well-preserved face, with its calm and restful expression; she heard him speak of his wife and children, and thought that he

at least had found happiness. He did not wear himself out with complicated questions ; he took life simply as he found it.

She wished to found a story on this meeting and this motive. She told me so, and I regret deeply that she found no time to write it when full of her personal philosophy.

The following is a letter of this period addressed to my brother :—

“DEAR GÖSTA,—I have just this minute received your kind letter. I am so grateful for your friendship. Yes, I believe it is the only good thing life has really given me! How ashamed I am to have done so little to prove to you how much I value it. But forgive me. I am not at this moment mistress of myself. I receive so many letters of congratulation, and, by a strange irony of fate, I have never felt so miserable in my life. Unhappy as a dog ; no—I hope for the dog’s sake it is *not* so unhappy as human beings can be. *Comme les hommes, et surtout comme les femmes peuvent l’être.* But perhaps I shall grow more sensible by and by. I shall at least try. I will attempt to begin a new work, and interest myself in practical things. I shall of course be led entirely by your advice, and do whatever you wish. At this moment all I can manage to do is to keep my sorrows to myself. I take care to make no mistakes in society, nor give people any opportunity of talking about me. I have been invited out this week to Bertrand’s and to Menabrea’s ; and afterwards to Count Levenhaupt, to meet

Prince Eugén, &c. But to-day I feel too low to be able to describe all these dinner parties to you. I will try to do so another time.

“When I return to my rooms I do nothing but walk up and down. I have no appetite, neither can I sleep. I do not know whether I should care to go away. I shall decide that next week. Good-bye for to-day, dear Gösta. Keep your friendship for me. I am in sore want of it ; that much I may say. Kiss Foufi for me, and thanks for all your care of her.

“Yours most affectionately,

“SONYA.”

She decided to leave Paris in the spring, and wrote to me from there in French :—

“Let me first congratulate you on the joy which has come to you. What a happy ‘child of the sun’ you are to have found so great, so deep a love at your age ! That is really a fate worthy of such a lucky soul as you are. But it has always been so. You *were* ‘*happiness*,’ and I am, and most likely shall always be, ‘*struggle*.’ It is strange, but the longer I live the more I am governed by the feeling of fatalism, or rather *determinism*. The feeling of free-will, said to be innate in man, fails me more and more. I feel so deeply that, however much I may struggle, I cannot change my fate one iota. I am now almost resigned. I work because I feel I am at the worst. I can neither wish nor hope for anything. You have no idea how indifferent I am to everything.

“But enough about me ! Let us talk of something

else. I am glad you like my Polish story.<sup>1</sup> I need not tell you how delighted I should be if you would translate it into Swedish. But I should reproach myself with taking up your time, which you might employ to so much better purpose. I have also written a long story about my sister's childhood, her youth, and her first steps in a literary career; and about our connection with Dostojevsky. Just now I am busy at 'Væ Victis,' which, perhaps, you remember. I have also another story in hand, 'Les Revenants,' which also takes up much time. I should much like you to give me full powers to dispose of our 'child,' 'When death shall be no more.' It is *my* favourite of all our children, and lately I have often thought of it. I have found an admirable frame for it—Pasteur's Institute. I have lately got, quite accidentally, to know all about the departments of that Institute; and it seems to me peculiarly well suited to a dramatic setting. I have for some weeks been turning over in my mind a plan for making our 'child' happy. But it is so bold and fantastic that I do not like to carry it out without full powers from you."

In August she wrote again from Sèvres, where she stayed, during the summer months, with her little daughter and some Russian friends:—

"I have just received a letter from Gösta, telling me that I shall perhaps meet you on my return to Sweden. I must say I am selfish enough to rejoice with all my heart. I am so impatient to know what

<sup>1</sup> A memory of her youth, written in French, and translated later on in the *Nordisk Tidschrift*.

you are now writing. On my part I have a great deal I should like to show you and tell you. Up to now, thank God, I have never been at a loss for a subject for a novel. And at this moment my head is in a ferment with plots. I have finished 'The Sisters Rajevsky'; I have written the preface to 'Væ Victis,' and I have commenced two stories—who knows when I shall have time to finish them!"

## CHAPTER XIII.

### LITERARY ENDEAVOURS—TOGETHER IN PARIS.

IN the middle of September, 1889, when Sonya returned to Stockholm, we met again after a separation of nearly two years. I found her very much changed. Her brilliant wit and badinage had disappeared. The furrow on her brow had deepened; her expression was gloomy and abstracted. Even her eyes had lost the marvellous lustre which was their chief charm. They were now dull and sometimes squinted slightly.

Sonya succeeded in hiding from her less intimate friends her real feelings, and, to them, appeared much the same as before. She even said that, when she had felt more depressed than usual in society, people would remark of her that Madame Kovalevsky had been really quite brilliant. But to us, who knew her well, the change was only too apparent. She had lost all wish for society, not only as regards strangers, but even for that of her friends. She could not remain idle for a moment, and only found peace in hard work. She recommenced her lectures from a sense of duty, but had no longer any real interest in them.

It was in literary composition that she now sought an outlet for the increasing restlessness which consumed her. This was partly because such work had points of contact with her own inner life ; and partly because she had not yet recovered from the overstrain she had undergone, which prevented her from resuming her scientific studies. She now began again to revise her "Væ Victis," and write the preface. The book had been translated from the Russian MS., and published in the literary calendar "Nornan" for that year. In it there is a short passage depicting the struggle of nature, the awakening from the long winter sleep in spring. But it is not, as usual in such compositions, written in praise of Spring. On the contrary, it is the calm restful *Winter* which is here idealised. Spring is depicted as a brutal, sensual being, which awakens great hopes only to disappoint them.

Sonya intended this novel to be part of her own inner history. Few women have become more celebrated, or been so surrounded by outer success. Yet, in this novel, she depicts the story of defeat, because she felt herself defeated, in spite of her triumphs, in her struggle for happiness ; and her sympathies were rather for those who succumb than for those who conquer.

This deep feeling for suffering was very characteristic of her. It was not the ordinary "charity" of the Christian. It was that she made the sufferings of others her own ; not with the superiority which strives to console, but with the sympathy that is the outcome of despair ; despair at the cruelty of life. Sonya

always said that what she most loved in the Greek religion, in which she had been educated, and for which she never quite lost her veneration, was its sympathy for suffering, which is much more emphasised in this than in any other religious community. In literature she was always most touched by this note in any writer, and it is in Russian literature that the feeling has found its most beautiful expression.

Sonya now began to put the finishing touches to the books which contained the memories of her childhood, and which Fröken Hedberg translated from the Russian.

In the evenings, in our own family circle, these books were read aloud chapter after chapter as soon as they were translated. In spite of the melancholy mood which had overcome both Sonya and myself, that autumn was still full of interest in consequence of her great eagerness for work ; an eagerness felt by both, though we were no longer in collaboration.

During October and November I wrote five new tales, which, together with Sonya's, were read aloud in the family circle. We were very happy in each other's work. We went together to the publishers, and our books—Sonya's "Sisters Rajeovsky," and my "From Life ; No. III.," appeared simultaneously. It was a faint reflection of our work together in earlier days.

Sonya had intended to publish her memoirs in a definite autobiographical form, and it was in that style that she wrote them in Russian. But as soon as we had read the first chapter, we dissuaded her from the



attempt. We considered that, in a small community such as ours, it would shock people if a still unknown writer sat down and wrote, without disguise, all the most intimate details of her family life for the benefit of the public.

The whole was written in Russian, and several chapters were already translated, when she turned the autobiography into a novel called "Tanja." From that moment we had little or nothing to object to, and could only express our astonishment on finding that, at one stroke, our friend had become a finished artist.

While our books were going through the press, we once more attempted a work in collaboration.

Sonya, during her last visit to Russia, had found, in her sister's desk, the MS. of a drama, which Anyuta had written many years previously. It had met with warm approval from some of the best literary critics in Russia, but it was not ready for the stage. It contained scenes full of inspiration. The delineation of character was admirable, and throughout there lay in it a wonderfully deep, melancholy spirit. It had, besides, a very strong Russian local-colouring.

When Sonya read it to me in full translation, I at once felt that it was worth revising in order to bring it out on the Swedish stage. Sonya, moreover, ever since her sister's death, had felt a keen desire to make some of her works known. It pained her to remember how Anyuta's rich gifts had been repressed in their development, and she found a kind of consolation in the thought of obtaining for her sister at least a posthumous fame. We set to work. We discussed scene after scene, act

after act, and agreed what alterations were necessary. Sonya sketched the drama in Russian, and added nearly a whole act, thus making her first attempt in dramatic dialogue. She then dictated it to me in her broken Swedish, and I put it into shape as I wrote it down.

But it seemed as though no form of collaboration could succeed. We read the new drama to a select circle of literary and artistic friends in Sonya's red drawing-room. It had, after much deliberation, received the somewhat clumsy title of "Till and After Death." The opinion of our friends was not very encouraging. They found the drama too monotonously gloomy. They did not think it would be successful on the stage.

Meanwhile Sonya and I had each many personal cares, and now that Christmas was approaching we had to consider where we should spend that holiday. Neither of us had the heart to spend it at home. Stockholm was hateful to us both, but for different reasons. So we finally decided to try and realise our old plan of travelling together as we had never yet managed to do. After many suggestions of places, we decided on going to Paris. There, we thought, we could, more easily than anywhere, come into contact with literary and theatrical people. And we hoped to divert our thoughts from our own personal worries. We left Stockholm in the beginning of December.

But how different was this journey from what we had been used to plan! We neither of us expected to *enjoy* this journey. It was only intended as morphia—to deaden our thoughts. We sat silent and sad,

staring at each other, and feeling that our individual melancholy was increased by that which each saw in the face of the other. We spent a couple of days at Copenhagen, and called on some friends and acquaintances. They were all astonished at the change in Sonya. She had grown much thinner. Her face was much wrinkled, her cheeks hollow, and she had, besides, a bad cough, caught during the influenza epidemic which had raged in Stockholm. She took no care of herself, and it was a wonder that she recovered at all. One day, when she had received a letter which excited her, she got out of bed, where she lay in a high fever, and, half-dressed and in thin shoes, went out into the cold wet snow. She came back drenched to the skin, and sat without changing her clothes till nightfall. "You see," she said to me when I entreated her to take more care, "I am not even happy enough to take a serious illness. Do not be frightened. Life will spare me. I should only be too happy to have done with it, but such happiness will not fall to my lot."

While, as we travelled through from Copenhagen to Paris, *viâ* Gedser, Warnemunde, Hamburg, we sat together motionless in the railway carriage, Sonya said over and over again :

"Just think if the train which is passing should run off the line and crush us ! Railway accidents happen so often. Why cannot one happen now ? Why cannot fate take pity on me ?"

During the long days and nights she spoke unceasingly of her own life, her own fate. She talked more to herself than to me. She went through a kind

of self-examination, as though seeking the reason why she must be always suffering and unhappy; why could she never get what she wanted—illimitable love—“Why, why can no one love me?” she cried, again and again. “I could be more to a man than most women—and why are the most insignificant women loved while I remain unloved?”

I tried to explain. She asked too much. She was not one to be content with the kind of love that may fall to any woman's lot. She was too introspective. She brooded too much about herself, and had not the kind of devotion which forgets itself. Her devotion demanded as much as it gave, and unceasingly worried itself and its object by considering and weighing all that it received.

How melancholy was our arrival at Paris! We had often pictured it as so bright! We drove straight from the station to Nilsson's Library, in order to ask for letters which we were expecting with impatience. They had arrived, and gave us sufficient food for thought. I had only been once before in Paris, and then only for a short time on my return from London in 1884. I asked Sonya about the palaces and squares which we drove past on our way to the hotel near the *Place de l'Etoile*, but she answered impatiently, “I do not know. I know nothing about these places. I cannot tell which is which.”

The Tuileries, the Place de la Concorde, the Palais d'Industrie, awakened no recollections in her, nor made any impression. Paris, great and gay, which had always been her favourite city, the place she would have chosen

to live in had she had the choice, was to her at this moment a dead mass of dull buildings. She had not received a letter from *him*, and only one from a friend of his whose news was anything but satisfactory—that was why Paris was dull.

We spent some feverish, strangely restless weeks in the place where, the year before, Sonya had received so much adulation and honourable distinction. But now Paris seemed to have forgotten her. She had had her “quart d’heure.”

We looked up our friends, made new acquaintances, and ran about from morning to night, but not as tourists. Of the city and its sights I saw nothing ; not even the Eifel Tower. We were only interested in studying people and theatres, trying to get into the whirlpool, and to find the necessary stimulus for our flagging literary interest.

The circle of our acquaintance was varied, and on some days curiously mixed. All nations and all types were represented in our rooms. A Russo-Jewish family, and a French banker’s family, lived in the palace of a former aristocrat. The footmen wore knee-breeches and silk stockings, and everything was in keeping with the traditions of aristocratic pomp. Among our friends, besides, were Swedish and Russian scientists, some of the latter being ladies ; Polish emigrants and conspirators ; French literary men and women ; and several Scandinavians : Jonas Lie, Walter Runneberg, Knut Wicksell, Ida Erikson, and other scientists, artists, and authors.

Sonya, of course, called on some of the leading mathematicians in Paris, and received invitations from

them. But at the moment her head was full of anything but science, and consequently she was less interested than usual in such society. Among the interesting figures in our circle I must specially mention the afterwards famous Padlevsky. He was a sickly young man, about whom still lingered the air of a prison. He spoke French badly. He at once interested us by the vehemence and enthusiasm with which he embraced revolutionary principles. He seemed to us to be boiling with impatience to be once more in danger. He evidently loved martyrdom; and imprisonment, in which state he had passed so much of his youth, had no horrors for him. His father had been executed during the Polish revolution; his brother had died a horrible death in the Peter-Paul Fortress of terrible fame. In order to save her youngest from a like fate, and get him away from the influence which had seduced his father and brother, his poor mother took him to Germany. But all in vain. Revolution was in his blood, and before he was twenty he was a political prisoner. He escaped, and passed through countless adventures. Just now it seemed that he had nothing in prospect. But he did not conceal his readiness to fling himself again into the furnace of revolt at the very first opportunity. These facts of his life I relate as told to me by Sonya. As a private individual, Padlevsky was most sweet and winning, gentle and charming in his ways. He was absolutely without means of livelihood. Conspiracy was, I believe, his only profession. But he was constantly the guest of the richer members of his party.

It was of deep interest to me to make acquaintance with the strange group of enthusiastic patriots who lost themselves so entirely in the love of their country ; who sorrowed so deeply over its misfortunes ; and who so longed to save it, that what a law-abiding community called crime was to them a sacred duty.

Just at this time a great English newspaper published a horrible account of the cruelties which Siberian prisoners, and among them some highly educated ladies, had had to undergo.

There was something deeply touching in the sorrow which the intelligence aroused in the Russo-Polish clique in Paris. It seemed as though its members had suffered personally. The bond which unites all the martyrs of the Czar is so strong that to all intents and purposes they are but one family.

The centre of that clique was one of Sonya's most intimate friends ; a woman whom she admired more than any other, and who impressed her so greatly that she lost all her critical judgment in regarding her. Sonya admired this woman with the jealous adoration so characteristic of her. This friend possessed several of the qualities which Sonya herself desired and envied : beauty ; a rare power of fascination ; and an equally rare talent for dressing in perfect taste. While in Paris, Sonya used to get this friend to choose her dresses for her, but they never looked so well on her as on the charming Pole.

The latter had a gift for attracting a small court of admirers, who vied with each other in winning a smile from her. But Sonya admired in this friend least what

the others admired most : her genius, intelligence, and courage. A genius not creative in its nature had no attractions for Sonya.

As to courage, that is, moral courage, Sonya considered that, if tried as her friend had been, she would prove equally courageous.

The life which M<sup>d</sup>me J—— lived now that all the storms of her life were over—for she, too, had passed a year as a political prisoner—seemed to Sonya the ideal of happiness. Recently married to a man who adored her ; surrounded by a sympathising and admiring circle of friends in whose sight she was a queen ; the mistress of a hospitable mansion open to all friends ; living in Paris in the very midst of the intellectual movement of the time, and inspired by a mission in which she intensely believed, M<sup>d</sup>me. J—— was, in Sonya's opinion, in a position of supreme and ideal happiness.

In this circle, so sympathetic to her feelings, Sonya became open-hearted. I had never seen her so communicative except when *tête-à-tête*. She spoke openly of her dissatisfaction with life ; of her sterile triumphs in science. She said she would willingly exchange all the celebrity she had won, all the triumphs of her intellect, for the lot of the most insignificant woman who lived in her proper circle—a circle of which she was the centre, and in which she was beloved.

But Sonya noticed with some bitterness that no one believed her statement. All her friends thought her more ambitious than affectionate or sensitive, and they laughed at her words as though she were but indulging in one of her paradoxes.



The Norwegian author, Jonas Lie, was the only person who understood Sonya fully. Once, in a little speech he made, he showed his comprehension of her so plainly that she was moved to tears. It was on one of the pleasantest of our Paris days. We were dining with Jonas Lie; and Grieg and his wife, who were just then enjoying his triumph at Paris, were present. There was about this little dinner the indescribable festive feeling which sometimes springs up in a small circle when each person present is pleased to see the other, and all feel themselves to be fully understood and appreciated. Jonas Lie was in high spirits. He made one speech after the other, bright and sparkling, and full of imagination, and yet withal—as was his wont—somewhat involved and obscure. The spontaneity and poetic fervour inherent in all his utterances, gave to his cordiality a special charm. He spoke of Sonya, not as the great mathematician, nor even as the successful author, but as the little “Tanja Rajevsky,” whom he said he had learned to love so truly, and for whom he felt so great a sympathy. He said he was so sorry for the poor little misunderstood child who so longed for tenderness. He doubted, he said, whether she had ever been understood. Life, he had heard, had lavished upon her every gift upon which she set no value; had given her honours, distinction, and success. Yet she still stood there with great wide-open eyes. There she stands, with her empty outstretched hands. What does she want? She only wants a friendly hand to give her an orange. “Thank you, Herr Lie,” Sonya murmured, in accents deeply moved and

choked with tears. "I have had many speeches made about me in my life, but never one so beautiful." She could say no more. She sat down, for she had risen in the impulse of the moment, and tried to conquer her emotion by drinking a glass of water.

When we left Lie's house, Sonya was in a brighter mood than she had been for many a day. She felt that there existed at least one person who understood her, though he had seen her but a few times, and knew nothing of her private circumstances. He had penetrated further into her inmost soul by merely reading her book than her most intimate friends had done, though they had known her for years. Now, after all, she felt that there was some pleasure in writing, and, after all, life was worth living.

We had intended to go straight from Lie's house to another friend, and not to run home between whiles. But Sonya was always expecting letters, and was never happy if away from the hotel for many hours at a time. So we returned home, making a detour to the hotel in order to ask the eternal question, Are there any letters? The next moment Sonya had clutched the letter which lay close to the key of our rooms, and rushed up the flight of stairs.

I followed her slowly, and went straight to my own room, for I did not want to disturb her. Almost immediately she came to me, threw her arms around my neck, laughed, danced round me, and then flung herself down on the sofa, almost shouting with delight.

"Oh, what happiness!" she exclaimed. "I cannot bear it! I shall die of joy!"

The letter explained away an unfortunate misunderstanding—one which had worried her for months and had worn her to a shadow. The very next evening she left Paris in order to meet the man on whom her whole existence depended.

## CHAPTER XIV.

### THE FLAME BURNS.

A COUPLE of days after Sonya's departure I received a few lines from her. Already the spark of happiness which had flamed up so brightly and inspired most extravagant hopes, had died out. I have not kept her letter, but I remember the main contents. "I see," she wrote, "that he and I will never understand each other. I shall return to my work at Stockholm. In future my only consolation will be work."

That was all. During the remainder of that winter and all next spring I had not a line from her except a few heartfelt words of congratulation on my marriage in May.

She suffered; and avoided showing me her sorrows, not wishing to disturb my happiness. She could never make up her mind to write on indifferent matters. Therefore she kept silence. But this reticence, after our recent intimacy, wounded me deeply. Afterwards I well understood that she *could not* have acted otherwise.

In the April of that year, 1890, Sonya went to

Russia. She had rather expected to be elected a member of the Academy of Science at St. Petersburg, the most advantageous position which she could have acquired. It would have yielded her a large salary, and no duties beyond a few months' yearly residence in St. Petersburg. To be a member of the Academy is the greatest honour to which any Russian scientist can attain. Sonya had built her hopes on obtaining it. She would have then been delivered from the insufferable yoke of Stockholm life, and her wish to settle in Paris could have been realised.

During our stay in that city she had often said to me, "If you cannot have the best in life, namely, true heart-happiness, life may be bearable if you get the next best thing—an intellectual atmosphere in which you can breathe and flourish. But to have neither is insufferable." She still fancied that if she could gain this, she might be reconciled to life. I could not guess whether her plans would prosper, nor did I ever know where she was going after leaving St. Petersburg. She was very mysterious about her plans all that spring, mentioning them to no one. I met her by chance, however, in Berlin in the middle of June. I was then *en route* for Sweden, whither I was returning with my husband shortly after our marriage. Sonya had arrived the same day from St. Petersburg.

I found her in an unnaturally excitable state of mind—a mood which a stranger might easily have mistaken for light-heartedness. I knew her too well not to realise that something crouched behind it. She had been fêted at Helsingfors and St. Petersburg; she had been

hurried from place to place ; had met the most interesting people, and had made a speech before a thousand listeners. She assured me that she had enjoyed herself immensely, and had good expectations ; but she continued to be mysterious and to shun all intimacy, carefully avoiding remaining alone with me, for fear of being searchingly questioned.

We spent, however, some cheerful days together, filled with jesting and small-talk. Still she impressed me painfully, for I saw how nervous and over-excited she really was, and how utterly out of tune. The only thing she said to me about her personal concerns was that she never intended to marry again ; that she would not be so *banal* ; she would not do as other women did, forsake her work and mission in order to marry as soon as she had a chance. She did not want to leave her post at Stockholm until she had won such a sure position as an author that she could support herself by her writings. She did not deny that she wished to meet and travel with M——, who was to her the best of friends and comrades.

A few months later we again met at Stockholm, where she had resumed her lectures in September. Once more her forced gaiety had vanished. She was still more out of sorts, and troubled with an increasing restlessness. I had no opportunity of seeing deeper into her heart. She hid her feelings from me. She continued to shun a *tête-à-tête*, and, on the whole, showed herself more or less indifferent to all who formerly had been her most intimate friends. It was evident that her heart was elsewhere, and that she felt

these months at Stockholm as a kind of banishment. She counted the days that must pass before the Christmas holidays, when she meant to travel. She was in a desperate condition. She could neither manage to live with or without M——. Thus her life had lost its balance. She was like an uprooted plant : could not strike root again, and seemed to wither away.

When my brother removed to Djursholm, in the villa quarter of Stockholm, he tried to persuade Sonya to come to the same neighbourhood. She had always liked to live near him, so that they might meet as often as possible. But though my brother's removal to new quarters was a great trial to her, and she felt more lonely than ever, she could not make up her mind to move.

“ Who knows how long I shall stay in Stockholm ? This cannot last for ever ! ” she often exclaimed. “ And if I am in Stockholm next winter I shall be in such bad spirits that you will not care to see much of me. ”

She could not be induced to go and see Mittag Leffler's new villa, which was being built. She took no interest in it, and did not wish to enter the new home of one of her most intimate friends in such a spirit of indifference. And when those who were with her went to see the rooms, she insisted on waiting outside the door.

A feeling of the fleeting, evanescent nature of her sojourn in Stockholm was growing upon her. She began to let drop all the ties that bound her to the place. She neglected her friends, withdrew from society, and was more than ever indifferent to her

house and dress. All the inspiration and soul had even died out of her conversation. The heartfelt interest she had formerly taken in all spheres of human life and human thought had faded. She was entirely engrossed by the tragedy of her life.



## CHAPTER XV.

### THE END.

THE last time I saw Sonya alive was in the same year, 1890. She had come to say good-bye to us at Djursholm before she went to Nice. No forebodings told us that this was to be the last farewell.

My husband, Sonya, and I, had agreed to meet at Genoa directly after Christmas, so we said but short farewells. But the plan was not carried out, in consequence of a misdirected telegram which was intended to meet us on our return to Italy. Whilst Sonya and her companion were waiting for us, we passed through the town in which they were staying without knowing they were there.

New Year's Day—which we had hoped to spend together—was passed by Sonya and her friend in going to the lovely marble dwelling of the dead at Genoa. While there, a sudden shadow flitted across Sonya's face, and she said with prophetic emphasis: "One of us will not survive this year, for we have spent its first day in a burial-ground!"

A few weeks later Sonya was on her way back to Stockholm. The voyage she so hated was this time

not only to be a trying, but also a fatal one. With a heart wounded once more by the pain of separation, feeling that the torture was almost killing her, Sonya sat in the railway carriage lost in despair. These bitter cold winter days differed so cruelly from the mild and fragrant air she had left behind in Italy. The contrast between the Mediterranean and the northern cold had now become symbolic to her. She began to hate the cold and darkness as intensely as she loved sunshine and flowers.

Her journey was also physically more than usually disagreeable to her. A strange contrariety of fate made her fail to take the shortest and most convenient route from Berlin, where she had spent a few days. An epidemic of smallpox had broken out at Copenhagen, and as she was mortally afraid of this disease, she would not risk a single night in that town.

She therefore took the long and troublesome route across the Danish islands. The never-ending change of trains in bad weather was very likely one of the causes of the severe chill which she caught.

At Fredericia, where she arrived late at night in pelting rain and storm, she had no Danish coin by her, and therefore could not hire a porter; so she carried her luggage herself, dead tired and frozen as she was, and so dispirited that she was ready to faint. When she arrived at Stockholm on the morning of February 11th, she felt very ill. Nevertheless she worked the whole of the next day, Thursday, and gave her lecture on Friday, February 6th. She was always very plucky, and never missed a lecture if it were

possible for her to stand. That evening she went to a party at the Observatory. There she began to feel feverish, and went away alone, but could not get a cab. Unpractical as she always was in such matters, and never knowing her way about Stockholm, she got into the wrong omnibus, and in consequence had to make a long *détour* on that cold raw evening. When she reached home—alone, helpless, trembling with fever, with mortal sorrow in her heart, she sat down in the cold night, feeling the violence of the illness which had attacked her. That very morning she had told my brother, who was Rector of the University, that she must have leave of absence during next April on whatever terms she could obtain it.

Each time she had returned to Stockholm her only consolation in the midst of her despair had been to make plans for the future. Between times she tried to numb her sorrow and restlessness by working hard. She had thought of several new plans, both as concerned mathematics and literature, and spoke of them with much interest. To my brother she divulged an idea of a mathematical work, which he thought would be the greatest she had yet written. To her friend Ellen Key, with whom she spent most of these last days, she spoke of several new novels which she had worked out in her head. One she had already commenced, and in it she meant to give a character-sketch of her father. She had also written two-thirds of another, which was to be a *pendant* to "Vera Verontzoff." She meant to call it "A Nihilist," and it was to describe an episode in Tschernyshevsky's life. The last chapter, which

she had not yet written, she described to Ellen Key, who noted it down in the following words:—

“T., from obscurity, has suddenly risen to celebrity among the young generation by his social revolutionary novel, entitled, ‘What are We to Do?’ At a fête he has been hailed as the hope and leader of the rising generation. He has returned to his garret, where he lives with his beautiful young wife. She is asleep when he arrives. He goes to the window and looks down on sleeping St. Petersburg, where lights still glimmer. He talks, in imagination, to the terrible mighty city. There it lies—still the home of violence, poverty, injustice, and oppression. But he will conquer; he will breathe his spirit into it. What *he* thinks, *they all* shall gradually come to think; even as the rising generation does now. He remembers especially a deep-souled girl whose sympathy has gone out to him. He begins to dream, but rouses himself to go and kiss his wife and tell her of his triumphs, when, at that moment, he hears a sharp knock at the door. He opens it, and there stand the gendarmes who have come to arrest him.”

Eagerly as Sonya had often invoked death, she had at this moment no wish to die. But those friends who were near her at the last thought her more resigned than she had been formerly. She no longer yearned for that complete happiness, the ideal of which had ever consumed her soul with its burning flame. But she now longed, with ardent clinging love, for the broken gleams of the happiness which had of late cast a light upon her path.

In her innermost heart she was afraid of the *great unknown*. She often said that it was the possibility of punishment in the other world which alone kept her back from leaving this one. She had no definite religious belief, but she believed in the eternal life of each individual soul. She believed, and she trembled.

She was especially afraid of the awful moment at which earthly life ends. She often quoted Hamlet's words :—

“ For in that sleep of death what dreams may come,  
When we have shuffled off this mortal coil,  
Must give us pause.”

With her vivid imagination she pictured those awful moments which perhaps may occur, when the body, physically speaking, is dead, but the nervous system still lives and suffers—suffers a nameless martyrdom—known by none but they who have taken the dread leap into the great darkness.

Sonya was anxious to be cremated, because she had also a fear of being buried alive. She pictured to herself how it would be to awaken in her coffin. She described it in such words as to make all who heard her shudder.

Her illness was so short and violent that probably she had no time or power to recall at the last moment all these sad forebodings. The only thing she said which suggested that she had any idea of her approaching end, she uttered on Monday morning, the 9th of February, barely twenty hours before she died. “ I shall never get over this illness,” she said.

And on the evening of the same day she remarked :  
“ I feel as if a great change had come over me.”

But as to the rest, her fear was chiefly that her illness might be a long one. She had not strength to speak much, for she had severe pleurisy, high fever, and breathlessness. She suffered cruel pain, and could not bear to be alone for a moment.

The last night but one she said to Ellen Key, who scarcely ever left her : “ If you hear me moan in my sleep, wake me, and help me to change my position, otherwise I fear it may go ill with me. My mother died in just such an access of pain.”

She had hereditary disease of the heart, and had in consequence often expressed a hope that she might die young. This disease, however, was found at the *post mortem* to have been of no importance, though it may have increased the breathlessness caused by the pleurisy.

The friends who were near her during her short illness cannot say enough about her goodness, gentleness and patience ; or how unselfish she was, fearing to give trouble ; and how touching was her gratitude for every little service rendered.

On Tuesday her little girl was to go to a children's party, and Sonya interested herself in it to the last, wishing that her child should not miss this pleasure. She begged her friends to help her to get what was required, and when, on Monday evening, the child came to her mother dressed in a gipsy costume, Sonya smiled kindly on her little daughter, and hoped she would enjoy herself. Only a few hours later the child was roused from her sleep to receive her mother's dying look which was full of tenderness.

On the Monday evening both the friends who had nursed her during the last few days had left her, and a St. Elizabeth's sister took their place. The doctors did not apprehend any immediate danger. They seemed rather to believe the illness would last some time. The friends, therefore, considered it wiser to forego the night-nursing, and spare their strength.

At Sonya's own desire they were to rest that night, as there seemed no special need for their presence. Just that night the great crisis came.

Sonya lay in deep sleep when her friends left her. But at two o'clock she awoke. The terrible death-agony had begun. She showed no sign of consciousness. She could neither speak nor move, nor even swallow. This lasted for two hours. Only at the last moment did one of her friends, summoned tardily by the nurse, arrive.

Alone, alone with a hired stranger, a nurse who did not even speak her language, she had to struggle through the last and bitter battle. Who knows what consolation a beloved voice, the touch of a loving hand, might have been to Sonya during those two terrible hours?

I wish even that a Russian priest could have read a mass to her during that time. With the veneration in which she still held the Greek religion, and indeed all memories of her childhood, the familiar words would have been sweet and calming in her ears if she had been able to catch them. Could her hands, in their wandering, have clutched the cross, it might have consoled her; as it has so often consoled other dying mortals. To her, it was ever a much-loved symbol—the symbol of the sufferings of mankind.

But there was nothing—not a word of consolation ; no help, not even a loving hand to place its cool pressure on her burning brow. Alone in a stranger-country, with a broken heart and shattered hopes ; trembling, perhaps, at what she was about to meet ! Thus she closed her earthly life, “this soul of fire, this soul of thought.”

Out of the hopeless darkness which seemed to enshroud this death-bed, little by little some gleams of hope have come to me. It matters not whether life be long or short ; all depends on what it has contained for oneself and for others ; and, from this point of view, Sonya’s life had been longer than most. She had lived intensely ; she had drained the cup both of sorrow and of joy. She had quenched the thirst of her spirit at the wells of wisdom. She had risen to the heights to which genius and imagination alone can carry the soul. To others she had given unstintingly of her knowledge, experience, imagination and feeling. She had spoken with the inspiring voice which genius alone possesses when it does not isolate itself in selfish retirement. No one who knew her could remain unmoved by the influence ever exercised by the keen intellect and glowing feeling which spread sunshine and growth around. Her mind was fertile because her intellect was unselfish. Her highest aspiration was to live in mental union with another.

If there was much that was fantastic and superstitious in her forebodings and dreams, it is nevertheless true that there was much in her of the “seer.” When her shortsighted eyes, luminous with genius, were fastened on



the person to whom she spoke, one felt that they penetrated the very soul. How often did she, with a look, pierce through the mask beneath which less sagacious glances had failed to discover the real countenance. How often would she divine the secret motives that were hidden from others, and even unrevealed to their very owner. It was her poet-soul which thus became in her the seer. A chance word, a single insignificant episode, which she came across, could reveal to her the whole connection between cause and effect ; and enable her to develop them into the story of a whole life. It was this *connection* for which her soul was always searching ; connectedness in the world of thought and between the varied phenomena of life. She even sought for the unknown connection between these phenomena and the laws of thought.

It was a never-ending source of grief to her that in this world " we can only see in part, and only know in part." Thus it was that she loved to dream about another and a higher life, of which the apostle so beautifully says, " Now we see through a glass darkly, but then face to face." To perceive oneness in the manifold, was the aim of her scientific and poetic mind. But ah ! has she attained this now ? The possibility, dim and uncertain as it is, makes the brain reel ; but it makes one breathe more freely, and makes the heart beat with a fluttering hope that takes away the sting of death.

Sonya had always wished to die young. In spite of the inexhaustible freshness of mind which made her ever ready to receive new impressions, to drink from

fresh sources of pleasure and find enjoyment in trifles, there was still in her mind and soul a longing which life could never satisfy. She sought for unity in the world of thought, and longed for it also in the world of feeling.

Just as her intellect craved absolute clearness of thought and absolute truth, so her heart craved that perfect love and union which the limitations of life, and more especially the limitations of her own nature, rendered impossible.

It was the impossibility of harmonising and fulfilling all the desires of such a nature as hers that wrecked her life. And in this light we can look upon her death with less sadness.

Starting from her own belief in a deep relationship between the different phenomena of life, one cannot fail to understand that death was, as it were, the natural outcome of it all. It was not merely that destructive and fatal microbes had settled on her lungs; and not even because life could never give her the joys for which she craved. But, also, the necessary organic relationship between her inner and outer being was wanting; the link between the worlds of thought and feeling, between her temperament and disposition, was lacking. She *saw*, as it were, "as when that which is perfect is come," but she *acted* only "in part."

If there be a world in which these contrasts are harmonised, truly she must be happy now. If not—then she has gained the desired harmony in another way, because in complete rest there is also harmony.

A death has seldom awakened so great and so general

a regret as did that of Sonya. From nearly all quarters of the civilised world telegrams of condolence reached the Stockholm University. From the highly conservative University of St. Petersburg, of which she had been made a corresponding member during the last year of her life, down to the Sunday school in Tiflis and the *Kindergarten* in Charkow, all joined in showing honour to her memory.

The women of Russia decided to raise a monument over her grave in Stockholm. At her burial, carriage-loads of flowers covered the dark newly-turned earth among the snow-drifts in the Stockholm cemetery. All the papers and reviews contained honourable mention of the unique woman who beyond all others had brought honour on her sex.

But, out from all these signs of homage, these tributes of esteem, one picture stands by itself. Sonya will be for posterity what she least wished to be—a marvel of mental development and brain power; or, if you will, a kind of giantess of such extraordinary proportions that you regard her with wonder and admiration.

I have, perhaps, in describing her life, in unveiling its mistakes and weaknesses, its sorrows and humiliations, as well as its greatness and its triumph, reduced too much its true dimensions. What I had in mind was to depict Sonya as I knew her, and as she wished to be known and understood. I have, above all, sought to emphasise the *human* traits in the picture, and in this way place its subject nearer to the level of other women; to make her one of them; not an exception to, but a

proof of, the rule that the *life of the heart* is the most important, not only for women, but for the whole of the human race. At this central focus of all humanity, the most and the least gifted may ever meet.

FINIS.

## APPENDIX.

A YEAR before the date of the Introduction to this biography, the Duchess of Cajanello published in the "Annali di Matematica pura ed applicata" a notice on Sonya Kovalevsky, from which we quote some interesting facts not detailed in the memoir now given to our English readers.

Sonya Vassilievna Corvin Krukovsky was born at Moscow on the 15th of January, 1850. Her father was a general of artillery, marshal of the nobility of the Government of Viteb, and belonged to the ancient aristocracy of the country. Her mother was niece of the celebrated astronomer Schubert. The family of Corvin was directly descended from King Matthias Corvin, the hero of Hungary.

The ancient feudal castle in the Government of Viteb, where Sonya grew up, was far distant from any city, and had no communication with the outer world except by means of wretched country roads, which traversed enormous steppes, and, at certain seasons of the year, were absolutely impracticable. About Sonya's paternal abode, Castle Palibino, the wolves howled on winter nights, and bears wandered in the dense forests that formed a natural park around it. Here the imaginative girl dreamed not only of the big unknown world without its boundaries, but also of vast unknown spaces of other horizons, already divined by her precocious mind.

In this castle there was a chamber the walls of which were papered with nothing but old newspapers, among which there

happened to be some lithographs of Ostrogradski's lectures on the differential and integral calculi, which her father had studied in his youth. These lithographs, with their strange formulas, attracted the attention of the little Sonya.

She stood for hours together before the mysterious wall, trying to find out the meaning of certain phrases, or the order in which the drawings ought to follow each other. In this way the exterior appearance of some formulas fixed themselves on her memory, and the text itself left a profound trace on her brain. So that when she took her first lessons on the differential calculus with her professor, he was astounded at the rapidity with which she appropriated the ideas and methods connected with such studies.

She had also read a work on physics which she found among her father's books, the author of which was a friend of the General, and one day, when this friend was on a visit to the castle, Sonya told him that she had been studying his work. He laughed at her, saying that that was impossible, for she knew nothing of trigonometry.

But, in the conversation which followed, it soon appeared that the girl had constructed for herself, from what knowledge she already possessed, the fundamental formula of trigonometry. Amazed at such a proof of intelligence, her father's friend induced the former to allow Sonya to take lessons, in spite of the conservative and aristocratic idea of what it was allowable to a girl of noble family to learn. The General consented, thinking this passion for study a mere caprice. But when, at the age of fifteen, Sonya seriously requested his permission to go and study in a German university, there was a terrible family scene. Her father could not have taken it worse, had his daughter committed some crime.

In order to understand this, it must be remembered that at that epoch a Russian girl who studied was almost looked upon as a Nihilist. A political and patriotic enthusiasm for study had invaded the young generation ; there was a great striving

towards light and liberty. And this enthusiasm had produced a very curious phenomenon : fictitious marriages were all the fashion, their aim being to free the Russian girls from paternal authority and enable them to study abroad. Thus Sonya, when still almost a child, was legally married to Vladimir Kovalevsky, with the understanding that they were to be no more to each other than fellow-students. With her sister and a female friend she went to Germany, where the three girls studied in one university and Kovalevsky in another. At that time Heidelberg was the only university open to women ; now all are closed to the sex, so that when Sonya Kovalevsky was already a professor at Stockholm, and wished to hear a lecture at the Berlin University, the permission was at first refused, but afterwards obtained, through the intervention of the Minister of Instruction, as a great personal favour.

Sonya's first master was Professor Koenigsberger. After having attended his lectures for two years, she went to Berlin at the end of 1870, and took private lessons with Professor Weierstrass during four years, interrupted only by visits to her family in Russia and other journeys. In the year 1874 she received a degree from the Gottingen University. Her chief thesis, "Zur Theorie der partiellen Differenzialgleichungen," is considered to be one of the most important ever written on the subject. Another, "Ueber die Reduction einer bestimmten klasse Abel'scher Integrale 3<sup>ten</sup> Ranges auf elliptische Integrale," was published entire ten years later in the *Acta Mathematica*.

Her studies finished, Sonya returned with her husband, who had also obtained his degree, to Russia, where Vladimir was nominated Professor of Paleontology at the Moscow University. It was then that the two actually became man and wife. Sonya shortly became a mother, and for several years all mathematics were completely put out of sight. During these first years of married life Sonya was exclusively a wife and a mother. With her extraordinary capacity for

sharing in the interests of those with whom she lived, she now studied her husband's science with such assiduity that, for some time, when he was occupied with business affairs, she wrote all his lectures for him.

But she lived in literary circles, and by degrees her latent taste for literature was aroused, and she wrote a romance entitled "The Private-docent," representing university life in Russia, which was published as an appendix in a Russian journal.

But this period of calm lasted a very short time. Sonya's husband was enticed into speculations of a dangerous character, and Sonya's patrimony was in peril. Although the Russian law would have enabled her to refuse her husband the right of disposing of her property, Sonya did nothing but try to oppose her influence to that of the adventurer who was ruining him. She failed, and broken-hearted at the ruin, not only of her prosperity, but of her life's happiness, she left her little girl to the care of a friend, abandoned her home and country, and went to study in Paris in the Quartier Latin, where the terrible news reached her that her husband had not had the courage to outlive the disgrace he had drawn upon his family and his name. Struck by sorrow, and all alone, Sonya, who had been reared in luxury and total ignorance of all economy, had now to provide the necessaries of life for herself and child. In her own country nothing better offered than the post of mistress of arithmetic in the inferior classes of a female school.

The University of Stockholm had been recently opened, founded on private means. Mittag Leffler was one of the first three professors nominated. He was an enthusiast for the new institution in his native city, and cherished the idea of doing honour to it by attracting to it the unique woman who had shown such scientific genius. On his invitation Sonya went to Stockholm in the autumn of 1883, and began a course of free lectures in the German language on the theory of partial differential equations. Meanwhile Mittag



Leffler succeeded in collecting means for creating specially for her a chair of superior mathematics.

In the commemoration made by Mittag Leffler, as Rector of the Stockholm University, after the death of Sonya, he thus speaks of her influence on her students :—

“She came to us from the centre of modern science full of faith and enthusiasm for the ideas of her great master of Berlin, the venerable old man who has outlived his favourite pupil. Her works, which all belonged to the same order of ideas, have shown, by new discoveries, the power of Weierstrass’s system. We know with what inspiring zeal she explained these ideas, what importance she attributed to them in resolving the most difficult problems. And how willingly she gave the riches of her knowledge, the genial divinations of her mind, to each student who had the will and the power to receive them ! Her simple personality, free from any trace of scientific affectation, and the eagerness with which she sought to comprehend the individuality of every man, induced all her students to confide to her, almost at the first meeting, their own most hidden thoughts and sentiments ; their scientific doubts and hopes ; their hesitations before new systems ; their sorrows, disillusion, and dreams of happiness. With such qualities she entered on her teaching, and on such bases she founded her relations to her scholars.”

During the first years of her stay at Stockholm Sonya occupied herself with the study of the theory of the propagation of light through crystals. On this she published a note in the *Comptes Rendus*, which was translated into Swedish ; and she afterwards enlarged on the subject in a more extensive memoir in the *Acta Mathematica*.

She wrote another work on Lamé’s theory of elasticity, and, taking up the interrupted thread of former investigations, she also finished a work on the rings of Saturn. Meanwhile she had sent a thesis to the French Academy in 1887, in competition for the Bordin prize “To perfect in some important

points the theory of the movement of a rigid body." With Russian fatalism she had let a year slip by before commencing her work, and spent the precious time in composing two dramas in collaboration with the writer of this notice, whose literary occupations had attracted her, for she always felt the influence of the surrounding intellectual atmosphere in which she happened to be placed. The two above-mentioned dramas treated of "fidelity to oneself and to the essentials of life, or the abandonment of the essential in the chase of exterior and superficial success." Thus the work was entitled "The Struggle for Happiness." When remonstrated with on losing her time in this work, Sonya would say, "It does not matter; I know that I shall be ready in time."

In the spring of 1888 she began seriously to occupy herself with her thesis, working for whole nights together, and on Christmas Eve of that year the prize was awarded to her by the French Academy. The work appeared so notable to the Academy that, before publishing the list containing the name of the author, the prize had been raised from three thousand to five thousand francs. In resolving a new case of the problem of the movement of a rigid body, Sonya Kovalevsky had added her name to the great ones of Lagrange, Poisson, and Jacobi. Besides the thesis presented to the French Academy, she wrote two others on the same argument, both published in the *Acta Mathematica*. In the same year (1890) she also published some observations on a theory of Bruns, published in the same journal.

After the fatigue she had endured at this time, Sonya's scientific genius seemed to be temporarily exhausted. She returned to literature more seriously than ever. She had, since years, longed to leave the solitary world of science and enter the literary field, more fertile in personal joys. But the need of sympathy and intellectual ties with others was so strong in her, that almost she could not work alone. She possessed no aristocratic carelessness of the appreciation of her contempo-

raries and personal friends. Rather she had an ardent desire to be understood and esteemed in every step she took, in every thought that occurred to her. It was not vanity or love of outward honours ; she had had enough of those to be aware of their emptiness, and was of too deep a nature to be satisfied by them. It was the essentially feminine need of being loved, and to provoke, not only admiration but joy among a large circle of friends, and the general public. Thus literature appeared to her more and more pleasing the older she grew, solitude weighed on her more, and the longing for sympathy became so acute as to cause her intense suffering.

But she did not only demand and desire sympathy ; she had a unique capacity for giving it to others. Her conversation was as *spirituelle* and attractive as only that of a Russian can be ; but though she spoke willingly and much, she was at the same time an excellent listener, who gazed with her bright but short-sighted eyes into those of her interlocutor, and drew out his words with little impatient exclamations. If she approved what the other said, found a judgment just or an idea original, she received it with jubilee. If, on the other hand, she disapproved, she criticised what she had just heard with expressions which were very biting and often paradoxical. She never showed contempt, or opposed prejudices to ardent thoughts. She had a large way of looking at all the questions of life ; and so pliable a mind, that she never stopped at a system of ideas once acquired, but always collected new ones and rushed forward to new conquests. In her manners she was always the *grande dame*, and at the same time always simple and natural. She detested all exterior appearance of emancipation, and felt much more flattered if any one complimented her on her dress or amiability than if they admired her for her learning. In her young years she was really beautiful, but latterly her long wakeful nights of study, and her many sorrows, had left heavy traces on her fine and regular features.

In the romance "The Sisters Rajevsky," the first she published in her own name, she related the story of her childhood in such vivid and true colours, with such  *finesse* of observation and sentiment, that it at once obtained the success she so much desired—that of being personally understood, and of arousing sympathy in others. The publication of this romance in Russia, Sweden, Norway, and Denmark, was saluted as a literary event, and it was said that a new Tolstoi was born to Russia.

This felicitous entrance into the literary career stimulated Sonya's fertile imagination, which, besides, was aided by an exceptionally rich experience of outer and inner life, and four or five new literary works germinated contemporaneously within her mind. While yet a mere child, but already an acute observer, she had witnessed the great crisis of the liberation of the Russian serfs. In her romance "The Vorontzoff Family," she tells the impression produced on the noble proprietors by this crisis. The daughter of one of these proprietors becomes a Nihilist, and is taken a prisoner to Siberia. The author read this book aloud to a scientific circle in Stockholm shortly before her death, and produced great enthusiasm. Fortunately the manuscript was found complete, and will be published.

Of another romance, the "Væ Victis," only one chapter was published. Its fundamental conception reveals, more than any other work, its author's nature. Few women have been so much observed, fêted, admired, and covered with honour as Sonya Kovalevsky. Nevertheless, is this romance, which would, if finished, have become the true story of her inner life, she sings the praise of the conquered; because she felt herself, in spite of the applause which surrounded her, as one defeated in the *struggle for happiness*; the true happiness, which, for her, consisted exclusively in love; in the *life in two*, the want of which, all alone in a strange country, she so bitterly lamented.

According to what Mittag Leffler says, Sonya had not thought of abandoning scientific study entirely. In the last conversation she had with him, the day before she was taken with her short and fatal illness, she told him of a plan for a new mathematical work, which she believed would be the most important she had ever written. According to her usual manner, considering herself gifted with *second sight* in all intellectual things, she said she had divined the solution of certain profound enigmas, which would open out a new path in the field of thought.

Sonya was, indeed, gifted in a high degree with this second sight, even as regards the actual occurrences of life.

She knew beforehand all that was to happen to her of importance, and on the last New Year's Day of her life, when she visited the Genoese cemetery in company with some Russian friends, she said, "One of us will die this year." After two months' holiday on the Mediterranean she returned northwards at the beginning of February. The cold was extraordinary, and she suffered much during the journey. She had given only one lesson at the University when she was attacked with violent inflammation of the lungs, which in three days destroyed her intense and flourishing vitality.

Rarely has a death aroused such universal regret. Telegrams reached Stockholm from all parts of the world. Sonya's bier was followed by three carriages full of flowers, which were put on the snow that swiftly covered her grave. It was a quite southern luxuriance in the midst of the northern frost which had killed her. But she would gladly have exchanged all the splendour of flowers, which surrounded her in life and in death, for a modest flower from northern fields, which was missing amid this exotic pomp: the flower *forget-me-not*, the symbol of the entire gift of a heart.

VERSES WRITTEN ON SONJA KOVALEVSKY, AFTER  
HER DEATH, BY F. LEFFLER.

Själ af eld och själ af tankar,  
Här Ditt luftskepp lyftat ankar  
Nu att stjärnerymder plöja  
Evig, där Du förr sågs dröja  
Mången gång, dit stadd på spaning  
Öfver världssystemets daning  
Hög din tanke lyfte vingen,  
När i stjärneklara kvällen  
Stråla sågs Saturnus-ringen  
På den dunkelblåa pällen ?

Männe ifrån högre zoner  
Analytiska funktioner  
Svaret nu dig finna läta  
På odödlighetens gåta ?

Ljusets strålar från det höga  
Såg Du förr med forskarns öga  
Mot kristallegrund sig bryta.  
Huru ser Du nu dem flyta ?

Från de ljusa himlavärldar  
Ofta nog du blicken vände  
Också ned till mörkrets härdar,  
Till vår egen jords elände.  
Där också i hoppets stunder  
Såg Du mot kristallegrunder  
— Utaf *kärlek*—ljus sig bryta  
Och med mörkret väldet byta.

Själ af eld och själ af tankar,  
Tryggast fann Du kärleks ankar.

\* \* \* \*

Så farväl och tack ! Ej tücke  
Tungt den svenska jord det unga  
Lif, som lämnas nu åt grafvens  
Långa, ljufva hägn !—Så länge  
Som Saturnus-ringen svänger  
Sig på färd bland ljusa världar  
Och än lefva män, Ditt minne  
Mälas skall bland stora själars.





*Sophie Kosslovoy*

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# THE SISTERS RAJEVSKY

(FROM THE SWEDISH).

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*The Original MS. of this work was written in Russian by*

SONYA KOVALEVSKY,

*and is an Account by her of her Own Life and that of her Sister  
under the fictitious name of Rajeovsky.*

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TRANSLATED BY A. M. CLIVE BAYLEY.



## CHAPTER I.

TANJA RAJEVSKY'S earliest reminiscences were all connected, somehow or other, with journeys or with adventures which occurred on her travels. When in later life she sometimes sat with closed eyes trying to recall the first conscious impressions of her life, a broad dusty road would stretch itself out before her, bordered on either side with birches and mile-posts. On it was a huge travelling carriage large enough to contain a Noah's ark. From this monotonous, sombre background there stood out, like bright points upon it, memories of various incidents—such as picking up stones on the road while they waited at different stations, or of throwing her eldest sister Anyuta's doll out of the window. There were nights, too, at the post-stations, with improvised beds on small, hard sofas, or perhaps merely on chairs which were placed together for the purpose.

Tanja's father, Ivan Sergevitsch Rajevsky, was a general of artillery, and had often, owing to the exigencies of the service, to move from one place to another; and, as a rule, his family always followed him

Kaluga was one of the places where the Rajevskys stayed somewhat longer than in other towns. Tanja was then five years old, and of this period of her life she has a clear and vivid memory.

The Rajevskys had two children besides Tanja ; the eldest, Anyuta, was then twelve years old, and the youngest, Fedja, was a boy of three.

The nursery was a large, low room, so low that when Njanja (as the Russian nurse is generally called) stood on a chair, she could without much difficulty reach the ceiling. All three children slept in the nursery. There was certainly some talk of Anyuta moving to the governess's room—that horrid Frenchwoman, as the children called her. But Anyuta had no intention of being without the others.

The three beds, with latticed sides, stood side by side, so that in the morning the children could creep from one to another without touching the ground with their feet. A little way off was Njanja's bed, piled up with a whole mountain of bolsters and pillows. This was Njanja's pride. Sometimes in the daytime, when she was in a good humour, she gave the children leave to jump and roll upon it. They climbed on to it with the help of chairs, but scarcely had they succeeded in boarding the top of the pile than it gave way under their weight, and they sunk down in a perfect ocean of pillows to their great delight and happiness. In the nursery there was always a peculiar smell, a mixture of incense, of reeking tallow smoke, and of coarse fir oil and birch balsam, which Njanja used for her rheumatism. The governess, that horrid Frenchwoman, could

never come into the nursery without holding her handkerchief to her nose and mouth in disgust.

“Do open the window, Njanja,” she would say in broken Russian.

Njanja received this injunction as a personal insult.

“What nonsense she does talk! that heathen foreigner! Am I to open the window and give the children cold?” she grumbled, as the governess left the room. Regularly every morning there was a skirmish between Njanja and the governess.

The sun had long been shining into the nursery. The children gradually opened their sleepy eyes, but there was no hurry for them to get up or dress themselves. Between waking and getting ready to dress there lay a long interval of play and romp, flinging pillows, pinching one another's bare legs, and of ceaseless chatter. A delicious smell of coffee spread itself through the room. Njanja, only half dressed, and merely having changed her nightcap for the silk handkerchief which was her invariable head-dress in the daytime, brought in a tray with a huge copper coffee-pot. She served the children, unwashed and uncombed as they were, with coffee and fresh rolls in their beds. When this meal was over, it sometimes happened that they fell asleep again tired out with their play.

But suddenly the nursery door would open with a noise and a bustle, and on the threshold would stand the indignant governess.

“What, still in bed, Annetta! It is eleven. You will be late again for your lesson!” she would exclaim angrily in French.

“How on earth can you let them sleep so long? I shall complain to the General,” she would add, turning to Njanja.

“For mercy’s sake, go and complain, you viper!” Njanja would mutter after her; and it took her long to calm down after the governess had left, grumbling to herself the while:

“The master’s own children, as if they could not sleep as long as they liked! She will be too late for her lesson! What a misfortune to be sure. And you would have to wait a little! You can easily manage that!”

But notwithstanding her grumbling, Njanja would find it necessary at last to set about dressing the children in earnest. It must be owned that however long her preliminaries might take, the toilettes themselves did not take very long. Njanja dabbed a wet sponge over their faces and hands, drew a jagged comb through their tangled manes, and put on their clothes, which not seldom were minus several buttons—and lo! they were ready.

Anyuta went down to her lessons with her governess, and Tanja and Fedja remained in the nursery. Without troubling about their presence, Njanja swept the floor with a brush, raising a perfect cloud of dust, spread the quilts over the little beds, shook down her own pillows, and looked upon the dusting as done for the day. Tanja and Fedja sat huddled up on the leather-covered sofa, through which here and there tufts of horsehair stuck up. They played together there with their toys. They were seldom allowed to go out for a walk—only

when it was specially fine weather, or on great festivals when Njanja took them to church.

After lessons were over, Anyuta would rush up to the others. It was much jollier with them than with her governess, specially as visitors often came to see Njanja—other nurses or ladies' maids, whom she would invite to coffee, and from whom they heard a number of interesting things.

The nursery door would sometimes open, and on the threshold there would stand a beautiful lady, still young, and dressed in costly silks. There would be flowers in her hair, and on her arms and neck glittered bracelets and necklaces. It was Elena Pavlovna Rajeovsky, Tanja's mother. She would be thus dressed for some dinner or supper, and had come to say "good-bye" to the children.

As soon as Anyuta saw her, she would rush up to her directly, and cover her hands and neck with kisses, and begin to examine and try on all her trinkets.

"When I am grown up I shall be just as beautiful and smart as mother," she would say, as she tried on her mother's necklace and craned up to look at herself in the little looking-glass on the wall. This always amused Elena Pavlovna very much.

Sometimes Tanja also longed to caress her mother and to climb on her knee. But the attempt invariably ended in her hurting her mother by her clumsiness, or by her tearing the fine clothes. So off little Tanja would rush, and hide herself in some corner. Tanja thus became somehow shy of her mother, and this shyness was increased by hearing Njanja often say that

Anyuta and Fjeda were Elena Pavlovna's favourites, and that Tanja was a step-child in the family. Though she had nursed all three from their birth, Tanja was somehow or other her special nursling, and she was highly indignant if any one was, according to her idea, unjust or hard on the child.

Anyuta was so much older than the other two that it seemed natural that she should have precedence. She grew up in uncontrolled freedom, and knew no authority or restraint. She had free entrance into the drawing-room, where she from her earliest years, earned the character of being a charming child, and entertained the guests with her witty and even saucy sallies and remarks. Tanja and Fedja, on the other hand, only went into the reception rooms on great days, and they ate their breakfast and dinner in the nursery.

Sometimes when there were friends to dinner, and it came to dessert time, Nastasja, Madame Rajevsky's maid, would come rushing into the nursery and say :

"Be so good, nurse, and be quick and put on Fedinka's light blue silk jacket, and bring him into the dining-room ; her ladyship wants to show him to the guests."

"And what did the mistress tell you I was to dress Tanja in?" nurse would ask in an aggrieved tone of voice, though she knew quite well beforehand what the answer would be.

"Tanja is not to go down at all. It is better she should remain in the nursery, such a little stupid as she is!" answered the maid, laughing, knowing well that she would anger the nurse.



And truly Njanja saw in this desire to show Fedinka off to the guests a great slight on Tanja. For a long while after she would go on mumbling from time to time between her teeth, while she looked sympathisingly at the child and stroked her hair, saying, "My poor little one!"

It was evening. Njanja had already put Tanja and Fedja to bed, but she had not yet taken off the silk kerchief, the disappearance of which was the sign of her exchange of work for rest. She sat in the front of the round table, drinking tea with Nastasja. Twilight reigned in the room. The smoky flame of the tallow candle looked only like a yellow blur in the darkness, for Njanja had long forgotten to snuff it. In the opposite corner of the room flickered the bluish flame of the lamp before the picture of the saint, making fantastic figures on the ceiling and lighting up the Saviour's hand, which was stretched forth from the silver robe in benediction. Tanja already heard Fedja's close even breathing beside her, and over there in the stove corner she heard the heavy snoring of the nursery-maid, Fekluscha, of the upturned nose, Njanja's invariable scapegoat. She lay on the ground on a piece of gray felt, which she spread out every evening, and which in the daytime was hidden in a cupboard.

Njanja and Nastasja talked together in a loud whisper, as though they chose to believe the children were all fast asleep, and they discussed all sorts of family matters without restraint. But Tanja did not sleep, but, on the contrary, listened with much attention to all that they were saying. Much of it she did not understand ;

much of it did not interest her. Sometimes she fell asleep in the middle of some story, without hearing the end. But the loose ends of the conversation, which fastened on her mind, came back to her memory in fantastic pictures, and left indelible traces on her whole life.

“How could I help loving her better, my darling, my little dove, than all the others!” she heard Njanja say, and Tanja knew well it was of her whom nurse was speaking. “I nursed and watched over her, and I only, from the very first. It was not at all the same with the others. When Anyuta was born, her father and mother and grandfather and her father’s sister never wearied of her. She was the first, of course. I never had a moment to nurse her in peace without one or the other of them coming up and taking her from me. But with Tanja it was quite a different matter.”

At this point of the oft-repeated tale Njanja would sink her voice mysteriously, which naturally made Tanja strain her ears more than ever.

“She came into the world at an unlucky moment, my little dove, that was certain,” continued Njanja, in a half whisper. “Just when she was born, the master lost a great sum of money playing at the English club. It was so bad that all her ladyship’s diamonds had to be pawned. How could they at such a moment be glad that God had sent them a daughter? And they had both of them so desperately desired a son. My mistress said to me over and over again, ‘You will see, Njanja, you will see, it will be a boy.’ She had got everything ready for a boy, both the crucifix and the cap with its

light blue rosette. And there was no boy at all, but only another girl. Her ladyship was so vexed she would not even look at her once. But then Fedinka came, and that comforted them."

Njanja told this story so often, and Tanja listened each time with such intense eagerness, that at last it was accurately fixed in her memory.

Thanks to suchlike stories, Tanja became convinced while quite a child that she was not wanted at home, and this reacted on the development of her whole character. She became more shy and more reserved than ever.

If, for example, she had to go into the drawing-room, she stared round her and looked sulky, clutching Njanja's skirt tightly all the while with her hands. It was impossible to get a word out of her. Notwithstanding all Njanja's encouragements and injunctions, she maintained an obstinate silence, and stared from under her hair at all the company with a frightened and defiant expression like a hunted creature, till Madame Rajevsky exclaimed in vexation, "Take away your little savage, Njanja. One is ashamed of her before strangers. It is just as if she were tongue-tied."

Tanja was very shy with other children also, and rarely saw any. On the other hand, when she sometimes went out with Njanja and saw street boys and girls engaged in some noisy game of play, she was seized with a sudden desire to share their game. But Njanja never gave her permission. "What are you thinking about, my darling? How can a little lady like you play with such vulgar children?" she would

exclaim, in a tone so reproachful and persuasive that Tanja instantly felt ashamed that she could have harboured such a wish. Soon she lost all desire or wish to play with other children. When some little girl of her own age met her, and wanted to say "How do you do?" to her, Tanja never knew what to say, and stood there thinking, "Will she go soon?"

Tanja was much happier alone with her Njanja. In the evening when Fedja had been put to bed and Anyuta had gone into the drawing-room to the "grown-ups," she crept on to the sofa by Njanja, nestled up close to her, and then Njanja would tell her long tales.

These tales made such a deep impression upon the child's fancy that no sooner did she lay down to sleep than they came back to her in her dreams, and the fearful forms of the "Black death," of were-wolves, and of twelve-headed serpents overpowered her with an almost suffocating terror.

About this time a very strange thing happened to Tanja. She was overcome now and again by a strange horror. Usually it came over her when she was alone in the room when it grew dark. She might, for instance, be playing with her toys, thinking of nothing, when suddenly she would see a shadow growing up behind her dark and black, which seemed to have crept from under the bed or from out of the corners. It seemed to her as though something strange had crept into the room, and the neighbourhood of this new, unknown thing gave her such violent heart-beating that she would rush out of the room headlong

to find Njanja, whose company was usually enough to comfort her. But sometimes it happened that the unpleasant feeling did not disappear for hours.

Her parents explained it by saying that Tanja was afraid of the dark ; but this was not really the case. For in the first place the feeling she experienced was of a very complicated nature, and much more like anguish than fear ; and secondly, darkness in itself did not call it forth, nor any of the circumstances connected with it, unless it were just the approach of darkness. She would often be seized by a similar feeling under altogether other circumstances ; as, for instance, if, when out walking, she came across suddenly a large unfinished house with bare, unwhitewashed walls and empty window spaces, or if in summer time she lay on her back out on the ground and stared up into the sky.

Other even more serious signs of nervousness began to show themselves in her, at this time. Among others an awful horror of all deformity. If she heard any one speak of children with two heads, or a calf with three legs, she trembled from head to foot, and all the following night she invariably dreamed of the malformation spoken of, and woke Njanja with her heartrending shrieks.

The very sight of a broken doll excited Tanja's discomfort. If she accidentally let her doll fall to the ground, Njanja had to pick it up, and if it were all right, give it to her again. But if on the contrary it were broken, she had to carry it away so that the child might not see it. Once Tanja went into a convulsion

because Anyuta, who found her alone and wanted to amuse herself at the little one's expense, forced her to look at a wax doll's head with its eyes knocked out and dangling from the head.

Tanja was on the high road to growing up a nervous, sickly child, when her surroundings suddenly changed, and a new stage of her existence commenced.

## CHAPTER II.

TANJA was about six years old when her father resigned his post and went back to his paternal estate at Palibino in the Vitebsk government. A rumour of the approaching emancipation of the serfs was just beginning to gather strength, and it was this which induced General Rajevsky to interest himself seriously in the management of his estate, which up to that time he had left in the hands of an agent.

The move to the country was a great change for the Rajevskys. Their hitherto glad and untroubled life took at once a more serious colour. Hitherto General Rajevsky had taken very little notice of his children and their education, for he considered that this was the duty of the wife and not of the husband. He had moreover given Anyuta, in some small degree, more attention than the others, just because she was older and also quicker and brighter than the others. He liked to have a game with her when he could manage it, and sometimes in winter he took her out sledging with him, and boasted of her before strangers.

When she sometimes passed all bounds, so that the family were out of patience with her, and complained to the General about her, he would generally turn it

into a joke. But if now and again he looked severe, she knew very well that he was, as a fact, the first one to laugh at her sallies.

As far as the younger children were concerned, General Rajevsky's intercourse with them was confined to asking Njanja, when he met them, how they were. He would affectionately pinch their cheeks, to assure himself that they were round and fat, and he often took them up in his arms and tossed them in the air. On high days, when the General had to go to some official function and was dressed in full parade uniform, with orders and stars, the children were called into the drawing-room to see how grand father was! and this exhibition gave them all great delight. They jumped round him and clapped their hands with pleasure, at the sight of his shining epaulettes and orders.

But shortly after their move to the country an incident happened which in a most unpleasant way drew attention to the nursery, and made a deep impression on the whole house, and not least on Tanja.

Things suddenly began to disappear out of the children's room—first one thing and then another. If Njanja wanted something which she had not used for a time she could never find it, and though she was quite certain where she had put it, and that she with her own hands had put it into the cupboard or bureau, it could not be found. At first every one took it calmly enough, but it began to happen constantly, oftener and oftener, until at last valuable things began to disappear. At last a silver spoon, a gold thimble, and a knife with a mother-of-pearl handle, disappeared one



after the other. It was certain there was a thief in the house. Njanja, who considered herself answerable for all that belonged to the children, was more unhappy than any one, and decided, come what might, she would discover the thief.

Suspicion naturally fastened, first of all, on the unhappy Fekluscha, already mentioned. It was true enough that Fekluscha had been for three years in the nursery, and that Njanja, during all that time, had noticed nothing wrong in her behaviour. But Njanja considered this proved nothing. "She was so young then that she did not know the value of things, but now she has grown up she is cleverer," she explained. "And now she has her belongings over in the village, and it is for them that she appropriates the gentlefolk's goods."

As the outcome of such reflections, Njanja became firmly convinced of Fekluscha's guilt, and she began to treat her with more and more severity—and the poor frightened girl, who instinctively knew that they suspected her of something, looked more and more conscious.

But however much Njanja watched Fekluscha, she never managed to catch her in the act. Yet still new things disappeared, and those already gone were not found. One fine day Anyuta's purse suddenly vanished. It was always kept in Njanja's cupboard, and contained at least forty roubles, if not more. This last loss reached General Rajevsky's ears. He instantly called Njanja to him, and with some severity commanded her to find the thief instantly. Every one understood it was no longer a thing to joke about.

Njanja was in a state of despair. She awakened, however, at night, to hear a curious smacking of lips going on in the corner where Fekluscha lay and should have slept. Filled with suspicion, she quietly put out her hand for the matches and suddenly lit a candle. And what did she see? There sat Fekluscha crouched on the mat with a large pot of jam between her knees and gobbling up the jam as fast as she could with the help of a crust of bread.

It happened, moreover, that some days previously the housekeeper had complained that a pot of jam had also disappeared from out of her cupboard.

To jump out of bed and to catch the criminal by her plait of hair was only the work of a moment for Njanja.

“Ah ha! I have caught you at last, you scoundrel! Where did you get that jam from? Answer!” she screamed, in a voice of thunder, while she roughly tweaked the girl’s plait of hair.

“Dear, sweet Njanja! I have done nothing, I swear,” howled Fekluscha. “Maria Vasiljevna, the sempstress, gave me the pot last evening, but she said particularly that I was not to show it to you.”

The truth of this statement nurse greatly doubted.

“Well now, madam, you don’t seem to be very good at the art of lying,” said she, with some contempt. “Is it likely that Maria Vasiljevna should think of treating you to jam!”

“Dear, sweet Njanja, I am not lying. I can swear that I am telling the truth. Ask her yourself. I heated the irons for her yesterday, and she gave me

the jam in return. She only said to me, 'Don't show Njanja; she will only be angry with me for spoiling you,'” protested Fekluscha still.

“Well, we shall see the first thing to-morrow,” answered Njanja; and while waiting for the morning she locked Fekluscha into a dark cupboard, whence her sobs sounded during the silence of the long night.

Next morning came the investigation.

Maria Vasiljevna was a sempstress who had lived for many years in the Rajevsky family. She was not a serf but a freed woman, and treated with much more consideration than the other servants. She had her own room, where she ate by herself and was served with food from her master's table. She usually carried herself haughtily, and did not associate with the other servants. In the family she was much valued on account of her cleverness with her needle. “She has fairy fingers,” they used to say. She was supposed to be past forty; her face was thin and sickly, with unnaturally large black eyes. She was not beautiful, but our elders thought that she had a *distingué* appearance. One would never believe she was a simple sempstress. She always dressed neatly and tidily, and always kept her room nice and well dusted, with a certain air of elegance about it. In her window usually stood a few pots with geraniums. The walls were ornamented with some small cheap pictures, and on a shelf in the corner were various small bits of china, swans with gilt beaks, and slippers made of roses, which gave the children great delight. To the children especially, Maria Vasiljevna was a person of great

interest in consequence of the romantic story which was told about her. In her youth she was a really strong and lovely girl, and a serf of some rich lady who had a grown-up son. He was an officer and was home on leave, and whilst there presented Maria Vasiljevna with several silver coins. Unfortunately the old lady came into the servants' room and caught Maria with the coins in her hand. "Where did you get those from?" she asked sternly; and Maria was so frightened that instead of answering she put the pennies into her mouth and swallowed them. She immediately became ill and fell down with a scream. It was with difficulty they saved her life, but she lay ill for long, and lost from that hour and for ever her beauty. The old lady died shortly after, and the young master gave Maria her freedom.

Tanja and Anyuta were always very much interested in this story of the swallowed money, and they often besought Maria to tell them how it had happened.

Maria had to come into the nursery pretty often, though she was not on a very good footing with Njanja. The children also loved running into her room, specially at twilight, when she was forced, whether she would or no, to lay aside her work. There she sat by the window, leaning her head on her hand, singing with a plaintive voice various old and touching ballads—"Through the dark valley," or "Dark blossoms, sad blossoms." It sounded very sad, but to little Tanja this plaintive sound was specially charming. Sometimes the singing was interrupted by a violent fit of coughing, which seemed as if it must rend in sunder her thin,

feeble chest. She had for many years suffered from a bad cough.

On the following morning after the scene with Fekluscha already described, Njanja turned to Maria with the query, whether or no it was true that she had given the girl jam. Maria looked at her as though something extraordinary were going to happen.

“What on earth are you thinking about, dear Njanja? I am likely to spoil the girl in that way! Why, I have no jam for myself!” she exclaimed in an injured tone.

Now, of course, the matter was clear enough, but Fekluscha’s impudence was so great that, notwithstanding this categorical denial, she continued to protest her innocence.

“Now, Maria, for Christ’s sake, have you forgotten what you did? You called me to you yourself yesterday evening, and thanked me for the irons and gave me the jam”; and she sobbed bitterly, her whole body shaking as though she had ague.

“You must be sick, or delirious, Fekluscha,” answered Maria, calmly, without a trace of emotion visible in her pale, bloodless countenance.

There was no longer the least doubt of Fekluscha’s guilt. She was taken away and shut up in a closet which was apart from the whole upper storey of the house.

“You shall sit here, you villain, and you shall have neither bread nor water till you confess,” said Njanja, as she angrily turned the key twice upon her.

It was, of course, natural that the affair caused the

greatest commotion in the house. Every single person among the servants managed to come to Njanja on some errand or other, to talk over the interesting matter. The nursery was turned into a regular club that day.

Fekluscha's father was dead, but her mother lived in the village near, and was accustomed to come to the house to help with the wash. She, of course, soon heard of the matter, and came rushing into the nursery, making a loud outcry, and swearing her daughter was innocent.

But the nurse silenced her sharply.

"Be quiet, now, and stop that, madam. Wait till we see what your daughter has done with the stolen things," she said severely, throwing such a meaning look at her that the poor woman was afraid and slunk shyly away.

The general opinion was decidedly against Fekluscha. "If she took the jam, she is pretty sure to have taken the other things."

The feeling was all the stronger because this mysterious and repeated thieving, which had been going on for weeks, lay like a heavy weight on the whole of the servants, who feared that suspicion might fall on one or other of them. The discovery of the thief was therefore a great relief to all.

But Fekluscha would not confess even now. During the course of the day, Njanja went several times up to the prison, but she repeated obstinately, "I have stolen nothing. May God punish Maria, for she has dealt ill with a fatherless child."

Madame Rajevsky came that evening into the nursery.

“Are you not too severe, Njanja, with the poor girl? Have you given her nothing to eat all day?” she said, in a troubled tone.

But Njanja would not hear a word of mercy.

“What is her ladyship thinking of! Shall we pity such a one? She has allowed honest folk to be suspected for weeks for her thefts, the miserable little being!” she answered, so decisively that Madame Rajevsky, seeing she would not overcome her obstinacy, left the room without effecting, the least amelioration in the little criminal’s fate.

On the following day Fekluscha still refused to confess. Her judge began to feel a certain uneasiness, but at dinner-time Njanja walked in with a triumphant air to Madame Rajevsky.

“Our fine bird has confessed!” she proclaimed with delight.

“Well, then, where are the things?” was naturally enough Madame Rajevsky’s first question.

“The little thief has not yet confessed what she has done with them,” answered Njanja, in a troubled tone. “She talks all sorts of nonsense about forgetting where they are. But only wait; if she sits there another couple of hours or so, she will soon remember.”

And sure enough, before the evening was out, Fekluscha had made a full confession, and related circumstantially how she had stolen the things so that she might sell them later on, but that she got no opportunity to do so. So she kept them hid for a

long time under her mat in the corner of her cupboard. And when she saw they were certain to be found, and that they were beginning to hunt down the thief, she got frightened, and at first tried to lay them back in their places ; but as she could not manage this, she tied them up in her apron and cast them into a deep pond on the other side of the estate.

Every one was so anxious to close the disagreeable business that no one criticised Fekluscha's statement very keenly. Every one was rather vexed that the things were all lost, but they were relieved that the matter was explained.

The criminal was allowed out, and on her confession followed a short, sharp judgment. She was to have a good beating and then to be sent home to her mother.

Notwithstanding Fekluscha's tears and her mother's protest, the sentence was really carried out, and another girl was taken as nursery-maid.

After a few weeks order was gradually restored in the household, and the whole matter began to sink into oblivion. But one evening all was silent and quiet in the house. Njanja, after having put the children to bed, was herself beginning to prepare for bed. All of a sudden, the nursery door opened softly and mysteriously, and the washerwoman Alexandra, Fekluscha's mother, came in. She alone had stuck out obstinately against the apparent truth, and was never weary of affirming her daughter's injured innocence. Many times she had had hot skirmishes with Njanja over this subject, until at last the old nurse forbid Alexandra to



put her nose inside the nursery, and retorted that it was no use talking sense with foolish women.

But this evening Alexandra looked so strange and mysterious that Njanja, at the first glance, saw that she had not come to repeat her usual dull complaints, but that something new and important was about to happen.

“Look here, Njanja, I have got something funny to show you,” whispered Alexandra, mysteriously, as she looked carefully round to assure herself no strangers were near, and she drew from under her apron the little penknife with the mother-of-pearl handle, the children’s pet treasure, which had been among the things stolen by Fekluscha, and finally given up for lost as cast into the pond by her.

At the sight of the penknife Njanja threw up her hands in astonishment.

“Where did you get *that* ? ” she said eagerly.

“Ah ! that’s just the point, *where* I found it,” answered Alexandra, slowly, and was then silent for a moment, evidently enjoying Njanja’s emotion. “Philip Matvjeitsch, the gardener,” she began at last, in a meaning voice, “gave me a pair of old trousers to mend, and in one of the pockets I found the knife ! ”

This Philip was a German by birth, and stood in the first ranks of the domestic aristocracy in the household. He enjoyed fairly high wages ; was unmarried ; though to an impartial eye he seemed nothing but a fat and rather disagreeable German, no longer young, with a red, square beard, still among the women servants he found favour and was considered a fine fellow.

Njanja certainly for a few minutes did not know what to think.

“How on earth did that penknife get into Philip’s hands?” she asked, altogether crestfallen. “He never put his foot in the nursery, and it is not possible that such a person should steal the children’s things!”

Alexandra looked at Njanja for a few seconds silently, with a long, malicious gaze. Then, leaning forward, she whispered into her ear a few words, in which Maria Vasiljevna’s name was often heard.

A gleam of intelligence began to penetrate Njanja’s troubled brain.

“Ah! ha, ha! Is that how it was?” she exclaimed, throwing up her hands. “Oh, you sneak! you villain! But wait, we shall catch you!” she cried, quite wild with spite.

It turned out later that Alexandra had long had suspicions about Maria Vasiljevna. She had noticed that the latter had been more or less taken up with the gardener.

“Now just think for yourself, if such a fine fellow as Philip would be likely to play the lover to such an old maid unless he got something for it. She knew how to bribe him with presents.”

And in truth she soon found out that Maria gave Philip both things and money. But how on earth could she prove all that? And then and there Alexandra set on foot a regular system of espionage, arranged so that Maria might have no suspicion of danger. The penknife was the last link in a long chain of evidence.

The tale was one of great interest, and took every

one by surprise. In Njanja's mind awoke instantly that passionate detective instinct which so often lies slumbering in old women, and which, when roused, drives them to unravel the most tangled knots, even of matters in which they have no personal interest whatsoever. This feeling was strengthened in Njanja by the conviction that she had sinned against Fekluscha, and she desired, if possible, to atone for this wrong, so between her and Alexandra a solemn bond and covenant was established against Maria. As the two were fully convinced of her guilt, they did not hesitate to adopt extreme measures. They were to possess themselves of her keys, and to go into her room on the first opportunity, when she was out, and search her things.

No sooner said than done! They proved beyond doubt that at last they were right in their surmises. The contents of the drawers confirmed to the full their suspicions, and proved to the full that the unfortunate Maria was guilty of the petty thefts which had of late caused such a commotion.

"The insolent creature. So she went and bought jam and bribed poor Fekluscha with it so as to turn the suspicion on her. What a wicked thing to do! and she had not a spark of pity for the child!" exclaimed Njanja, in horror and disgust, while she entirely forgot her own rôle in the story, and that it was she herself who, with her severity, had driven Fekluscha to a false confession.

But one can imagine the extreme indignation of the servants when the sad truth came to light.

In the first excitement, General Rajevsky determined to send for the police and arrest Maria—but out of consideration for her sickliness and her age, and her long residence with the family, he let mercy stand for justice and determined only to dismiss her and send her back to St. Petersburg.

One would have thought that she would have been well pleased with her sentence. She was so clever a dressmaker, that she had no fear of suffering from want in St. Petersburg; and what position could she hope to hold in the Rajevsky family after such a history! All the other servants had formerly been jealous of her, and had hated her for her pride and stuckupedness. But she knew, and knew well moreover, how bitter would be the punishment for her former overbearingness. And yet certainly, however strange it may seem, she did not rejoice over the General's sentence; but begged and prayed for mercy. She clung with particular affection to the house and to the corner in which she had so long sat and worked.

"I have not long to live, I know. I shall soon die. Must I close my days among strangers?" she asked.

"That is not the real reason," affirmed Njanja. "She cannot bear to leave the house as long as Philip is there. She knows very well that if she leaves, she will never see Philip again. And she must have been desperately fond of him, or she, who has lived honestly all her life, would never have done this wicked thing for his sake in her old age."

As far as Philip was concerned, he came out of the matter with a whole skin. It may be possible that he

was speaking the truth when he swore that he had no suspicion whence the presents which he received from Maria came. In any case, it was not easy to get so good a gardener, and one could not leave the garden "to the winds and waves," so it was determined that he should remain as before.

Whether Njanja was right or not in the reasons she gave for Maria's clinging to the Rajevskys, it is certain that when the day of her departure came, she rushed down to the General, and threw herself on her knees before him.

"Let me remain," she sobbed, "without wages; punish me like a slave—but do not send me away!"

The General was moved by such affection for the house, but on the other hand he feared that if he forgave Maria, it would have a demoralising influence on the whole household. He was in great perplexity what to do, when suddenly an idea struck him.

"Listen," he said; "although thieving is a great sin, I would forgive you if your sin had been stealing only. But through you a poor girl has suffered innocently. Remember that it is your fault that Fekluscha had to undergo the shame of a public flogging. For her sake I cannot forgive you. If you positively want to remain here, I can only permit it on the one condition that, in the presence of all the servants, you ask Fekluscha's pardon and kiss her hand. If you will submit to that, then, for God's sake, you shall remain."

Every one expected that Maria would not accept such terms. How could she, so stuck up as she was,

humble herself in public before a serf girl, and into the bargain kiss her hand ?

But to every one's amazement she consented.

Presently the whole establishment assembled in the house to witness a strange spectacle—Maria Vasiljevna kissing Fekluscha's hand. The General had given special orders that it should be done in the most solemn and public manner, and a crowd of people had assembled, for every one was anxious to see the sight. The elders of the family were also there, and the children had begged to be allowed to witness the spectacle.

Tanja would never forget the scene which followed. Fekluscha was quite overcome with the honour which so unexpectedly fell to her lot, and was even afraid that Maria would pay her out for this forced humiliation. She went to the General and begged him to excuse both her and Maria from the hand-kissing.

"I forgive her willingly," she said, sobbing.

But the General had worked himself up into a conviction that it was necessary for him to enforce the severest justice, and only swore at her. "Go away, you stupid, and don't meddle in things which do not concern you. It is not for your sake, but for principle sake, that it is done. If I had sinned against you—I, your master, mind you—I should have had to kiss your hand. Do you not understand that ? Now do be quiet and don't grumble."

The frightened Fekluscha dared no longer make the least remonstrance, but stood where she was told and awaited her fate, trembling like a criminal.

Pale as a sheet, Maria threaded her way through the crowd which opened for her. She moved mechanically as though in her sleep, but her countenance showed a fixed determination and such bitter rancour that every one shivered at the sight of it. Her lips were bloodless, and pressed convulsively together. She went close up to Fekluscha—"Forgive me," she cried; it sounded like a cry of pain, and she took Fekluscha's hand and raised it to her lips with an expression of such hatred as though she would have bitten her. But suddenly a change came over her countenance, and froth foamed round her lips. She fell unconscious to the ground in convulsions and uttering heartrending screams. Later on it was discovered that she had formerly been subject to these attacks, a kind of epilepsy, but had carefully hidden the circumstance from her employers for fear they should not wish to keep her. Those of the servants who knew of her infirmity had, out of loyalty, not mentioned it.

Tanja naturally did not know what an impression this sudden attack made, for the children were, of course, at once removed, and they were so frightened that they themselves were almost hysterical.

But the scene was all the more vividly impressed on her mind by the effect it produced on the servants. Up to that moment they had shown themselves exceedingly bitter and spiteful to Maria. Her conduct seemed to them so shameful, that they experienced a kind of pleasure in showing her their contempt and annoying her in every way. But now all was changed. She became suddenly invested with the character of a suffer-

ing victim and an object of general sympathy. Among the servants a secret protest was raised against the General for the extreme harshness of his sentence.

“Of course she had done wrong,” whispered the other women servants, as they gathered in the nursery to talk the matter over with Njanja as was usual after any great commotion in the family. “If the master himself had punished her, or the mistress beaten her with her own hand, as is the custom in other houses, it would not have been so dreadful; one could bear that. But to have hit upon such a punishment, making her kiss Fekluscha’s hand so that every one should see her! who could stand such a humiliation as that?”

It was long before Maria became conscious. The fits continued for some time, one after another. At last they were obliged to send to the town for a doctor.

Every moment the sympathy for the sick woman increased, and with it the anger of the servants against the master and mistress.

During the course of the day Madame Rajevsky came into the nursery and found Njanja busily employed making tea, though it was not an ordinary “tea hour.” So she innocently asked, “Whom is that for, Njanja?”

“For Maria, of course—who else should it be for? Can’t one spare her a cup of tea when she is ill. We servants at least have some feeling of Christian sympathy,” Njanja answered, in so angry a tone that Madame Rajevsky was quite confused and left the room hastily.

Could this be the same Njanja who only a short time



before was ready to flog Maria almost to death, if she had been allowed !

After a few days Maria got better again, to the great relief of the master and mistress, and continued to live with the Rajevskys as before. Nothing was said about what had passed, and she found that no one, even among the servants, upbraided her with what had happened.

As far as Tanja was concerned, she too felt for Maria from that day forward a secret sympathy, but mingled with a certain instinctive aversion, and she never ran into her room as before. When she met her in the corridor, she pressed herself against the wall and tried not to look at her, so frightened was she that Maria would fall down suddenly on the floor and begin to struggle and shriek.

Maria probably noticed that the child was estranged from her, and tried in every possible manner to win back her former affection. Almost daily she surprised her with small presents. Now it was a bit of many-coloured silk, now a new dress for her doll. But it was no good. The secret aversion remained unchanged, and Tanja ran off as soon as she was left alone with Maria.

Besides, Tanja now came under the influence of the new governess, and that put an end to all intercourse with the servants.

But once, when Tanja was between seven and eight years old, she was running along the corridor, past Maria's door. Suddenly the woman opened the door and called out, "Come here, little missie, and see what a beautiful bread bird I have baked for you."

It was half dark in the long corridor, and no living creature was there except Tanja and Maria. The sight of the pale countenance with the unnatural black eyes frightened Tanja, and instead of answering she rushed away as fast as she could.

"Ah! ha! that is what it is, Miss Tanja despises me!" she heard Maria mumble.

She felt as if she had been hit, not so much by the words as by the tone; but still she could not stop, and ran on her way. But when she came into the school-room and gradually got calm after her fright, Maria's soft, sad voice sounded in her ears. The whole evening Tanja was ill at ease. However much she tried to play or romp, she heard this sad lament which seemed to haunt her. She could not get Maria out of her head. And as it always happens about a person whom one has been unjust to, all of a sudden she seemed to Tanja so good and kind, that she yearned to go to her. Tanja could not manage to tell the governess what had happened. Children are always so loath to speak of their feelings. As she was, moreover, forbidden to go with the servants, she knew her conduct would be praised, and she felt instinctively she would not like to be praised for it. After tea was over and the children were gone to bed, she suddenly decided to go to Maria's room instead of going straight to her bedroom. This was indeed a great and remarkable sacrifice on her part, for she was obliged to run quite alone through the pitch-dark corridor, which she always avoided and was frightened of at night. But now she took the courage of desperation. She flew as fast as she could run without daring

to take breath, and rushed like a whirlwind into Maria's room. Maria had just eaten her evening meal, and as it was a feast day she was not working, but sat by the table with its white tablecloth and read in a little book of pious reflections. A light was burning before the ikon, and after the fearfully dark corridor the room appeared to Tanja unusually bright and pleasant, and herself so good and kind.

"I came to say good-night, dear kind Maria," burst out Tanja in a breath; but before she could say more, Maria had clasped her in her arms and covered her with kisses. She kissed her so passionately and so long that Tanja was again frightened, and began to wonder how she should ever get away without hurting Maria again, when a violent coughing fit forced Maria to let go of the child.

Her cough got worse and worse. "I lie and pant like a dog at night," she was wont to say of herself, with a kind of bitter irony. Every day she became thinner and more transparent, but she withstood every attempt of Madame Rajevsky's to send for a doctor, and looked very hurt and provoked if any one talked of her illness.

Thus she lived on for two or three years, keeping about to the last moment. Only two days before the end did she take to her bed, but the death struggle was very terrible and hard.

By the General's orders she received, according to the rural idea, a very grand funeral, and not only were all the servants there, but the family themselves, including the General. Fekluscha followed her to the very grave

with many tears. Only Philip the gardener was missing. Without waiting for her decease, he had some months previously left the Rajevskys for a better situation somewhere near Dünaburg.

### CHAPTER III.

THE unfortunate episode of Maria Vasiljevna was the prelude to a whole number of unpleasantnesses which by degrees forced the General to pay a certain amount of attention to the nursery, with which he had hitherto troubled himself as little as possible.

As often happens in Russian families, Ivan Rajevsky suddenly made the unexpected discovery that his children were far from being brought up in the exemplary manner which he imagined.

To begin with, one fine day both girls went off, lost their road, and could not find it till the evening, and had moreover eaten crackleberries which made them ill for several days.

This incident showed that the children were watched in a very lax fashion. After this first discovery others followed in rapid succession. Every one had till this moment imagined that Anyuta was a perfect prodigy, wise and developed beyond her years. Now it was suddenly discovered that she was not only unbearably spoiled, but that for a girl of twelve she was woefully ignorant. She could not even write Russian correctly.

To complete these misfortunes, it was discovered that the French governess had done something so shocking

that it could not be even mentioned in the children's presence. Dismal indeed were the days which followed. In after years Tanja recalled them dimly as days of general domestic misery. In the nursery there was constant worry, tears, and cries. Every one squabbled; and it affected every one, innocent or guilty. The father was furious; the mother wept. Njanja howled; the Frenchwoman wrung her hands and packed her boxes. Tanja and Anyuta sat still and did not dare to move, for every one vented their wrath on them, and each fault was now regarded as a serious sin. None the less did they listen with curiosity, and not without some childish glee, to their elders quarrelling; and they whispered wonderingly one to another, what would be the end of all this. General Rajevsky, who did not believe in half-measures, determined on a thorough reform of his whole system of training. The Frenchwoman was sent off. Njanja left the nursery, and was entrusted with the charge of the linen cupboard. Two new persons were installed in the house, a Polish tutor and an English governess.

The tutor proved himself a thoroughly pleasant and good-natured man, who understood his business to its very foundation, but he exercised hardly any influence on the actual training of the children. The governess brought altogether a new element into the house. Though she was born in Russia and spoke Russian fluently, she had retained absolutely the typical peculiarities of the Anglo-Saxon race—integrity, endurance, and the power of carrying a business to its end. These peculiarities were absolutely opposed to those of the

family, which explains the extraordinary influence which she soon acquired.

Directly she entered the house, all her endeavours were directed to make the children's room into a regular English nursery, in which she should train up pattern English misses. But God knows it was not easy to establish a hot-bed for English "misses" in a Russian gentleman's home, which for hundreds of years or for generations back had been accustomed to autocratic arbitrariness, negligence, and slovenliness. Nevertheless, thanks to her wonderful indomitableness, she did in some measure succeed.

The eldest sister Anyuta, who hitherto had been accustomed to unrestrained freedom, she certainly never managed to curb. They had two years of incessant skirmishing and collisions, till at last Anyuta, when she was fifteen, renounced once for all the governess's care and control. As the outward visible sign of her freedom from tutelage, Anyuta's bed was moved from the nursery to a room close to Madame Rajevsky's, and from that moment Anyuta considered herself grown-up. The governess, moreover, took every opportunity of showing obtrusively that Anyuta's education, however unsuitable, was no longer any concern of hers, and that she washed her hands of it entirely.

All the more zealously did she concentrate her efforts on Tanja, cutting her off from the rest of the family, endeavouring to shield her from her elder sister's influence as jealously as though it were the plague. The arrangements of the huge manorial house favoured her design, for it was so large that three or four families

might have lived in it as one and the same time without getting in each other's way. Almost all the ground-floor, with the exception of a few rooms occupied by the servants and occasional guests, was at the disposal of Tanja and her governess.

The upper storey with its reception rooms was occupied by Madame Rajevsky and Anyuta. Fedja and his tutor lived in a separate wing, and the General's business room was on the entresol of a tower which was entirely apart from the rest of the building. Thus, the different elements of which the Rajevsky family consisted each had its own territory without disturbing each other, the scattered members only assembling at the dinner table or at supper.



## CHAPTER IV.

THE wall clock in the bedroom close to the school-room struck seven. Each repeated stroke of the clock brought to Tanja, even through her sleep, the mournful consciousness that in a few minutes Dunjascha would come and wake her. But it was so delicious to sleep that she tried to persuade herself that she had only imagined she heard the hated seven strokes. She turned over and drew the sheets closer round her, and hastened to enjoy the short-lived bliss of the last moments' sleep. She knew that happiness would soon be ended.

Now the door really creaked, and she heard Dunjascha's heavy step as she brought in a bundle of wood. Then came a series of familiar daily repeated sounds: the sound of the blocks of wood as they were thrown on to the ground: the striking of the match, the crackling of the dry wood as it was broken, the spluttering and hissing of the flames. Tanja heard it through her sleep, and it seemed to increase the feeling of enjoyment and to strengthen the dislike of getting up from her warm bed. "If I could only sleep for a moment—one little moment more!" But the noise of the flames got louder and louder, till it grew into a continuous, regular roar.

“It is time to get up, little missie,” said a voice in her ears. And Dunjascha drew down the sheets with a merciless hand.

Outside it had only just begun to get light, and the cold winter morning’s first rays mingled with the yellow light of the stearine candle and gave everything a dead, unreal appearance. Is there anything more unbearable in all the world than getting up by candlelight? Tanja sat crouched up in bed, and began mechanically to pull on her stockings; but her eyes closed of themselves, and the hands which held the stocking became still.

From behind the screen, where the governess had her bed, came a sound of splashing, spluttering, and energetic rubbing.

“Don’t dawdle, Tanja. If you are not ready in a quarter of an hour, you will have to wear the ‘lazy’ ticket on your back at luncheon,” cried the governess’s severe voice in English.

This threat was not one to be played with. Tanja does not remember any corporal punishment, but her governess had managed to replace it by a fearful substitute. If Tanja was guilty of any fault, she fastened on the girl’s back a paper on which was written, in big characters, of what her crime consisted, and thus adorned she had to appear at the breakfast or dinner table. This was a punishment which Tanja feared more than death, and thus the governess’s threat had the effect intended, of driving away every trace of weariness. She instantly jumped out of bed. Dunjascha was already waiting by the wash-stand with a can of cold water in one hand and a bath towel in

the other—for Tanja had every morning, in English fashion, a cold douche. A momentary icy coldness, and then a feeling as of boiling water rushing through the veins, and then a most delicious feeling of extraordinary vigour and strength.

Now it was already light. Tanja and her governess went into the dining-room. The samovar steamed on the table, the fire crackled in the stove, and the clear light was reflected many times over in the hard-frozen window-panes.

Tanja was no longer in the least sleepy. On the contrary, she felt in such good spirits, so unreasonably glad and lively, that she longed to make a noise and laugh and play. Ah, if she had only had some companion, of the same age, with whom she could have jumped about and romped, and who felt the same overpowering wealth of young life as herself! But she had no such comrade. She drank tea *tête-à-tête* with her governess, for the other members of her family—even Anyuta and Fedja—got up later. She felt such a wild desire to laugh and to be funny, that she made a mild endeavour to joke with her governess. But unfortunately she was at the moment out of temper, a thing which often happened in the morning as she had some kind of liver complaint. So she thought it her duty to quash Tanja's inconvenient access of merriment with a freezing remark that now it was time to learn, not to play.

The day began for Tanja invariably with a music lesson. In the large salon in the upper storey where the piano stood, it was so cold that her fingers were almost

numbed with frost, and so swollen that her nails looked like blue spots.

One and a half hour's scales and exercises, accompanied by the monotonous tap of the governess's time-beating, chilled, as may be well imagined, all the life and spirit with which Tanja began the day. After music followed other lessons. As long as Anyuta shared them, Tanja took great pleasure in them, though she was so small that she could hardly have any real instruction. But she had begged leave to be present at her sister's lessons, and listened to them with such attention, that it often happened that when the fourteen-year-old Anyuta had by the next time forgotten the whole lesson, the little seven-year-old Tanja remembered every word, and solemnly repeated it all for her elder sister, which small triumph was a great delight to Tanja. But now that Anyuta had closed her school days and stepped into all the rights of "grown-up" dignity, the lessons had lost half their charm for Tanja. She studied pretty diligently, but how much more willingly would she have striven if she had had a companion.

Twelve o'clock was the hour of the mid-day meal. After they had finished the last mouthful, the governess went to the window to look at the weather. Tanja followed her with beating heart, as the question was one of great importance to her. If the thermometer showed more than ten degrees of frost (R.), and if there was no wind, then she had before her the melancholy prospect of a walk with her governess, for an hour and a half up and down the snow-swept paths. But if, luckily for her, it was cold, or there was a wind, the governess went

out alone for what she considered her indispensable walk, and Tanja was sent to the drawing-room upstairs to exercise herself playing at ball.

Tanja did not appreciate playing at ball alone. She was just twelve, thought herself a big girl, and considered it insulting that her governess should really think she could enjoy herself in such a childish way. But none the less, she accepted the governess's order with pleasure, as it gave her an hour and a half's freedom.

The upper storey belonged specially to Madame Rajevsky and Anyuta, but at that hour both of them were in their own room, and there was not a soul in the big room. Tanja ran round the room a few times, kicking the ball before her, but her thoughts were far away. Like most children brought up alone, she had her world of dreams and fantasies of which her parents never dreamt. She loved poetry passionately; the form and rhythm gave her a strange enjoyment. She devoured greedily whatever Russian poets she could get hold of; the more inflated, of course, and the more high-flown they were, the better they suited her. She had till then, moreover, had little opportunity of educating her taste. Schukofski's ballads were for long the only production of Russian poetry which she knew. There was no one in the family who interested themselves in this kind of literature, and even though there was a fairly large library, it consisted almost wholly of foreign books. Neither Puschkin, Lermontof, nor Nekrasof were represented in it. Tanja could never forget, later, the day when she first held in her hand Filonof's

anthology, which had been bought at the teacher's express request. It was a veritable revelation for her. During the course of the few days after she got it, she went about as though out of her senses, mumbling half aloud to herself strophes out of Lermontof's "Mtsyri" and Puschkin's "Prisoners in Kaukasus," till the governess at last lost patience and threatened to take from her her precious book.

Verse-writing had always attracted Tanja to such a high degree that from her fifth year she had written verses. But this occupation was not approved by the governess. She had ever before her the picture of the normal, healthy child, who was to develop into an exemplary English Miss, and verse-writing did not at all fit into that scheme. She therefore punished all Tanja's attempts at verse mercilessly. If by ill-luck she found a whole budget of Tanja's verses, she fastened the papers round the child's neck, and moreover read aloud several of the unlucky verses to Anyuta and Fedja, of course making fun of them the while and distorting them.

But the punishment was of little good. When Tanja was twelve years old she was quite sure she was going to be a poetess. For fear of her governess, she dared no longer write down her verses, but she composed them in her head, like the ancient bards, and confided them to her ball. Bowling it before her, she was wont to run round the room declaiming in a loud voice two pieces of which she was specially proud—"The Bedouin and his Horse," and the "Seaman's Feeling when Diving after Pearls." She had also in her head another long

poem, "The Whirlpool," something between "Undine" and "Mtsyri," but of which the first ten verses only were ready, and there were to be one hundred and twenty. Tanja did not lose courage, for she believed firmly and fully that this poem would in time become one of the gems of Russian literature.

But the Muses are, one knows, capricious, and they did not always grant the poetic inspiration just when Tanja was tired of playing with her ball. And as the Muses did not come when called, Tanja was put into a hazardous position, temptation besetting her on every side.

Near the drawing-room was a large library, and on the table and on all the sofas were strewn Russian magazines and foreign novels of the most fascinating kind. Tanja had been severely forbidden to touch them, for the governess was most strict as to what books she read.

Sonya had not many children's books, but those she had she knew by heart. The governess never allowed her to read any kind of book, even if it were specially written for children, without looking through it herself; and as she read rather slowly, and seldom thought she had time for such things, Tanja was often subject, so to speak, to a chronic state of famine. And when she suddenly found all this wealth of books within reach, how could she withstand the temptation. ?

She fought some moments with herself. She drew near the books and at first only fingered them. She turned over a few leaves, and then read some lines here and there, and then jumped up and played ball again

without looking toward them. But by degrees the reading captivated her more strongly, and when she saw that her first attempt went off happily, she forgot her danger, and devoured eagerly one page after another. It mattered little if she did not begin with the first volume of a novel. She read with the same interest the beginning, middle, or end—adding, by dint of her imagination, what went before. Between whiles she took the precaution of playing a little with her ball, so that, in case her governess came back by chance to see after her, she should find her pupil playing as she was ordered.

Usually this stratagem succeeded. Tanja heard the governess's step on the stairs in time to throw down the book before she came, so that the governess lived under the impression that her pupil exercised herself all the time playing ball, as became a good and proper child. Once or twice it, however, happened that Tanja was so lost in her book that she heard nothing and noticed nothing before the governess rose, as it were, out of the ground before her, and thus caught her in the very act. On this occasion, as usual when Tanja's guilt was specially great, the governess hit on the extreme measure of sending her to her father, ordering her to tell him herself what she had done. This was the worst punishment Tanja knew.

Though General Rajevsky was in no way really severe with his children, he never was much with them except at dinner, and he never permitted himself to be the least familiar with them, except when they were ill. Then he was quite different. The fear of losing them



made him quite another man. His voice became wonderfully soft and gentle, and no one understood as he did how to coax and play with them. They, on their side, idolised him in such hours, which they ever after remembered with pleasure. But usually, when they were all well, the General followed the rule that "a man must be strict," and was therefore very niggardly with his caresses.

He liked to be alone, and lived in his own world, where none of the family entered. In the morning he went for a walk round his property, alone or followed by the steward, and nearly all the rest of the day he spent in his own room. It lay apart from the rest of the rooms, and formed, so to speak, the Holiest of Holies in the house. Even Madame Rajevsky did not go in without knocking, and none of the children would ever have had so bold an idea as to go there unbidden.

So when the governess said, "Go to your father, and tell him how you have behaved," Tanja was quite in despair. She wept, and fought against it, but the governess was unrelenting, took her by the hand and led or dragged her through the long row of rooms which led to the General's door. She left her to her fate and went away. It was no good crying any longer. Besides, in the hall outside Tanja saw the forms of some of the idle and curious servants, who looked at her with impertinent interest.

"I expect the little miss has done something naughty again," she heard a servant, her father's valet, Ilja, say with a half-compassionate, half-spiteful voice.

Tanja did not condescend to answer him, and strove to appear as if nothing were amiss, and as if she of her own free will was visiting her father. She did not dare to return to her schoolroom without having fulfilled the governess's command—that would be to increase the offence by visible disobedience, and to stand by the door as a butt for the servants' scorn was unbearable. There was nothing left for it but to knock and go courageously to her fate.

Tanja gave a feeble, a very feeble little knock. Some seconds passed which she thought an eternity.

“Knock a little louder, miss ; papa did not hear !” remarked again that unbearable Ilja, who seemed much amused at the whole incident.

There was nothing else to do. Tanja knocked again.

“Who's there? Come in !” at last her father's voice answered from the inner room.

Tanja stepped in, and stood in the shadow by the threshold. Her father sat at his writing-table with his back to the door and did not see her.

“Who is there? and what do you want ?” he cried, irritably.

“It is I, papa. Malvina Jakovlevna has sent me here,” sobbed Tanja, in answer.

The General now understood what had happened. “Aha! you have been behaving foolishly again,” he said, endeavouring to speak as severely as possible. “Well, speak out ; what have you done ?”

And sobbing and stammering, Tanja made her self-accusation.

The General listened carefully. His ideas of training were most elementary, and pedagogy he considered was something with which only women should busy themselves. He naturally had no inkling of the world of confused, complicated feeling which already began to develop in the little girl standing before him to await his decision. Absorbed by his masculine "business," he had not noticed how she had by degrees grown out of the chubby child of five years ago. He was doubtless perplexed what he should do and say on the spur of the moment. Tanja's transgression seemed to him most trifling, but he believed firmly and truly in the imperative necessity of severity in the training of children. He was annoyed with the governess for not managing so simple a business by herself, instead of sending Tanja to him. But if matters were once brought to him he must show his power and his fatherly authority. So he put on a severe and displeased air.

"You are a naughty, disobedient girl, and I am much displeased with you," said he, and paused, not knowing what more to say. "Go into the corner," he said at last, for the only pedagogical wisdom which had remained in his memory was that naughty children should be put in the corner.

And so Tanja, a girl of twelve, who a few minutes before had been in the company of a heroine who, in the last half of a volume, had passed through a thrilling psychological scene, had to go into the corner like a little stupid ignorant infant.

The General returned to his business at his writing-

table. Deep silence reigned in the room. Tanja stood immovable, but what did she not suffer and experience during those few minutes. She saw and understood so clearly how foolish and unsuitable the whole of this treatment was. A kind of inner shyness made her endeavour to keep silent, and not to break into tears or to make a scene. But a bitter feeling of injustice and helpless wrath rose in her throat and nearly choked her.

“How silly! What does it hurt me to stand in a corner?” She sought to comfort herself thus, but it hurt her to think that her father could and should humble her so, the same father whom she was so proud of and who stood so far above every one else.

It did not matter so much while she was alone with her father, but there was a knock at the door, and, under some pretext or other, in walked the unbearable Ilja. Tanja knew well that he only came out of curiosity to see how she had been punished; but he pretended not to see her, fulfilled his errand without hurry as though he had not noticed anything peculiar, and only just as he was going out did he cast a malicious glance at Tanja. How she hated him at that moment!

Tanja remained so silent and still that perhaps her father had forgotten about her, and she had to stand there a long, long time, for she was of course too proud to beg forgiveness. At last her father remembered her, and despatched her with the words, “Now get along, and don’t do anything naughty another time.” He had no inkling of the moral torture which the unhappy little girl had suffered during the foregoing half-hour.

Truly he would have been horrified could he have looked into her mind, but as it was he forgot in a few minutes the whole business. Tanja went out of the room with a feeling of grief far above her years, of undeserved humiliation, so bitter that she only experienced the like again twice or thrice in her life's darkest hours.

She returned to the schoolroom silent and subdued. The governess was delighted at the result of her method of education, for during the course of many days Tanja was so quiet and good that she found nothing to correct in her conduct. But she would have been less pleased had she known what an impression this extreme of pedagogic zeal had left on her pupil's mind.

Through the whole of Tanja's childhood's memories ran, like a black thread, the conviction that she was not liked by her family. The melancholy impression, fed by the expressions she picked up from the servants, was heightened now by the solitary life she lived with her governess.

The lot of the latter was not one of the happiest. Ugly, alone in the world, no longer young, a foreigner in Russia, where she had never felt quite at home but always longed for English ways, she concentrated on Tanja all the affection which her stern, energetic, and somewhat unsympathetic nature was capable. Tanja formed the centre of all her thoughts and endeavours, and gave an object to her life. But her love was hard, zealous, exacting, and without a touch of tenderness.

Madame Rajevsky and the governess were two opposite natures, between whom no sympathy was

possible. Tanja's mother, both in character and appearance, belonged to the class of women who never grow old. She was born a "Von Sch. \* \* \*," a German family long settled in Russia. Her grandfather was a famous man of science, and her father head of the military academy. His position introduced him into the highest military as well as to scientific circles; and all the cultivated and distinguished people of that day in St. Petersburg met in his house. He had early lost his wife, but his household was looked after by his many unmarried sisters who lived with him: and thus it happened that Elena Pavlovna, as long as she was a girl, never came into touch with the practical side of life. She received a better education than many Russian girls of the day, and was an accomplished pianist, sang well, and spoke many foreign languages, and was well acquainted with German and French literature.

She had also other artistic inclinations, though these were never so strongly marked as to demand of her any sacrifice or to encroach in any way on the sensibilities or convenience of the rest of the family. It was, in short, evident in every way that she was to cultivate her talents not for her own sake, but for the pleasure or others. In her father's house there were chiefly old and serious people who found it pleasant and refreshing to talk with a pretty, talented young girl, and Elena from her earliest youth had played the part of a fresh, sweet flower, which stood out in pleasant relief on the sombre background of academical surroundings. To all her father's scientific friends she was the personifi-

cation of that ideal child of whom Goethe sang, and whom, it seems, fate decrees as necessary a feature of each circle of grey-headed German thinkers as is the little busy flycatcher to the great dark-red rhinoceros around whose resort it flutters.

General Rajevsky, Elena's husband, who was much older than herself, had from the very first been accustomed to consider her and to treat her as a child, and he kept this idea far into life. He called her Lina, or Lenotschka, though she always respectfully called him Ivàn Sergejevitch. He often scolded her even in the children's presence. They often heard him say, "Now you are talking nonsense again, Lenotschka." And Elena was never angry over these scoldings, but held fast to her opinion like a spoiled child who has the privilege of winning consent even for its most unreasonable whims.

There is no doubt that had Elena stepped, on her marriage, into an old German patriarchal family, she would soon have become an excellent housewife. But in her husband's house it was not easy for her to develop any housewifely virtues. General Rajevsky was a widower when he married Elena, and though there were no children by the first marriage, the house kept to the customs which had been established at that time. The servants were all old family serfs, and had already usurped the reins of authority. The new mistress, who was almost a child, gentle and yielding in disposition, could naturally not excite respect; and among the servants there was, from the very first, a kind of secret understanding to confine her dominion

within the four walls of the drawing-room, and never under any circumstances to leave the sceptre in her small weak hands. At the commencement of her married life Elena sought sometimes to throw off the servants' yoke, but every attempt at interference on her part in domestic matters met with such obstinate, though respectful opposition, her commands were obeyed with such an evident desire to make them seem preposterous, that the results were naturally disastrous. Nothing remained for poor Elena but to admit her own want of practical knowledge, and she drew back again humiliated ; so that her attempts only served to bring her more than ever under the tyranny of the servants.

Of her children's governess Elena was afraid, for the liberty-loving Englishwoman treated her often somewhat fiercely, and considered herself the ruling power in the children's rooms and the mother as only an occasional visitor. As a consequence, Madame Rajevsky hardly ever appeared in the children's room, and never meddled with their training.

As far as Tanja was concerned, she admired her mother heart and soul, for she thought she was the loveliest and most charming of ladies, though at the same time she always felt wronged by her. Why did she love her less than her other children?

It was evening, and Tanja was sitting in the school-room. Although the lessons for the next day were all prepared, the governess kept her close there under different pretexts, and would not let her go upstairs to the others. From the drawing-room, which was just



above the schoolroom, there came a sound of music. Madame Rajevsky generally played the piano in the evening. She could sit and play for hours together, improvising and going from one motif to another. She had great musical taste and a wonderfully light touch, and Tanja always listened with delight to her playing. Under the influence of music and of fatigue after lessons, she had a sudden fit of tenderness, and she longed to slip upstairs and be coaxed by some one. Now there were only a few minutes till tea-time, and the governess at last let her off. Tanja rushed upstairs and witnessed the following scene. Madame Rajevsky had already ceased playing the piano, and was seated on the sofa between Anyuta and Fedja, who leant against her on either side. They were laughing and talking merrily when Tanja came in, but no one noticed her. She stood some moments silently beside them, hoping that some one would take notice of her. But they continued their conversation without disturbing themselves. It needed nothing further to check Tanja's eagerness. "They are happy without me," whispered she, bitterly, deeply hurt in her heart, and instead of rushing up and kissing her mother's delicate white hands, as she had intended when in the schoolroom downstairs, she crept into a corner far away from the others and sat there and sulked till tea-time, and shortly after was sent to bed.

## CHAPTER V.

THIS conviction of Tanja's that she was less loved than the other children hurt her deeply. It was all the worse, because very early in life there arose in her a longing for a strong, undivided affection. As a consequence of this, if any relative or friend of the family happened to notice her in the smallest degree more than her brother or sister, she immediately had for that person a feeling bordering on worship.

There were specially two persons who in Tanja's childhood became objects of her warmest affection—her father's brother and her mother's brother. The first, Peter Rajevsky, her father's eldest brother, was an old man of unusually noble appearance, tall, with a massive head covered with curly white hair. His face, with its regular and severe profile, the grey eyebrows almost meeting and the deep furrow which cut the brow almost in two, might have seemed terribly stern, almost forbidding, if it had not been lit up by a pair of good, honest, innocent eyes such as one generally finds only in a Newfoundland dog or in a little child.


Peter Rajevsky was not a man of *this* world. Though he was the eldest of the brothers, and should have taken his position as the head of his family, he was

treated by all his relatives as a kind of grown-up child, of whom one need take no notice. He had for many a long year been regarded as original and odd. His wife had been dead for some years, and he had made over the whole of his somewhat considerable property to his only son, whilst he kept for himself only an inconsiderable monthly allowance. As he was thus without definite occupation, he often came to visit his brother at Palibino, and stayed there for weeks at a time. His arrival was always considered by the children as a high festival, and it was always merrier and brighter in the house when he was there.

His favourite place was the library. In all questions of physical exertion he was very lazy, and could sit for whole days without moving on the leather sofa, one leg over the other, blinking with his left eye, which was weaker than the other, and altogether absorbed in reading *Revue des Deux Mondes*, his favourite literature.

To read, to read madly, furiously, this was his only passion. Politics interested him much, and he devoured the papers greedily when they came, once a week, to Palibino, after which he would sit long lost in deep meditation as to "what was the next piece of mischief that rascal Napoleon would hit upon?" During the last years of his life Bismarck also troubled his brain pretty severely. He was for the most part convinced that Napoleon would make "mincemeat of Bismarck." And as he never lived to see the year 1870, he died undisturbed in this conviction.

As far as politics were concerned, Peter Rajevsky was very bloodthirsty. To cut to pieces an army of a



hundred thousand men was to him a very small affair. He showed the same hardheartedness when he fancied himself punishing criminals. A criminal was to him a lay figure, for in real life he considered all men good and law-abiding. Notwithstanding the protests of the governess, he, for instance, sentenced all the English governors in India to be hanged. "Yes, miss, all, all," he cried, striking in his warmth his knuckles on the table. At such moments he looked so savage that any one coming suddenly into the room would have been frightened at his countenance. But the next moment he was silent, his face took an uneasy, troubled expression: he became aware that he had with his careless gesticulation disturbed the greyhound Grisi which had just laid herself down by the sofa to take a nap.

But Peter Rajevsky was in his glory when he came across an account of one or other remarkable scientific discovery. At such times the Rajevskys' dinner-table was enlivened by hot debates, whereas when the family were alone there reigned an almost obstinate silence, simply because for lack of common interest there was nothing to talk about.

"Have you read what Paul Bert has just discovered?" he would ask, turning to his sister-in-law, Madame Rajevsky. "He has made a kind of artificial Siamese twins by allowing the nerves of one rabbit to grow into those of another. If one hits one, the other instantly feels the blow. What do you say to that? Do you see what it will lead to?"

And then Peter Rajevsky would begin to detail to those present the contents of the newspaper article he

had just read, while he involuntarily and almost unconsciously adorned and exaggerated and drew such wild conclusions as to the aim and effect of the discoveries as certainly never entered into the dreams of the discoverer.

After the statement followed a hot debate. Madame Rajevsky and Anyuta were almost always on Peter Rajevsky's side in their enthusiasm for the new discovery. The governess, on the other hand, with inborn contradictoriness, was almost always the leader of the opposition, and began with great eagerness to attack the theories Peter Rajevsky propounded. The Polish tutor occasionally raised his voice to correct some evident mistake, but he wisely refrained from taking part in the debate. As to the General, he played the part of a sceptical and amused critic, who took neither one side nor the other, though he had with his keen glance perceived and grasped the weak points of both combatants.

These debates sometimes took quite a warlike note, and, through some unlucky fate, though almost always beginning with an utterly abstract question, would pass over to some small personal insinuation. The hottest combatants were always Malvina (the governess) and Anyuta, between whom raged a five-year-old, but secret, quarrel, though it had been sometimes interrupted by a short armed and watchful truce.

If Peter Rajevsky was somewhat surprising in his rashness in drawing all sorts of conclusions from isolated facts, the governess on her part was not less remarkable in her cleverness in application. She saw

at a glance, in scientific theories apparently widely removed from practical life, opportunities of blaming Anyuta's conduct, and this in ways so unexpected and original that the others could not but be astonished.

Anyuta was never in the least disconcerted, but gave her so malignant and impertinent an answer that the governess rose from the table and explained that after such an insult she could no longer remain in the house. Every one present naturally was troubled and ill at ease. Madame Rajevsky, who hated squabbles and scenes, undertook the office of mediator, and after a lengthy negotiation peace was at last concluded.

Tanja remembers later what storms were caused by two different essays in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*—the one dealing with the correlation of the physical forces (an account of Helmholtz' brochure on this question), the other Claude Bernard's experiment on the part of the brain of a dove. Helmholtz and Claude Bernard would have been much astonished if they had known what an apple of discord they had thrown into a peaceful Russian family, living in an unknown corner of the province of Vitebsk.

But it was not only politics and accounts of recent discoveries which interested Peter Rajevsky. He read with equal delight novels, travels, and historical works—aye, even in lack of all else, children's books. It would seem that nothing could be easier than for a man of fortune to indulge this innocent passion. But nevertheless, Peter Rajevsky owned hardly any books of his own, and it was only during the last years of his life, and thanks to the library at Palibino, that he was able

to indulge in the only enjoyment for which he cared. The unusual weakness of his character, which was in such marked contrast to his stately and severe exterior, had during his whole life subjected him to the oppression of another, and this oppression had been so severe that it had never been possible for him to satisfy any personal inclination or desire.

The result of this same feebleness of character had made it evident when he was young that he was unfitted for the military career, the only one open in those days to a nobleman ; and as he was of a peaceful and contented nature, and had never kicked over the traces, his affectionate parents had decided to keep him at home, giving him, however, just sufficient education to prevent him sinking to the level of an ordinary country yokling. All that he had learned he had thought out or read about, and his knowledge was really remarkable, though, like all self-educated men, it was patchy and unconnected.

Some subjects he knew very well ; of others he was quite ignorant. Even when grown to man's estate he continued to live at home, and he enjoyed his unpretentious position in the family, and was always utterly wanting in every trace of self-interest or egoism. The younger and much more brilliant brothers treated him in a rather bullying, good-natured, patronising manner, as though he were a harmless original being. But suddenly a piece of unexpected good luck fell from heaven upon him. The greatest beauty and richest heiress in the governmental district, Nadeschda Andrejevna N., honoured him with her attention.

Was she caught by his prepossessing exterior, or did she coolly calculate that he was just the husband she required; that it would be pleasant to have for ever at her feet a submissive, enamoured giant? At all events she allowed it to be understood clearly that she would have no objection to presenting him with her hand.

Peter Rajevsky himself would never have ventured to dream of such a thing, but the whole crowd of aunts and sisters hastened to apprise him of the good luck which had fallen to his lot, and before he knew a word about it he found himself the chosen bridegroom of Nadeschda Andrejevna. But the marriage was not a happy one.

Although the Rajevsky children were fully persuaded that Uncle Peter was put in the world solely for their special pleasure, and were ready to chatter with him about every kind of folly which came into their heads, they had, nevertheless, an instinctive feeling that there was one subject of conversation which it would not do to meddle with; they never dared ask their uncle about his deceased wife.

Terrible stories about Aunt Nadeschda Andrejevna were, moreover, current among the children. The parents and governess never mentioned her in their presence, but the youngest unmarried sister of their father, Anna Sergejevna, sometimes had a gossipy fit, and told the children terrible things about her blessed sister-in-law Nadeschda Andrejevna.

“God have mercy on us, what a viper she was! She led me and my sister Martha a miserable life. And



brother Peter had certainly his full benefit of her ! If, for instance, she was angry with any of the servants, off she rushed to him instantly and desired him to flog the criminal with his own hand. But however good he was, he would not do it without trying to talk her into reason. But that certainly was hard. She became angry with his remonstrances, and turned on him with every manner of abuse. He was just a weak woman all his life, and no man. He sat there, silent and meek, and listened to her. And at last, when she saw she could not anger him with words, she took his paper, books, and anything that was on his writing-table, and threw them into the fire, screaming out that she would have none of that rubbish in her house. It went so far that she even took off her shoe. Yes, she regularly boxed his ears, and he, the meek creature, tried to catch her hands, but very carefully, so as not to hurt her, and said kindly, 'What is the matter with you, Nadenka? do calm yourself. Are you not ashamed even to do it in other people's presence?' But she was ashamed of nothing."

"How could uncle stand such a wife ! Did he not try to get rid of her?" we children all exclaimed, with deep concern.

"Ah ! dear children, one does not throw away one's lawful wife like a glove," answered Anna Sergejevna. "And I must also say that however ill she treated him, he loved her just as much."

"How could he love such a crosspatch !"

"He did love her, however, and could not live

without her. When she was put an end to, he was so miserable he nearly killed himself."

"What do mean, Aunt Anna, by being put an end to?" the children asked, in greatest excitement.

But our aunt noticed she had let slip what she ought not to have mentioned, and broke off her story and began to knit energetically at her stocking, which was a sign that no sequel was to follow; but the children's curiosity had been aroused, and would not slumber.

"Sweet darling auntie, say!" we asked her earnestly. And Anna Sergejevna probably thought she could not well stop now she had gone so far.

"Well, you see, it was so—her own serfs suffocated her," she answered, suddenly.

"Oh, how terrible! How did it happen?"

"Very easily indeed," said Anna Sergejevna. "She had sent brother Peter and the children away somewhere. At night her favourite maid Malanja undressed her and put her to bed, and then clapped her hands two or three times. This was a sign for the other maids to hasten into the room, and Fedor the coachman and Jevstignej the gardener were with them. Nadeschda Andrejevna needed only to glance at them to see her danger, but she was not afraid and never lost her head, but swore at them. 'What are you going to do, you rascals? Are you mad? Out of the room instantly!' And out of long use they were subdued, and went back to the door; but Malanja, who was the boldest, called out to the others, 'What are you thinking about, you miserable cowards? Are you not more anxious to save your own skins? Don't you understand that to-morrow

she will send you all to Siberia?' So then they took courage and rushed towards the bed; some held my sainted sister-in-law down by hands and feet, and others piled cushions and bolsters upon her so that she was suffocated. She begged and besought them, and offered them money if they would let her live—but no, they would not be bribed. And Malanja, who was her favourite, made the others lay a wet handkerchief over her head, so that there should be no blue marks on her face.

"But then they went and gave themselves up, the stupid slaves, and were whipped until they told the whole story to the judges. And they all got severe punishment for what they had done, and many are still leading miserable lives in Siberia."

Their aunt remained silent, and the children too, filled with horror.

"Mind, now, whatever you do, don't say anything to your father or mother about this. I was stupid to have told you," she added presently. But the children understood well that it was not a thing they could talk about to father or mother or governess. There would be a scene indeed, and no one would ever dare to tell them anything more.

But in the evening, when Tanja had to go to bed, this horrid story followed her, so that she could not sleep. Once, when on a visit to her uncle, she saw a great oil painting, full size, of Nadeschda Andrejevna, painted in the banal style customary at that time. And now her aunt's picture stood lifelike before her, small and delicately made, pretty as a porcelain

doll, dressed in a red velvet robe, with a garnet necklace on her round white throat, with a bright colour in her round cheeks, a haughty expression in her large black eyes, and a stereotyped smile in her little mouth. And Tanja tried to fancy how those large eyes opened wider with horror, when she suddenly saw herself surrounded by submissive slaves coming to take her life. Later Tanja fancied herself in her place. When Dunjascha undressed her, it came over her all at once how it would seem if the maid's round kindly face were suddenly to have a wild, hateful expression, and if she were to clap her hands, and Ilja and Stepan and Sascha were to rush in, calling out, "We are going to strike you dead, miss!"

Tanja became thoroughly frightened with these fearful thoughts, and no longer tried to keep Dunjascha with her as long as possible, but was glad when she went off, taking the light with her. But Tanja could not even then sleep, without lying awake first and staring into the darkness with wide-open eyes, waiting wearily until the governess should come upstairs with the grown-ups from the card party.

Whenever she was alone with her uncle, this story always came back to her involuntarily, and it seemed to her so wonderful and incomprehensible that a man should have gone through so much in his life and yet remain so calm and happy as if nothing had happened; he could even play chess with her, and make paper boats for her, and be roused to fire and flames by reading some article in the papers about the ancient bed of the Syr-Dayas, or something else of that kind.

Children always find it hard to realise that their relations whom they see in everyday life have, during their life, lived through tragic scenes, and have ever deviated from the common customs around them.

Tanja sometimes experienced an almost morbid desire to ask her uncle how it had all happened. She could sit motionless by him for hours together whilst she tried to picture to herself how that great, strong, clever man had trembled before the little beauty his wife, how he had wept and kissed her hands while she tore his papers and books, or while she pulled off her little shoe and struck him on the cheeks.

Once and only once in the course of her whole childhood did Tanja venture to meddle with her uncle's sore point.

It was evening, and they were together alone in the library. Her uncle as usual sat on the sofa, one leg thrown over the other, and read. Tanja jumped about playing with her ball, but at last tired, she crept on to the sofa close to him. She leant against him, lost as usual in her wonderings about his past life.

Peter Sergejevitch suddenly laid down his book, and asked, while he gently stroked her hair, "What is my little girl thinking about so deeply?"

"Were you very unhappy with your wife, uncle?" exclaimed Tanja, impulsively and almost involuntarily. Never could she forget the effect of the unexpected question upon her poor uncle. His calm, stern countenance suddenly contracted as though in physical anguish, and he put out his hands as if to ward off a blow. And when Tanja saw how she had vexed

him, she was ashamed and ill at ease. It seemed to her as if she herself had taken off her slipper and boxed him on the ear.

"Dear, darling uncle," she cried, "forgive me; I didn't mean what I said," she whispered, and she nestled up to him and hid her face in her breast, and the kind uncle sought to comfort her over her indiscreet inquisitiveness.

From that hour Tanja never again ventured on the forbidden subject. But she could always ask him anything else. She was considered his special favourite, and could sit for hours with him talking of every imaginable thing. He would unfold to Tanja the most abstract theories, quite forgetting it was a child to whom he was talking. But it was just that which pleased Tanja. He talked to her as he would have talked to a grown person, and she strained her powers to understand him, or at all events to appear to understand him. Although he had never studied mathematics, he had the deepest respect for this branch of science. He had obtained from different books a few mathematical ideas, tried to philosophise upon them, and often did so aloud in Tanja's presence. From him she first heard of the quadrature of a circle, and many other such things, the meaning of which she could not of course quite seize, but which made a great impression on her fancy, and awoke in her a deep admiration of mathematics. She thought it a lofty, mystic science, which to the initiated opened a wonderful world, inaccessible to ordinary simple mortals.

There was another peculiar circumstance which

had early awoke Tanja's interest in mathematical science.

When they moved to the country, the whole house had to be repaired and the rooms to be repapered. But as there were so many rooms there had been a mistake made in the estimate, and there was not enough paper for one of the children's rooms. To write for more paper to St. Petersburg was quite out of the question, for it was not worth the trouble for only one room. It had to wait until some convenient occasion occurred, and meanwhile, for many years the walls were covered with common waste papers. Among these there were several lithographed pages out of Ostrogradski's "Lectures on Differential and Integral Calculus," which General Rajevsky had studied when young.

These pages, with their wonderful, intricate, and incomprehensible figures, had quickly attracted Tanja's attention. She could stand for whole hours before the mysterious walls, trying to puzzle out the meanings of isolated phrases, and striving to find out the order of the pages. Through long and daily study of these figures she got the mere outward forms clearly fixed in her mind, and even the text left a deep impression on her mind, though she could not understand it at the moment when she read it.

When many years later, as a fifteen-year-old girl, she took her first lessons in differential calculus from an obscure mathematician in St. Petersburg, he was astonished to find how quickly she got on and assimilated all the ideas connected with it, as though she had already studied it.

The truth was that, somehow, the moment he explained these for her, the true meaning of the figures and words which had so long lain in a forgotten corner of her brain, awoke in her inner consciousness.



## CHAPTER VI.

TANJA'S affection for her mother's brother, Fedor Pavlitsch, was of quite a different kind.

He was the only son of Mdme. Rajevsky's deceased father, and was much younger than she was. He was living in St. Petersburg, and as he was the only heir of the famous Sch-ska name, he was an object of the boundless devotion of his sister and countless maiden aunts.

It was a great event in the family when he came to visit at Palibino. Tanja was nine when he paid his first visit. For many weeks before they had talked about nothing but this uncle's visit. The best rooms in the house were put in order for his sake, and Madame Rajevsky saw after them herself, and had them furnished with the easiest chairs and sofas which could be found. A carriage was sent to meet him at the chief town a hundred and fifty versts distant, and in the carriage was put a fur and a skin wrapper and a plaid, so that Uncle Fedor might not be cold, as it was late in autumn. But many days before he was expected, a simple cart drawn by three miserable post-horses drew up in front of the steps, and out jumped a young

man in a light overcoat, and with a leather wallet over his shoulder.

“Good gracious, there is my brother Fedja!” exclaimed Madame Rajevsky, looking out of the window.

“Uncle has come, uncle has come!” sounded through the whole house, and every one ran into the hall to greet the welcome guest.

“Fedja, my poor fellow, what on earth did you take the stage-cart for? Did you not meet the carriage which we sent to meet you? Are you not shaken to pieces?” asked Madame Rajevsky anxiously, while embracing her brother.

It appeared that Fedor had started from St. Petersburg a day earlier than had been expected.

“Good gracious, Lina,” he answered, laughing, and drying the frost from his moustache before he kissed his sister, “I could not have imagined that you would make so many preparations for my coming. What was the good of sending to fetch me? I am not quite such an old woman that I can’t drive one hundred and fifty miles with post-horses!”

Uncle Fedor had a pleasant tenor voice, and spoke with a soft guttural tone. He looked quite young: his short-cut chestnut hair covered his head as with close velvet; his cheeks glowed with the cold; his dark brown eyes were bright and merry, and between the soft red lips, which were shaded by his moustache, shone now and again a row of strong white teeth.

“How stately he is, and how beautiful he is!” thought Tanja, and looked at him with delight.

“Whom have we here—Anyuta?” asked the uncle, pointing to Tanja.

“What are you thinking of, Fedor? Anyuta is already grown up; that is only Tanja,” answered Madame Rajevsky, in an injured tone.

“Gracious! is your daughter grown up? Look out, Lina, or you will be an old woman before you know where you are!” answered Fedor, laughing, and kissed Tanja. She felt shy, she knew not quite why, and blushed red.

At dinner, of course, her mother's brother sat in the place of honour near Madame Rajevsky. He had a large appetite, which did not prevent him chattering the whole time. He narrated several bits of news and scandal from St. Petersburg, and made the others often laugh, and he himself joined in often with a merry ringing laugh. All listened to him, even General Rajevsky, who showed him great respect, without a trace of that malicious patronising air he often put on to other young gentlemen of the family who sometimes came to visit, and which always gave them the greatest annoyance.

The more Tanja looked at her new uncle, the more she liked him. He had already washed and dressed himself, and no one would have guessed, from his fresh, bright appearance, that he had just come from a long journey. The short coat of some English material fitted him and suited him better than any one else. But above all Tanja admired his white, well-formed, and carefully tended hands, with shining nails like pink almonds. During the whole of dinner she watched

him incessantly, and quite forgot to eat, so lost was she in studying him.

Gooseberry jam was served with the pudding. Fedor Pavlitsch took a good portion of it on to his plate. The large green berries looked most inviting as they lay there in the thick white sugar. He looked at the preserve, and he looked at Tanja, and then again at the gooseberries, and burst out laughing, such a merry infectious laugh that every one joined in, though they did not know why.

“Do you know, Lina, all dinner-time I have been wondering what Tanja’s eyes were like,” said her uncle at last, as he tried to stop his desire to laugh. “Now I know : they are just like preserved gooseberries, just as big, and green, and sweet.”

They all found the likeness exact, and greeted it with a new laugh. Tanja blushed up to her ears, and considered herself almost insulted, but her uncle continued, laughing—

“But very much sweeter and very much greener,” and that comforted Tanja a little.

After dinner her uncle sat down on the sofa in the corner of the drawing-room, and drew Tanja on to his knee.

“Come, now, and let us make closer acquaintance, mademoiselle ma nièce,” he said.

He began to ask her all sorts of questions about her lessons, and what books she read. Children always know better than their elders fancy what are their strong and weak points, and Tanja knew well that it was easy for her to learn, and felt she had an unusual

amount of learning for her age. She was therefore highly delighted that her uncle had stumbled on this question, and she answered willingly and without pressure all his questions, and she saw that her uncle was pleased with her.

“What an intelligent little girl! How much she knows!” he exclaimed repeatedly.

“Now, uncle, you tell me something,” said Tanja in her turn.

“Yes, willingly, but it is such a serious young lady that we must not have mere children’s tales,” he said, laughing. “One can only talk of serious things with you,” and therewith he began to tell Tanja about infusoria and sea weeds, and the building of coral reefs. It was not long since he left the university himself, and so he had all this fresh in his mind. Besides, he told his story well, and it pleased him that Tanja listened so attentively to him and looked so steadily at him, with those wide-open, green-gooseberry eyes.

Afterwards the same thing happened each evening. After dinner both the General and Madame Rajevsky rested for half an hour, and the uncle had nothing else to do. So he would sit down on the corner sofa, take Tanja on his knee, and tell her all sorts of things. He invited the other children too, but Anyuta, who had but just left the schoolroom, was afraid of compromising the dignity of a grown-up lady by listening to such instruction, which could only interest little ones. Fedja listened for a time, it is true, but he soon found it dull, and went off to play horses.

Tanja, on the contrary, loved nothing better than this "scientific lecture," as her uncle laughingly called it. She thought this half-hour which she spent *tête-à-tête* with him the happiest of the whole day. She really worshipped him, with a kind of childish love to which little girls are more prone than old people believe. Tanja felt strangely confused every time her uncle's name was mentioned, even if it were the simple question, "Is uncle at home?" If some one at the dinner-table perceived that she never took her eyes off him, and asked, "How is it, Tanja, you are so lost in admiration of your uncle?" she would crimson and answer nothing.

During the day Tanja saw nothing of him, as she lived entirely cut off from her elders. But ever and continuously she had the same idea in her head through lesson and play hours—"Oh! would it were five o'clock. If I could only meet uncle!"

Once during his visit to Palibino, the owner of an adjoining property came on a visit with his daughter Olga. This Olga was the only girl of the same age whom Tanja had ever met. She did not come very often, but instead she always stayed some time, and occasionally over-night. She was a bright, lively little girl, and her disposition and inclination were altogether opposed to Tanja's, and anything like a real friendship could not in consequence spring up between them. Still, Tanja was always glad when she came, and all the more so because in her honour she was allowed to escape lessons and get a whole holiday. But this time Tanja's first thought when she saw Olga was, "Will she stay until after dinner?" The chief pleasure of her conversation with

her uncle was just this, that she was *tête-à-tête* with him, that she had him all to herself; and now she felt beforehand that that stupid Olga's presence would entirely spoil everything. For this reason Tanja's greeting to her little friend was less hearty than usual. "Perhaps she will go home earlier to-day," she hoped, in silence, all the morning. But no! It was evident that Olga would not go till late in the evening. What should she do? Tanja took courage at last, and decided to open her heart to her friend, and begged her not to disturb them.

"Listen, Olga," she said, insinuatingly, "I will play with you the whole day, and I will do whatever you like. But if I do, after dinner you must be good and go off by yourself and leave me in peace. I am always accustomed to talk for a little while to my uncle after dinner, and we do not want you."

Olga agreed to Tanja's conditions, and Tanja fulfilled her share of the compact faithfully all the morning. She played with Olga at every possible game which the little girl wanted, however stupid it was; adopted the most uninteresting rôles which it was Olga's pleasure to invent for her, changed patiently from a lady to a cook at a word from her, and from a cook back to a lady. At last they were called to dinner. Tanja sat on hot coals all the time. "Will Olga truly keep her promise?" she thought, and glanced at her little friend uneasily and with a little wink to remind her of their compact.

After dinner Tanja jumped up as usual to kiss her father and mother's hand, and nestled up to her uncle, waiting for what he should say.

"Now, little one, what shall we talk of to-day?" asked Uncle Fedor, while he lovingly patted her under the chin. Tanja jumped with delight, and took hold of his hand, thinking that she would go off to the accustomed corner, when she suddenly saw the unfaithful Olga following them.

Tanja's craftily planned agreement had only made matters worse. It is quite probable that if she had said nothing, Olga, when she found her little friend prepared to talk learnedly with her uncle, would have been the first to go off by herself, as she had a holy horror of all that savoured of study. But when she saw that Tanja was so interested in her uncle's narrative, and wanted to be rid of her at any price, she fancied that they talked of something very interesting, and was very anxious to listen to it.

"May I go with you?" she asked, in a beseeching tone, raising her beautiful eyes to Uncle Fedor's.

"Of course you may, little one," he answered, with a kindly look at her pretty, rosy face.

Tanja cast a bitter glance at Olga, who did not, however, seem to be in the least put out.

"But Olga does not care for these things. She will not understand it in the least," answered Tanja, in an aggrieved tone. But this attempt at being even with her unfaithful little friend did not succeed at all.

"Well, then, to-day we will talk of something simpler and pleasant, which can also interest Olga," said her uncle, good-naturedly, as he took both girls by the hand and led them to the corner couch.

Tanja followed in sullen silence. This conversation



*à trois*, however pleasing to Olga's taste and understanding, was not at all what Tanja desired. It seemed to her as though some one had taken a treasure from her which was hers by right.

"See, Tanja, come and sit upon my knee," said her uncle, who had evidently not taken any notice of her bad humour.

But Tanja was too much insulted to let herself be propitiated in this wise. "I don't want to," she answered hastily, and drew back sulkily into the corner.

Her uncle looked at her with an astonished laughing face. Did he understand how jealousy was raging in her little breast, and was he bent on amusing himself at her cost? Any way, he turned round directly to Olga and said—

"Well, then, Olga, if Tanja does not wish to come, you may come instead."

Olga did not wait to be asked twice, and before Tanja knew where she was, her friend had taken her place on her uncle's knee. That was an unexpected blow to Tanja. She had not thought that the matter would take such a terrible turn. It was as though the earth had suddenly opened under her feet. She was too surprised to protest, and only gazed on silently with wide-open eyes on her lucky rival, who, with a shy but highly delighted countenance, sat on Uncle Fedor's knee just as though it were quite the right thing. She pouted her little mouth into a funny grimace, and strove so hard to give her little childish face an expression of attention, that not only her face but her neck and her very arms were crimson with the effort.

Tanja looked at her, looked and looked ; and then all at once (she herself never knew how it happened, it was as though she was driven to it) she fixed her teeth in Olga's round white arm just above the elbow, and bit her till the blood came.

The attack was so sudden and unexpected that for the first minute all three were petrified, and only stared at each other silently. Then Olga uttered a penetrating shriek which recalled them to their senses.

Tanja was seized with a wild, frightened shyness, and rushed blindly out of the room. "Miserable little wretch !" she heard her uncle's angry voice calling after her.

Her constant resort in all her childish troubles and trials was Njanja's room, the same which Maria Vasiljevna had formerly inhabited. There even now she sought shelter. Hiding her head on the good nurse's knee, she wept long and continuously, and Njanja, who saw how upset her darling was, asked no questions, only stroked her head comfortingly and covered her with caresses. "My poor little one ! Calm yourself, my sweet child !" she murmured, and Tanja felt her great despair softened by this weeping with Njanja.

Fortunately Tanja's governess was not at home that afternoon. She had gone on a few days' visit to some neighbours. So there was no one to look for Tanja, and she was free to weep her heart out in Njanja's little room. When she was calm the old woman made her drink a cup of tea, and then put her to bed, where she was soon asleep in a deep, obliterating slumber.

But when she awoke next morning and remembered

all which had passed the previous afternoon, she was desperately shy at meeting the others, for she thought she could never face any one again. But all went better than she expected. Olga had gone home the previous evening, and apparently had been generous enough not to complain of Tanja. She could see by the family faces that they knew nothing. No one upbraided her for what she had done, no one joked about it. Even her uncle appeared as if nothing had happened.

But, strangely enough, from that day Tanja's feeling for him underwent a great change, and was of quite a different character. The after-dinner talk was never repeated. Shortly after this event her uncle went back to St. Petersburg, and though he often afterwards visited the Rajevskys, and was always very kind to Tanja, and she on her side was very fond of him, there was an end to the heathenish worship which she had once bestowed upon him.

## CHAPTER VII.

THE country in which the Rajevskys' property lay was very wild, and far more picturesque than are districts situated in central Russia. The Vitebsk "government" is known for its huge pine forests and its many large and beautiful lakes. Through some of this district stretch the last branches of the Valdai Hills, and consequently there are not the same monotonous plains here as over the rest of Russia, but, on the contrary, the landscape is rounded and undulating. There is a dearth here as elsewhere in Russia of stones, but in this locality great bits of granite crop up quite unexpectedly in the midst of a field, or in a swampy meadow where the rank grass grows to the height of a man. These rocks stick up oddly above the succulent vegetation around, and appear so inharmonious with the soft rounded contours of the rest of the landscape that one feels inclined to ask almost involuntarily what freak of fortune has placed them there.

One can but wonder if they may possibly be monuments dating from prehistoric times, of some unknown or, maybe, supernatural beings; and, in truth, geology tells us that these boulders were brought here from afar by an intruding stranger, and that they are, in truth,

interesting monuments, not of mortal folk or legendary gnomes, but of the great ice period, when these huge boulders were detached like grains of sand from the shores of Finland, and carried long distances by the slow, ever advancing, and all-powerful ice.

The Palibino estate is bordered on one side almost entirely by woods, which, though at first somewhat scattered and park-like, deepen by degrees and become more and more impenetrable until they form a royal forest. This stretches away for hundreds of versts, and in the memory of man no axe has ever been heard there, unless in the dead of night some bold peasant were bold enough to steal crown wood.

Among the people there were a number of tales in circulation about this wood, tales in which it was hard to tell where truth ended and falsehood began. Of course in all Russian woods crowds of elves and fairies dwell, but although there was no question but that these creatures existed there, no one had, strange to say, caught a glimpse of them except old cracked Grounja and the "wise man" of the village, Fedot. There were, however, many who could tell of meetings in the wood with suspicious persons. One legend told of a troop of robbers, horse-stealers, and discharged soldiers, hidden in its deepest thickets. Some said it was not safe for any policeman to go and look after them or to see what took place at night. As to wolves, lynx, and bears, there were few of the neighbouring peasants who had not had occasion to prove from their own experience that the forests were overrun with such creatures.

For the most part it was said that bears were on good

terms with the people round. It might happen sometimes in the spring or in the autumn that one heard how a bear had carried off a cow or a horse from a peasant, but generally they contented themselves with eating a few sheaves of oats from the barn, or a little honey from the bee gardens. Seldom, very seldom, did one hear of a bear having a struggle with a peasant, and it generally turned out that it was the peasant's own fault who first attacked the poor bear.

There were many who harboured an almost superstitious horror of the forest. If it chanced that a housewife in one of the forest border villages missed her child towards evening, her first thought was that it was lost in the thicket, and she began to cry and shriek as though she had already seen the corpse. None of the Rajevskys' servant-girls would venture to go there alone ; but in company, and especially in charge of the young lads, they gladly wandered there. The intrepid English governess, who had a passion for long walks, showed at first a great contempt for all stories about the wood with which people sought to frighten her, and declared she would go walking there despite all the old women's tales in the world. But one autumn day, when she went out alone with her pupils and was about an hour's walk from home, she suddenly heard a great rustling near her, and was suddenly aware of a huge bear, who, with her two cubs, walked across the road about fifteen feet in front of her. She was obliged to admit that the stories were not exaggerated, and from that moment she never ventured far into the wood, unless she were followed by some of the men servants.

But the woods hid not only horror and terror, but they were a never-failing source of delights of all sorts. They contained innumerable hosts of game—hares, guillenots, blackcock, and partridges. Hunters had merely to go and shoot ; the least practised shot could be sure of a bag. There were blackberries in abundance. First came wild strawberries, which certainly ripened a little later in the woods than in the meadows, but which, on the other hand, are much sweeter and juicier in the woods. And when they were done, came the bilberries, raspberries, and cranberries. So that before one knew where one was the nuts began to ripen, and then the mushrooms took their place. One can get rörsoppor even in summer, but for pepparling, kanta-relle, and riskor, autumn is just the right time. Old women, girls, and children, in the villages round, have at that season a kind of madness. Nothing but force can keep them out of the wood. They go there in great crowds, as soon as the sun rises, armed with earthen pots or bast baskets, and it is no good expecting them home till late in the evening. And what greed they display all day there ! One would think that when they had got so much good out of the one day away from home in the wood they would be satisfied ; but not a bit of it. In the morning, as soon as it is barely light, they must be off again. They think nothing but of gathering mushrooms, and are ready to go off to that from any work at home or in the fields.

The Rajevskys had also their great forest expeditions in summer when the wild strawberries were ripe, or in autumn when it was mushroom season. In these the

whole house took part, with the exception of the General and his wife, who were not specially given to such rural dissipations. Preparations began on the previous evening. With the sun's first rays three country carts drive up to the steps. In the house everything is gay and festive. Servants run about busily, carrying out china, the samovar, different provisions, tea, sugar, dishes of pastry and fresh butter-cakes, and pack them into the carts. At the top of all they throw in baskets and bowls, to be ready for the projected mushroom gathering. Children who have got up at such an unearthly hour run backwards and forwards, wild with delight, their cheeks aglow from the wet sponge polishing. In their delight they do not know what to do, but must finger everything and touch everything and hinder every one, and get incessant orders not to be in every one's way. The household dogs are naturally always deeply interested, like every one else, in the projected expedition. From early morning they have been in a state of nervous excitement, jumping between people's feet, and barking continuously and loudly. At last, tired with excitement, they stretch themselves out in the yard, near the steps, but their whole attitude expresses expectant waiting; they follow every passer with anxious eyes, and are ready to jump up at the first look. The whole intensity of dog nature is concentrated in the thought, "Can they possibly be going without us?"

At last the preparations are made. The company get up into the carriages and take their seats as best they can. The party consists of the governess, tutor,



three children, about ten maid servants, the gardener, and two or three men servants, and some five or six children belonging to the outdoor servants. The whole of the servant population are in commotion—all want to go on the pleasant expedition. At the last moment, just as the carriage is moving, the scullery-woman's little five-year old Aksjuska runs up, and sets up such a howl when she sees that her mother means to go without her, that she has to be lifted into the carriage.

The first halt is made at the forester's lodge, situated about ten versts from the house. The vehicles sway slowly along over the swampy forest path. Only the first is driven by a real coachman ; the others are chiefly amateur drivers, who snatch the reins from one another and force the horses to go in a zigzag fashion. Suddenly there is a jolt and every one jumps up. The cart has driven over a huge tree root. Little Aksjuska is nearly swung out by the jolt ; they are only just able to save her by catching her jacket and lifting her up, much as one might pick up a puppy. From the bottom of the cart comes the crash of breaking glass.

The wood gets thicker and more impenetrable. There is nothing to be seen but first, tall and dark, with their rich brown stems rising like gigantic church tapers. Only by the roadside grow a border of bushes, hazel elder, and above all alder. Here and there are a few red quivering aspen leaves, or a picturesque rowan, brilliant with its bright red berries.

From the cart come sudden shrieks of delight. The cap of a volunteer coachman has been caught in a dewy birch bough which overhangs the road. The branch

brushes first one and then another of the cart riders and covers them with a small rain of dew. Then there are screams and jokes and witticisms without end.

Now the forester's lodge is in sight. The house is roofed with boards, and looks incomparably more comfortable and neater than most peasant houses in "White Russia." It lies in a little meadow, and—an unusual luxury for a peasant in that neighbourhood—it is surrounded by a garden. Here among cabbage heads there are a few red poppies and some bright yellow sunflowers. Some apple trees, full of red apples, grow tall in the midst of the garden, and are their owner's great pride, as he himself planted them, having taken them from the wild plants in the woods, and so grafted them that his apples rival the best fruit from the neighbouring estates.

The forester was already over seventy. His long beard was quiet white, but he seemed active and agile, and had a serious and noble countenance. He was taller and broader built than most "White Russians," and in his face was reflected some of the forest's clear and majestic calm. All his children were provided for. His daughters were married, and his sons had followed different trades in the neighbourhood. He lived alone with his wife and foster-child, a boy of fifteen whom he had adopted in his old age.

As soon as the old woman had seen the most distant symptom of visitors, she hastened to prepare the samovar, and when the carts drove up to the door there stood the old man and woman ready to receive the party with deep salutations, and begged their visitors not to

refuse a cup of tea. Inside the room everything was clean and tidy, though the air was heavy and close and full of the stale odours of incense and lamp oil, for, for fear of the winter's cold, the windows were small and almost hermetically sealed against it.

After the fresh forest drive it was difficult to breathe for the first few minutes, but the room contained so many interesting things that the children soon accustomed themselves to the heavy air and began to look about them inquisitively. The mud floor was strewn with pine foliage; the benches went round the walls, and a tame jackdaw with clipped wings hopped about without being the least disturbed by the presence of a large black cat. The two seemed very good friends. The cat sat up on her two back legs washing herself with her forepaws, and, whilst she pretended to be quite indifferent, examined her guests from her half-closed eyes. In the far corner stood a large wooden table, covered with a white tablecloth with an embroidered border, and over it hung a shrine with an antiquated, hideous, and distorted picture of a saint. It was reported that the forester was a raskolnik (dissenter), and to this circumstance might be attributed the unusual cleanliness and prosperity of his dwelling.

It is a well-known fact that these dissenters never enter a tavern, and that they set great store by cleanliness, both of their dwellings and of their lives. It was further said that the forester yearly bribed both priest and police with a big sum, in order that they should not interfere with his convictions; nor force him to go to the orthodox church; nor make any fuss whether

he went to the dissenting meeting or no. It was also affirmed that he never ate a morsel in an orthodox house, and that at home he kept separate dishes for orthodox guests. Were such guests never so distinguished, he never offered them anything off plate or dish from which he himself ate. It would have rendered his vessel unclean, just as though a dog or unclean animal had eaten from it. The children were very anxious to ask, but they dared not, if Uncle Jacob—for so they called the forester—thought them unclean.

For the rest they were very fond of Uncle Jacob. To be with him was the greatest pleasure they could imagine. When he sometimes came to Palibino to visit them, he always made them some little present which pleased them more than the most expensive toy. For instance, once he had given them an elk calf, which lived for long in their park but never became quite tame.

The great copper samovar steamed on the table, and different kinds of uncommon delicacies were spread before them—varenetz (a Russian dish made of sour milk cooked in a particular way so as to be very rich and tasty), pancakes with poppy-seed preserve, and honey-cucumber—all dainties which the children never tasted except at Uncle Jacob's. He entertained his guests very zealously, but tasted not a bit himself. "Of course it is true that he thinks us unclean," thought the children. While he held a solemn, somewhat slow conversation with the tutor, he used several peculiar local idioms which the children could not understand; but they greatly loved to hear old Jacob talk, for he knew

so much about the woods and the wild animals, and what the animals thought and what they did.

It was already about six o'clock in the morning. (It was wonderful to think that one was usually in bed at that time when the day was really so far advanced.) There was no time to tarry. Every one dispersed through the wood, and shouted to one another so that they might not get too far from each other or lose their way.

Who would manage to pick most mushrooms? That question set all off, and self-interest at once blossomed out. Tanja considered at that moment that nothing was more important in all the world than that her basket should be filled as quickly as possible. "O God! let me get many, many mushrooms," she prayed passionately, and as soon as she saw in the distance a yellow or red-brown cap, off she went full speed so that no one should be before her and rob her of her booty. But what a mistake she had made! Now it was a leaf which she had taken for a mushroom; now she fancied it was a bright brown hat of the delicious rörsoppor shyly peeping up out of the moss, and pounced upon it eagerly, but instead of the head being white and thick underneath, it was traversed by deep furrows, and she discovered it was only a worthless kind which had a deceptive likeness to the rörsoppor. But most vexatious of all was it to Tanja to find that she had, as it happened over and over again, passed a place without noticing anything, while the sharp-eyed Fekluscha almost in her footsteps had gathered the most delicious little mushroom. That horrid Fekluscha!

It seemed as though she knew exactly where the best mushrooms were, as though she drew them out of the ground by magic. Her basket was full already to the brim, and that into the bargain with riskor and small mushrooms, besides different kinds of rørsopp, and she had not thought it worth while to gather tickor and pepparling. Her mushrooms looked so delightful and appetising, one could have eaten them raw. Tanja's basket, on the contrary, was only half full, and that of all sorts of big, ugly, dirty mushrooms, so that she was ashamed to show them.

At three o'clock another rest was taken. In the meadow where the unharnessed horses were feasting, the coachman had lit a fire. A servant ran down to the neighbouring spring to fill a water-bottle. The servants spread a tablecloth on the grass, and put the samovar on it, and glasses and plates. The gentlefolk sat in a group together, and the servants took up their places respectfully at a little distance. But this arrangement only lasted for the first quarter of an hour. It was such a remarkable and special day, that all distinctions were relaxed. All were possessed by the same devouring interest, and so the company gradually mixed itself. Every one wanted to boast of their own gathering and to see how much others had gathered. Besides, every one had something to relate about their adventures. One had started a hare, another had seen a badger's home, and a third had nearly stepped on a snake.

After eating and resting a little, mushroom picking began again. But the previous eagerness was gone. The weary feet almost gave way, and though there

were only a few more mushrooms in each basket, they had all of a sudden become so heavy that they seemed to pull the arms out of joint. The swollen eyes refused to do their duty; they saw mushrooms where there were none, and glared at real mushrooms without seeing them.

Tanja was now indifferent as to whether her basket was filled or not, but on the contrary she was more susceptible to the impressions of the forest. The sun was going down; and its oblique rays shot across the bare tree-stems, colouring them with a brick-red light. The little forest lake, with flat shore, lay so nonchalantly silent and still, that it seem spellbound. The water was already dark, almost black, only in one corner there was a glimmering crimson, almost blood-red patch.

It was time to think of going home. The whole party packed again into the carts. During the day every one had been so engrossed with their own business that no one had paid attention to others. But now every one looked at each other and suddenly burst into irresistible laughter. They all looked like fantastic denizens of the wood. A single day spent in the open air had tanned and crimsoned the faces, entangled their hair, and brought their clothes into wild disorder. Of course every one had put on their oldest clothes for this forest expedition, so that they need not trouble to look after them. But in the morning every one had looked so nice, and now they were only too laughable. One had lost her shoes in the wood, another had tatters hanging round her instead of a skirt. Their head-gear

was specially remarkable. One maid-servant had stuck a huge bunch of red rowan berries in her rough black plait ; another had made a helmet of a fern leaf ; and a third had stuck a huge mushroom on a cane and held it like a parasol.

Tanja had twisted round her head a long trail of hops, whose yellow-green sprays, mingling with the brown hair which hung round her shoulders, gave her the appearance of a Bacchante. Her cheeks glowed and her eyes shone.

“ Hail to Her Majesty Queen of the Gipsies ! ” her brother Fedja exclaimed, while he pretended to do her homage.

And even the governess, after she had seen her, was obliged to own with a sigh that she looked more like a gipsy than a well brought up young lady. But the governess little knew how Tanja in that moment longed to be a real gipsy. That day in the wood had aroused many wild nomad instincts in her. She did not at all want to go home, but she would gladly have passed her whole life in these wonderful, beautiful woods. Many dreams and fantasies of distant journeys and of unheard-of adventures swarmed in her brain.

The journey homeward was a silent one. There was no shouting and merry laughter, as in the morning. All were tired, every one was quiet, and had a wonderful, almost solemn feeling. Some of the servant-maids started so sad and pathetic a song, that Tanja suddenly felt her heart heavy with that strange, unreasoning anguish which so often came over her after moments of great high spirits. But in the anguish there was also



at the same moment such intense delight that she would not have exchanged it for noisy happiness. When Tanja got home and went to bed she could not sleep, notwithstanding her weariness. As she lay in a feverish state between sleeping and waking, a vision of the forest kept rising before her. She saw it now far more distinctly than in the daytime; in truth she understood better and more clearly its beauty both as a whole and in its minutest detail. Various momentary impressions, which had only flown past her without her being conscious of them, returned with pertinacious vigour. Here a huge ant's nest stood out from the background. Tanja realised every little straw and leaf so clearly that she could almost pick them up. Active ants, drawing little white eggs after them, ran swiftly hither and thither. Then of a sudden they would all disappear, and in their place would be a soft white lump like a snowball. Tanja distinguished now that the whole consisted of fine spiders' webs. In the middle was a little black speck. She wanted to pick up the lump in her hand, but she had hardly thought of it, when the black speck in the middle grew lively and a number of small spiders shot out of it like rays from the centre to the circumference, and ran busily backward and forward. Tanja had really seen such a strange lump in the morning, but had hardly noticed it, and now it all came back to her so clear and lifelike.

The weary Tanja tossed about a long time on the bed without being able to chase away these reflected scenes, till at last she fell into a calm sleep.

The wood which played so great a part in Tanja's childish memories bordered the estate on one side. On the other lay the garden, which reached down to the lake, and beyond the lake extended fields and meadows. Here among the verdure there was a small and miserable village, with a few hovels more like wild-beast dens than human dwellings.

The soil in the Vitebsk government is not nearly as fertile as the black earth of Russia and Little Russia. The peasants in White Russia are known for their poverty. The Emperor Nicholas, when passing through the district, rightly called it "White Russia," "a poor beauty," in contradistinction to the Tambojsk government, which he called a rich merchant's wife. From the midst of this sparsely peopled tract, the Palibino mansion stood out in striking relief, with its massive stone walls; its strange, foreign-looking terraces, in summer bordered with climbing roses; its spacious hot-houses and forcing-pits. In summer time some life and movement reigned in the neighbourhood, but in winter it seemed all dead and unpeopled. Snow buried all the garden paths, and was piled in high drifts even close to the house. From the windows one saw nothing but a white inanimate plain all round. Hours might pass without a living being crossing the high road. Sometimes one might see a peasant's sledge drawn by a thin, white, rime-frosted nag, and then all again was dead without a sign of life or movement.

Wolves came at night close up to the house. One winter's evening the Rajeovsky family were all gathered round the tea-table. In the big drawing-room

the crystal chandelier was lit, and the candle flames were reflected in the tall mirrors on the walls; round the walls stood the rich silk-covered furniture; and from the windows stood out the jagged leaves of palms and other hot-house plants. The tables were strewn with books and foreign newspapers. Tea was finished, but the children had not yet been sent to bed. The General smoked and played patience. Madame Rajevsky sat at the piano, playing a few bars of Beethoven's sonatas or a romance of Schuman's. Anyuta went from room to room; in fancy she was far away from her surroundings. She saw herself in a brilliant company, the queen of the ball.

Suddenly the valet Ilja opened the door. He said nothing, but stood on the threshold, now on one leg, now on the other, which was his fashion when he had anything special to narrate.

"What do you want?" shouted the General, presently.

"Nothing at all, your Excellency," with a meaning smile. "I only came to say that a pack of wolves are gathering by the lake. Perhaps your honours might like to hear how they howl."

At this information of course the children get into a wild state of excitement, and beg to be allowed to go out on the steps. After various opinions had been expressed about their getting chilled, the father gave his consent at last to their request. The children, wrapped up in furs and caps, went out, followed by Ilja.

It was a glorious winter night. The cold was intense,

and almost took away one's breath. Though there was no moonlight, there was the light from the snow and from myriads of stars which seemed like great golden nails thickly hammered over the sky. Tanja thought that she had never seen the stars so clear as on that evening. Their rays seemed to melt together, and they twinkled so strangely that they seemed to glitter and then to get dark again the next instant.

Wherever one looked, snow, nothing but snow, whole masses, mountains high of snow, which covered and made everything even. The steps up to the terraces could not be seen at all. No one would ever have noticed that one part was higher than the other in the surrounding garden. There was only a white, smooth plain, which passed without any break into the white frozen lake.

But strangest of all was the stillness which reigned—deep, undisturbed silence. The children had already been some minutes out on the steps, and had heard nothing. They began to be impatient. "Where are the wolves?" they asked.

"It seems as though they were silent on purpose," answered Ilja, annoyed. "But wait a little, they will soon begin."

And at the same moment came a prolonged howl, which was immediately answered by another. And then there rose by the lake a chorus so strange, so melancholy, that one felt one's heart involuntarily stand still.

"There are our boys!" exclaimed Ilja, delighted. "Now they have begun to sing. If one could only

understand why they are so happy on our lake! There are dozens of them there at night.

“What do you say to it, Polka?” he said, turning to the big Newfoundland, the pet of the whole house, who had followed them out to the steps. “Do you feel inclined to join them, and try the wolves’ teeth a little?”

But the concert had made a painful impression on the dog. He who was generally so bold, tucked in his tail and nestled up to the children, and his whole appearance expressed the utmost terror.

The children began to feel a little frightened at the strange, wild music. A nervous trembling took hold of them, and they turned back to the warm, comfortable room.

## CHAPTER VIII.

WHEN the Rajevskys moved to the country and took up their residence there, their eldest girl, Anyuta, was just growing out of childhood.

Not long after their removal the Polish revolution took place, and as Palibino lay on the very borders between Lithuania and Russia, some of the after-heavings of the storm made themselves felt there. Most of the neighbouring proprietors, and amongst them some of the richest and best educated, were Poles. Several of them found themselves more or less compromised, some had their properties confiscated, and all were called upon to pay heavy fines. Many voluntarily gave up their lands and went abroad. During the years which followed that revolution, there were hardly any young people in the district, as they had all moved away. Only children and old people were left—innocent, frightened beings, who were afraid of their own shadow—together with newly appointed officials, shop people, and smaller proprietors.

It is clear that country life under such circumstances could not be very lively for a young girl. Besides, Anyuta's education had in no way fitted her for rural pursuits. She cared neither for walks nor for mush-

room expeditions, nor for rowing on the lake. So it was natural that she refused suchlike dissipations which were constantly suggested by the English governess, and the antipathy between her and the governess grew so strong that if the one proposed a thing the other was sure to negative it. One summer Anyuta, however, took a sudden passion for riding, but it was chiefly to imitate the heroine in the novel which at the moment captivated her fancy. There was, however, no suitable companion to accompany her, and she soon found the solitary rides, without any other companion than a dull groom, very stupid. Her riding horse, to which she had given the romantic name of "Frida," soon returned to its former ignominious business of carrying the steward round the property, and was again known by its previous name of "Gray."

There could be no possibility of Anyuta busying herself with housewifely affairs. Any such suggestion would have been repulsive to a degree both to her and to those around her. Her whole training had tended to make her a brilliant woman of the world. From her seventh year she had been the queen of the children's balls, to which, when her parents were living in a large town, she often went. The General was proud of her childish precocity, of which many legends remain in the family.

"Only wait till Anyuta is big enough to be presented at court! She will turn the heads of all the grand dukes," the General would sometimes say, naturally in joke; but unfortunately not only the younger children but Anyuta herself took the words seriously.

Anyuta was really a beautiful girl, tall and well made, and with her fine complexion and her magnificent, fair curly hair might well be almost called a beauty. And she had, besides, most enchanting manners. She knew well that she could play the first and leading rôle in any society she chose—and to be stuck down in a desert in solitude and loneliness !

Every now and again she used to go to her father, and, with tears in her eyes, would reproach him with keeping her in the country. The General answered her complaint at first with jokes ; but sometimes he tried to explain to her and show her very logically how that, in those days, the proprietor's duty was to live on his property. If he left it to the wind and waves, he would bring ruin on his family. Anyuta knew not what to answer to this reasoning, but she knew only that it did not make it any the easier for her. She knew she would never get back her youth, which was thus being wasted. After such a conversation she would generally shut herself up in her room and weep.

But the General usually sent his wife and daughter to stay with the aunts in St. Petersburg for a month or six weeks every winter. But this somewhat expensive arrangement was hardly any good. It only nourished in Anyuta a love of pleasure without satisfying it. The month in St. Petersburg passed so quickly that she hardly realised it. She was not likely to meet in the circles into which she went anything that could give her thoughts a serious direction. No suitable lover presented himself. She got some new dresses, went a few times to the theatre or to a ball at the nobles' club ;



sometimes a relative would give a party in her honour, for people were very kind to her on account of her beauty ; and then, just as she was beginning to taste the pleasures of all this, they had suddenly to come back to Palibino again, to the solitary, idle, dull life in the great mansion, where she had no other dissipation than wandering from room to room, living in thought again the past joys, and gloating passionately over unproductive dreams of new triumphs on the same stage.

In order to make up for the dulness of her life, Anyuta was for ever hitting upon now one, now another, and yet another artificial fancy ; and as the inner life of each member of the household was in want of the same enlivenment, they all took a lively interest in any new idea of hers which gave them an opportunity for conversation and discussion. Some laughed at her, some sympathised with her, but for all she made a pleasant interruption in the ordinary monotonous life.

But Tanja was the one above all to whom everything that concerned or affected Anyuta was most deeply interesting. The feeling which from her earliest years she entertained for her older sister was of a very mixed kind. Her admiration of Anyuta was boundless. She obeyed Anyuta implicitly, and felt herself deeply flattered if her eldest sister honoured her by communicating anything to her in which she herself was interested. Tanja would have gone through fire for her sister ; but, notwithstanding this enthusiastic devotion, she felt towards her that peculiar kind of grudge which we secretly, almost unconsciously, nourish for those who stand

nearest to us, and whom we wish to resemble in every particular.

The first act by which Anyuta, when she was hardly fifteen, proclaimed her independence, was by taking possession of all the novels in the Palibino library and devouring an inconceivable number of them. There were, of course, no "immoral" books in the house, but there was no lack of bad, stupid books. The library was specially rich in old English romances, mostly historical, the scenes of which were laid in the Middle Ages and in the days of chivalry. To Anyuta these novels were a veritable discovery; they opened to her a wonderful and, till then, unknown world, and gave a new character to her fancies. It happened to her as it had happened to poor Don Quixote centuries before. She believed in those knightly days, and imagined herself a mediæval châtelaine.

Unfortunately the great massive mansion, with its tower and Gothic windows, was built somewhat in the fashion of a mediæval castle. In her "cavalier" period, Anyuta never wrote a letter without heading it "Château Palibino." Anyuta had all the dust and cobwebs cleared out of the highest room of the tower, which was unused because it could only be reached by a steep and difficult staircase. She hung it with old tapestries and weapons which she found in some corner of the garret, and turned it into her sitting-room. Her graceful, well-made figure in a close-fitting robe of white stuff, and her two long plaits of fair hair reaching to her waist, made her quite a suitable model for a mediæval beauty. So she would sit leaning over her frame, embroidering

the Rajevsky family arms in gold and beads, while she looked out of the window over the landscape awaiting the coming knight.

“Sister Anne, sister Anne! Do you see no one coming?”

“I see but the dust blowing and the flowers growing.”

Instead of the expected knight, she saw, perhaps, only the policeman, or an old Jew who dealt with the General in oxen and brandy. Knight there never was one—and the unhappy sister Anne wearied in waiting for him, till the “knightly” whim passed as suddenly as it had begun.

She had already half unconsciously begun to be weary of knightly tales, when all of a sudden one day she laid hands upon an intensely exciting book, “Harold,” by an English author. The contents are as follows: After the Battle of Hastings, Edith “Swan-Necked” finds among the dead, the body of her lover, King Harold. Shortly before the defeat he had been guilty of a breach of vows, which was a mortal sin, and he died without confessing. His soul was therefore doomed to everlasting torment.

From that day Edith vanished from her parental home, and none even of her nearest relatives ever saw her again. Many years passed, and the very memory of Edith was by degrees blotted out.

On the opposite coast of England lay, amid wild woods and mountains, a convent, known for its severe rule. There had lived there for many years a nun who had taken upon her an irrevocable vow of silence, and who was revered by the whole convent for her pious conduct. She gave herself no rest, night or day. Early

in the morning and even until midnight her kneeling figure prostrated itself before the Christ in the convent chapel. But whenever there was a duty to be done, help to be given, suffering to be lightened, she was the first to perform it. There was no deathbed in the whole neighbourhood over which the figure of the pale nun did not bend, and no brow damp with death from which she did not kiss the cold dew with those bloodless lips, sealed in everlasting silence.

But none knew who she was nor whence she came. Twenty years previously there had knocked at the cloister door a woman swathed in a black mantle, and after a long and secret conversation with the abbess she remained there for ever. That abbess had long been dead, and the pale nun continued to move about like a shadow, but no one living in the convent had ever heard a sound from her lips.

The younger nuns and the poor of the neighbourhood worshipped her as a saint. Mothers brought their sick children to her that she might lay her hands upon them, in the hope that they should be cured merely by her touch. But there were some folk who considered that in her youth she must have committed some very great sin, as she sought by such severe self-punishment and penitence to atone for the past.

At last, after many years of self-sacrificing labour, she drew near her last hour. All the nuns, old and young, thronged round her deathbed; even the abbess, who long since had lost the use of her limbs, was carried to her cell.

The priest entered. With the authority bestowed

upon him by Christ he loosed the dying woman from her vow of silence, and exhorted her to say at last who she was, and what sin or crime it was that weighed so heavily on her conscience.

The dying nun raised herself wearily in bed. Her bloodless lips were almost powerless after the long silence—she had lost the use of human speech. For some moments her face moved convulsively and mechanically without sound. At last, obedient to the holy father's command, the nun began to speak; but her voice, which had been silent for twenty years, sounded feeble and unnatural.

"I am Edith," she stammered forth. "I am the dead King Harold's bride."

At the sound of that name, which was accursed to all the true servants of the Church, the nuns crossed themselves in horror. But the priest said: "My daughter, he whom you loved on earth was a great sinner. King Harold lies under the ban of the holy Mother Church, and can never win forgiveness. He burns for ever in hell fire. But God has seen thy many sorrows, He has treasured of a surety thy many tears. Go in peace. In paradise awaits thee another and eternal Bridegroom."

The dying woman's sunken wax-like cheeks glowed with sudden crimson. In her eyes, from which it seemed as though time had quenched the light, flashed a passionate, feverish glow.

"What is paradise to me without Harold?" she exclaimed, to the horror of the nuns present. "If Harold has not won forgiveness, may God not call me to His kingdom."

The nuns stood silent, struck dumb with horror ; but with a supernatural effort Edith raised herself from her pallet and threw herself down before the crucifix.

“Almighty God,” she cried, in her broken and hardly human voice, “for some short moments of suffering which Thy Son bore Thou didst pardon man’s sin. But for twenty years I have died daily, hourly, a long and cruel death. Thou knowest, for Thou hast seen my sufferings. If through them I have won Thy favour, pardon Thou my Harold. Give me a sign before I die ! Whilst we say ‘Our Father,’ let the light before the crucifix kindle of itself. Then shall I know that my Harold has found mercy.”

The priest read “Our Father,” slowly and solemnly pronouncing every word. The nuns, both young and old, repeated after him the holy words. There was not one who did not thrill with pity for the unlucky Edith, none who would not have given their lives to save Harold’s soul.

Edith lay outstretched on the floor. Her body was convulsed with the last throes of coming death. All the life she had was concentrated in her eyes, which stared immovably at the cross.

The light kindled not.

The priest read the prayers to the end. “Amen,” he said, in a troubled tone.

The miracle had not taken place. Harold was not forgiven.

From the lips of the pious Edith came a curse, and her eyes closed for ever.

It was this romance which brought about a crisis in Anyuta's life. For the first time in her existence she asked herself the question, "Is there a life after this? Is death the end of all? Can two beloved ones meet in another world and know each other again?"

With the unrestrained eagerness which marked all that Anyuta did, she took up this question as though she was the first who had ever asked it; and it seemed to her so terribly serious that she could not live unless she knew the answer. This crisis in Anyuta's view of life affected even her younger sister.

It was a lovely summer evening. The sun was setting, the heat had gone with it, and the air was indescribably soft and pleasant. Through the open windows floated the smell of roses and newly-cut hay. From the farmyard came the lowing of the cows, the bleating of sheep, and the watchman's call, and all the other noises of a summer evening in the country, but so softened and mellowed in sound by distance that their tone seemed only to increase the beauty of the silence and peace. The ten-year-old Tanja felt specially glad and peaceful. She had for a moment escaped from her governess's watchful care, and flew up like an arrow to the tower room to see what her sister was doing. And what did she see?

Anyuta lay on the sofa, with her unbound hair gilded with the sun's last rays, and wept and sobbed heavily—sobbed as though her heart would break.

Tanja was horrified, and rushed up to her. "Darling Anyuta, what is the matter?" But she answered nothing, only signed with her hand to Tanja to go

away and leave her in peace. But Tanja naturally became only the more curious. It was a long time before Anyuta answered, but at last she got up and said, in a voice which seemed to Tanja almost broken :

“You would not understand me. I am not grieving over myself, but over mankind. You are only a child, and cannot understand serious things. I too was once like that, but this wonderful, this terrible book”—she showed Tanja the English romance—“has forced me to look deeper into life’s riddles, and now I understand how empty and vain is all we strive after. The most brilliant happiness, the truest love, all end in death. And what awaits us, or if aught awaits us, we know not and shall never know. Oh, it is awful, awful !”

She broke out crying again, and buried her head in the sofa cushion.

This genuine despair in a girl of sixteen who is first led to thoughts of death by reading a high-wrought English novel, the pathetic words and phrases taken from the book and addressed to her ten-year-old sister, all this may make a grown-up person smile. But Tanja was truly half dead with fear, and felt the greatest respect for the serious and profound thoughts which occupied her sister. All the beauty of the summer evening faded at once for her, and she felt ashamed of the groundless gladness which had filled her heart a moment before.

“But you always know there is a God, and that after death we go to Him,” she tried to answer. But her sister looked on her tenderly, as an old and experienced person looks at a child.



“Yes, you are still in possession of your simple child-faith. Let us speak no more of this,” she said, in a sad tone, but at the same time with such an expression of conscious superiority over her sister that that little one felt ashamed of her own words.

Anyuta moved amongst the family during the following days as one in gentle sorrow. Her whole attitude proclaimed that she was cut loose from joys of earth. All about seemed to say, “Memento mori.” Knights and fair dames and lovers’ trysts were forgotten. What was the good of loving, wishing, hoping for anything when death made an end of all. She read no more English novels; they had all become unattractive to her. Instead she read eagerly “The Imitation of Christ,” and decided, like Thomas à Kempis, through self-renunciation and mortification to stem the awakening doubts in her own mind.

With the servants she was extremely gentle and considerate. If Tanja or Fedja asked her to do anything, she no longer snubbed them as had often been the case, but granted instantly what they asked, yet with such an air of heartbroken resignation that Tanja felt her heart sink even in the midst of all her happiness.

All the house entertained a great respect for Anyuta’s pious mood, and dealt with her as gently and tenderly as if she had been sick or had had some great sorrow. Only the governess shrugged her shoulders disbelievingly, and her father joked at dinner about her sad countenance. “Son air ténébreux.” But Anyuta took patiently her father’s jest, and met the governess with an unexpected affability which provoked the latter

more than her former impertinence. When Tanja saw her sister thus, she could no longer be glad over anything without being ashamed that she could not feel sad herself, and was in secret envious of Anyuta, who had such strong, deep emotions. But this mood did not last long. The 15th of September was near—Madame Rajevsky's name's-day, which was always kept with great rejoicing. All the neighbours round for fifty versts came to Palibino, so that about a hundred persons assembled there, and something particular was always arranged for that day—fire-works, tableaux, or acting. The preparations of course began some while before. Madame Rajevsky herself loved theatricals, and acted with much spirit and talent. A small theatre had just been built at Palibino, with drop-scene and scenery all complete. In the neighbourhood there were some well-known theatre-goers, who could all be turned into actors. Madame Rajevsky would willingly have taken part in the acting, but now, when she had a grown-up daughter, she thought she could not with a good conscience have the same deep interest in it for her own sake. She now wanted to arrange it to give Anyuta pleasure. But at that moment Anyuta had with much diligence worked herself into the convent humour! Madame Rajevsky began carefully and quietly to work upon her daughter, so as to attract her mind by degrees to this fête day, Anyuta did not give in without evincing the greatest contempt for the whole matter. It was such a lot of trouble, and of what use was it? But at last she consented, with a virtuous semblance of not wishing to

disappoint the others. When the players had been gathered together it was necessary to choose a piece which should be acted. This is, as is well known, no easy thing—it must both be amusing, not too broad, and must not require too much property. At last they chose the French vaudeville, *Les Œufs de Perette*. Anyuta took a part for the first time as a grown-up lady in acting, and naturally took a leading part. Rehearsals began, and she displayed an unusual talent for acting. In a single day her fear of death, her struggle between faith and doubt and the fear of the mysterious “hereafter,” were at an end. From morning to evening her clear voice sounded through the house singing French couplets.

After Madame Rajevsky’s name’s-day Anyuta wept again, but from quite a different cause. She wept because her father would not consent to her eager entreaties to send her to a theatrical school. She thought now that her calling in life was to be a play actor.

## CHAPTER IX.

IN the days in which Anyuta Rajevsky dreamed only of knights and shed bitter tears over Harold and Edith's sad fate, nearly all the intelligent youth in the rest of Russia was inspired by quite a different spirit and had quite another ideal. Anyuta's fantastic day-dreaming may therefore seem like an anachronism.

But the remote region where the Rajevskys lived lay far removed from all centres of thought, and Palibino was so shielded from the outer world that the waves of new ideas never reached this peaceful haven until long after they had arisen on the open sea. But when they did once invade its shore, they at once caught Anyuta and swept her along with them. How, when, and whence these new ideas came into the Rajevskys' household, it would be hard to say. It is a known fact that each transition period is marked by some peculiarity which leaves but few traces behind it. A paleontologist, for example, will study the cross section of a geological strata, and will find therein a sharply defined flora or fauna. He will be able to build up in his imagination, from such indications, a picture of the world as it then appeared. If he examines critically the overlying strata, he may find

quite other formations, quite other types, but how they came or how they were developed from the former he cannot always tell. Fossil remains of fully developed types fill museums to overflowing, but a paleontologist is overjoyed if he can by chance dig up, at any time, a skull or a few teeth, or a bit of bone belonging to an intermediate type, which may enable him to determine the way in which this development was effected. It is almost as though nature herself eagerly destroyed and blotted out all trace of her work ; as though she would glory in the perfect work of creation in which she succeeds in giving life and form to the fully developed thought, but at the same time unrelentingly sweeps away all memories of her first and faulty attempts.

It was a calm and peaceful life which the Rajevskys lived. The members grew up and aged, quarrelled and made up, disputed, to pass the time, on this or that magazine article, this or that scientific discovery, but were at the same time fully persuaded that all these questions belonged to the strange distant world, and never could have any active bearing on their even, everyday life ; and so, suddenly, before they knew where they were, there arose beneath their eyes a marvellous ferment, which came ever nearer, and threatened to undermine the calm and patriarchal existence ; a danger which came not only from one side, but one which seemed to encircle them.

It may be said that at this period, from early in the sixties to early in the seventies, all intelligent classes of Russian society were engrossed in one absorbing con-

flict, family dissensions between parents and children. There was hardly an aristocratic family in which there was not some such quarrel. The misunderstandings arose not over any actual practical matters, but over mere theoretical and abstract questions. "Their opinions differed." It was *only* that, but that *only* was enough to make children leave their parents and parents turn off their children.

At that time there was a sort of epidemic of young girls leaving their parental home. In the immediate neighbourhood of Palibino all was (thank Heaven !) as it should be ; but from every other direction, first from one family and then from another, came the news of daughters who had left home—some bent on study in foreign lands, and others joining the Nihilists in St. Petersburg.

What shocked the neighbours, parents, and teachers in the neighbourhood of Palibino was a certain mysterious commune which it was said had been formed in St. Petersburg. This was, ran the story, recruited from all the young girls who wished to leave home. Young people of both sexes, it was said, lived there in the full rights of communism. Servants were not permitted ; so ladies of quality had, with their own hands, to scrub floors and dishes. It is, of course, understood that no one who spread the rumour had ever been in the same commune. Where it was located, or how it could exist in St. Petersburg under the nose of the police, that no one knew ; but there was no one who harboured the least doubt of its existence.

In a short while signs of the times began to show

themselves in the Rajevskys' immediate neighbourhood. The village priest, Father Phillip, had a son who formerly delighted his father's heart with his obedience and steadiness. But just as he finished his course at the seminary with almost the highest certificates, this peaceful youth changed suddenly into a wilful son, and refused sharp and short to become a priest, though he only needed to reach out his hand to receive a comfortable living. His Worship the Bishop ordered him before him, and exhorted him not to leave the shelter of the Church. He let him plainly understand, moreover, that it rested only with himself to become a parish priest in the village of Ivanovo (the richest in the government). He certainly had as a preliminary to marry the former priest's daughter. Such was the ancient custom that the living descended as a sort of portion to one of the former incumbent's daughters. But even this alluring prospect did not prove tempting to the priest's young son. He preferred going to St. Petersburg, entering his name as a student, and maintaining himself there at his own cost, which came to much the same thing as starvation.

Poor Father Phillip lamented terribly over his son's folly. Had the lad even taken up jurisprudence, which is esteemed as the most advantageous career, the old man could have borne it. But his son had instead taken up natural science, and came back for his first vacation choke full of all sorts of nonsense, pretending, for instance, that men are descended from apes, and that Professor Setenchof had proved there was no such thing as a soul except as a reflex

motion ; so that at last the father, in horror, had to seize the holy water chalice and sprinkle him with holy water.

When the young man had in former years come back to his father's home from the seminarium during the holidays, he had never neglected any of the Rajevsky family feasts, or to pay his respects ; and later when he joined the feast he had, as became a young man of his position, sat at the further end of the table and quietly enjoyed the name's-day cake without joining in the conversation. But this summer it happened otherwise. On the first name's-day which took place after the young man's arrival, he chose to absent himself ; and to make matters worse, he arrived on an ordinary day, and when the servant asked him what he wanted, he answered quite simply that he had come to pay the General a visit.

General Rajevsky had already heard many things about the young Nihilist, and though he had noticed his absence from the name's-day feast, he had not, of course, troubled himself about such an insignificant circumstance. Now, however, he was excessively angry that the impudent young man should venture to pay him a visit like an equal, for the priesthood in Russia forms almost a caste by itself, which is considered to stand somewhat low in the social scale and is always somewhat despised. The General determined to give him a good lesson. He therefore told the servants to inform him that the General only interviewed petitioners or people who came on business in the forenoon, or before one o'clock.



The honest Ilja, who always understood with half an eye what concerned his master, delivered the message just in the spirit it was given him. But the young man gave no sign, only just as he was going away he said calmly, "Tell your master, with my compliments, that I will never again set foot inside his house!"

Ilja delivered this message also, and one can easily imagine what a sensation such an answer from an underling made, not merely in the Rajevsky family, but in the whole neighbourhood. But the most astounding thing of all was that when Anyuta heard what had happened, she rushed into her father's room, with her cheeks burning and flaming with passion, and exclaimed, "Why on earth have you insulted Alexi Fillippovitch, father? It was very wrong of you; it is an ignoble way of treating a worthy and honourable man." The General stared at his daughter with wide-open eyes. His astonishment was so great that he forgot for the first moment how to answer her insolence. After the first moment Anyuta's fiery courage sank, and she hastened to the shelter of her own room.

When the General recovered from his astonishment, he decided that it was better not to give his daughter's behaviour any importance, and to treat it with ridicule. At dinner he began to relate a story of an emperor's daughter who took into her head to intercede for a stable-boy. He certainly drew the princess and her *protégé* in the most ridiculous light. He was a master of ridicule, and all the children were afraid of his talent. But on that day Anyuta listened to her father's tale

calm and unmoved, but at the same time with an angry and defiant air.

In order to emphasise her protest against the insult which the young man had received, she began to take every opportunity of meeting him either at the neighbours' or in her walks.

Stephen, the coachman, narrated once at supper in the servants' room how, with his own eyes, he had seen Miss Anyuta walking *tête-à-tête* with the priest's son in the wood. It was so funny to see them. Miss Anyuta walked silently along, with her eyes on the ground, swinging her parasol backwards and forwards, and he close beside her with his long sticks of legs, just like a crane! And the whole time he was talking and fencing with his hands. And then he pulled out a crumpled old book and began reading out of that to her, just as if he were giving a lesson.

It must be owned that the priest's young son was little like the legendary prince or the mediæval knight whom Anyuta had formerly dreamt of. His long, shapeless, awkward figure, thin, sinewy neck and colourless face, surrounded by coarse yellow-red hair, his large red hands, and his coarse and not always blamelessly clean nails, all this could hardly have conduced to make him a very fascinating hero to a young girl of aristocratic manners and inclinations. And, indeed, no one could for a moment imagine that Anyuta's interest in him had anything romantic about it. There was evidently something lying below the surface. And this was exactly what it was. The young man's chief attraction for Anyuta was that he

had come straight from St. Petersburg, and had there participated in all the newest ideas. Moreover, he had even had the happiness of seeing with his own eyes, though certainly only at a distance, so many of the great men to whom the youth of that period looked up with admiration and respect, Tschernyschefshefski, Dobroljudof, Sljeptsef. This was quite sufficient to make him himself interesting and captivating. Anyuta had, into the bargain, to thank him for many books which she could never otherwise have procured. The Rajevskys only got the most solid and respectable periodicals of the time—*Revue des Deux Mondes* and the *Athenæum* from abroad, and *Russki Vjästnik* from Russia. As a great concession to the feeling of the time, the General had that year also subscribed for *Epocha*, Dostojevsky's journal. But now, through this young man, Anyuta could be supplied with literature of quite a different kind—*Savremennik* ("Our Age") and *Russkoje Slovo* ("Russia's Word"), journals of which every fresh number brought to light some new movement among the young. Once he procured her even a number of Herz's forbidden weekly paper, *Kolokol* ("Bells").

It would be unjust to say that Anyuta at once and without criticising them accepted the new ideas which her nihilistic friend preached to her. Many of them disturbed her, and seemed to her altogether crude, and she could dispute right well about them. But under the influence of conversations with him, and reading the books he procured her, she developed quickly, and went further and further, not only every day, but every

hour. Towards autumn the young student was on such bad terms with his father that he was told to take himself off and not to come again next holidays. But the seed he had sown in Anyuta's mind continued to grow and flourish.

She changed even in outward appearance—dressed herself in simple black clothes with smooth white collar, and combed back her hair into a net. She now despised all talk of balls and parties. In the forenoon she let the servant's children come to her and she taught them to read, and when she met an old woman on the road she stood and talked to her long and kindly.

But what was most remarkable of all, Anyuta, who formerly abhorred study of every kind, was now seized with a perfect passion for studying. Instead of spending her money on rubbish and finery, she now ordered whole boxes full of books, and those not novels, but books with learned titles, such as "Human Physiology," "History of Civilisation," &c.

One day, she went in to her father and burst forth with a most unexpected proposition—that he should let her journey alone to St. Petersburg to study. The General tried to turn her request into ridicule, as in former times when Anyuta had announced herself unwilling to live any longer in the country. But this time she would not let herself be overawed. Neither her father's joke nor his ridicule moved her. She maintained with extraordinary warmth that because her father found it necessary to live on his estate, that was no reason why she should remain chained to the country, where she found neither occupation nor pleasure.

The General at last got angry and scolded her like a little child. "If you can't understand for yourself why it is the proper duty of every nice girl to stay at home with her parents till she is married, I don't intend to waste more of my time disputing with such a fool."

Anyuta saw it was no good to resist. But from that hour the relations between her and her father were greatly strained, and they felt for each other a bitterness which increased daily. At dinner, the only time of day when they met, they hardly ever spoke to each other direct; but in every word they spoke there was some pin-prick or wounding remark.

There was now a general and hitherto unknown division in the Rajevsky family. There had, it is true, never been many matters of common interest. Every one lived each for their own interest. Now all ranged themselves into two hostile camps.

The governess had from the first shown her hatred of the new ideas. She christened Anyuta the Nihilist, and the "advanced young woman," which latter nickname had a specially venomous sound from her lips. She instinctively understood that Anyuta had something in view. At first she suspected her of some criminal project—a secret flight from her home, a marriage with the priest's son, or joining the celebrated "Commune." She therefore took upon herself to spy out her doings. And Anyuta, who felt that the governess suspected her, enveloped herself studiously and, on purpose to irritate her, in an attitude of offended and injured reserve.

Only Madame Rajevsky seemed to notice nothing of

what was going on round her, but went on, as usual, trying to reconcile and smooth down every one.

It was not long before the spirit of strife which reigned at Palibino infected the thirteen-year-old Tanja. The governess had always striven to circumscribe her intercourse with Anyuta. But now she sought strenuously to shelter her pupil from the "Nihilist" as from a plague. As much as she could she prevented the sisters being alone together, and looked upon every attempt of Tanja's to leave the schoolroom and to go up to the grown-up's as a crime.

Her governess's espionage angered Tanja greatly. She had a feeling that Anyuta was aspiring to something new, something wonderfully interesting; and she wanted terribly to know what it was all about. Almost every time she came upon Anyuta unexpectedly she was sitting at her writing-table busily writing. Tanja tried to make her tell her what she was doing. But Anyuta had already been lectured by the governess for not being content with turning herself from the right path, but trying to allure thence her little sister. So she always drove Tanja away for fear of new complaints. "Now be good and run off. Malvina is sure to come and surprise us together, and then there's a fuss, as you know."

Tanja went back to the schoolroom angry with the governess, whose fault it was that her sister would have nothing to say to her. It became harder and harder for the governess to manage her pupil. From the conversation which took place at the dinner-table, Tanja principally gathered that it was no longer the fashion to

obey one's elders, and gradually the feeling of submission was weakened in her. There were almost daily altercations with her governess ; and at last, after a more than ordinarily stormy scene, Malvina decided she could no longer remain with the Rajevskys.

As there had already been several threats of the kind, Tanja did not at first think anything much of it. But this time it was evident that it was serious. On her side, the governess had already gone so far with threats that she could not in honour withdraw. Tanja's parents were so irritated with the constant altercations, that they did not try to keep the Englishwoman, and hoped there would be peace in the house when she was gone. But not till the last moment of the very last day came, did Tanja believe that the governess would really go.

## CHAPTER X.

THE old-fashioned portmanteau in its tidy linen cover, tied up with ropes, had stood all the morning in the lobby. On the top of it was piled a whole battery of carton boxes, baskets, bags and bundles, all the packages without which no old maid can ever travel. In front of the steps waited the tarantass, the harness of which was of the most primitive and inferior kind. The coachman, Jacob, always took it out when there was a long journey in prospect. The maid-servants ran about, busily carrying and stowing all the small parcels ; while the valet, Ilja, stood motionless, leaning idly against the door-post with the most contemptuous expression, which seemed to say that the journey in question was nothing so important to make such a fuss about. The whole family were assembled in the dining-room. As usual when any farewell was taking place, the General invited them all to be seated before the leave-taking. The family seated themselves in the place of honour in the furthest corner, and a little way off the group of servants, out of respect to their master, seated themselves on the very edge of the chairs. A few minutes passed in respectful silence, for every one felt involun-



tarily more or less affected by the nervous anxiety which accompanies all farewells. But when the General gave the sign to rise, crossed himself in front of the sacred picture, the others followed his example, and then came the usual embraces and tears.

Tanja gazed at her governess, who, in her black travelling dress, wrapped up in a thick warm shawl, all at once seemed quite different to what she usually looked. Malvina Jakovlevna seemed all of a sudden to have become old ; her firm, strong figure seemed to have shrunk and contracted ; her eyes (the two thunderbolts, as the children were accustomed naughtily to call them in secret), those eyes which had never let a fault of Tanja's escape her, were red and swollen and tearful. The corners of the mouth were tremulous with nervous emotion. For the first time in her life, Tanja felt guilty towards her. The governess folded her pupil in a long, convulsive embrace, and kissed her with an extreme tenderness which Tanja had never expected. "Don't forget me ; write soon. It is not easy to part with a light heart from a child one has educated from seven years old," she sobbed.

Tanja also clasped her tightly, and broke into despairing tears. A painful sorrow seized her ; a feeling of irreparable loss, as though, with the governess's departure, the whole family must split up ; and she was, moreover, conscious that she was herself to blame. With a painful sense of shame she recalled how, during the last few days—even that very morning—she had in secret been jubilant at the thought of the departure of the severe governess, and her own approaching liberty.

"It serves me right," she said; "now she is off in earnest, and we must stay behind here all by ourselves," and the next moment she was so miserable at being without Malvina Jakovlevna, that she would have done anything to keep her. She clutched hold of her as if she could not let her go.

"It is time to be off," said some one, "if you want to get to the town by daylight." Everything was ready in the carriage, and the governess got in. Another long embrace. "Take care, Miss, you don't get under the horse's feet," some one called out to Tanja, and off went the carriage.

Tanja rushed upstairs into a corner room, from whence she could see the long birch avenue which led from the house to the highway. She pressed her face against the window-pane, and could not tear herself away as long as the carriage was in sight. The feeling of guilt got stronger and stronger in her. Oh, God! what a bitter moment for her it was when governess left! All their squabbles (and they had of late been innumerable) stood in quite a new light now.

"She loved me: she would have stayed if she had only known how much I loved her! Now there is no one who cares for me," she thought in her remorse, and her sobs grew louder and louder.

"Are you making all those wry faces over Malvina?" asked her brother Fedja, who was passing, in a tone of malicious astonishment.

"Let her be, Fedja. It does her credit that she was so fond of her," heard Tanja behind her, in the voice of

an old aunt whom none of the children could bear because they thought her false. Her brother's sneer and her aunt's praise, bitter-sweet as it was, annoyed Tanja and chilled her. She never could, from her earliest days, bear to be comforted in any trouble by some one to whom she was indifferent. So she shrank away from her aunt's hand which lay caressingly on her shoulder, and murmured, "I am neither sorry nor affectionate," and so saying, she ran off.

The sight of the empty schoolroom nearly renewed Tanja's paroxysm of grief, and the only thought which at all comforted her was the feeling that now she might be with her sister as much as she wished, and she made up her mind to go to her at once.

Anyuta was walking up and down the big drawing-room, as was her custom when anything troubled her. She looked most preoccupied : her blue-green eyes were intensely brilliant, but took in nothing of what was passing around her. She herself did not know that her step kept time to her thoughts. If she was in a sorrowful mood, her step was heavy and slow ; if her mind was occupied by pleasant thoughts, she went quicker and quicker, till she began to run. Every one in the house recognised this, and often joked her about it. Tanja had often noticed her sister while she walked, and wondered what she was thinking about.

Tanja knew by experience it was labour lost to try to get a word out of Anyuta under such circumstances ; but when she saw her walking as if she would never stop, she lost patience, and began to talk to her.

"Anyuta, I am so sad—lend me one of your books

to read," she said, in a beseeching tone. But Anyuta went on without seeming to hear her. All was silent again for awhile.

"Anyuta, what *are* you thinking about?" Tanja at last ventured to exclaim. "Oh, do stop—there's a dear."

"You are too small still for me to talk to you about it," she said, contemptuously.

But Tanja really felt at last seriously hurt. "Is it really true? Will you never talk to me? Now that Malvina is really gone, I thought we should be such good friends, you and I, and there you go and send me off! Well, then, I shall go my own way; but I shall never care for you again—not one little, little bit!"

With sobs in her throat, Tanja jumped up to run away, when her sister called her back. Truth to tell, Anyuta was burning to confide to some one what was taking up so much of her thoughts; and in default of any one better, as there was no one in the house to whom she could speak, she was obliged to put up with her thirteen-year-old sister.

"Listen," she said; "if you promise never, never, under any circumstances whatsoever, to tell any one, I will tell you a great secret."

Tanja's tears dried instantly, and her wrath vanished. She naturally protested that she would be as silent as the walls, and waited impatiently for what Anyuta was to tell her.

"Come with me to my room," said the elder sister, solemnly. "I will show you something—something you never suspected."

And off she led Tanja to her room, and up to the ancient writing-desk in which Tanja knew she kept all her most important secrets. Slowly and very pompously, in order to excite Tanja's curiosity to the utmost, she drew out one of the drawers and took out of it a big envelope with a business-like look and a red seal with the words—"The Epoch Journal." The envelope was addressed to Mademoiselle Nikitischna Kusymin." This was the Rajevskys' housekeeper, who was blindly devoted to Anyuta, and would have gone through fire and water for her. From the cover Anyuta took a small envelope on which was written, "To be forwarded to Miss Anna Ivanovna Rajevsky," and finally she handed to Tanja a letter, written in a bold, manly hand.

"Honoured Anna Ivanovna," read Tanja, "your very kind letter and your marked confidence in me interested me so much that I instantly took up your story, with the following result.

"I own that it was not without secret trepidations that I began to read. We journalists have so often the sad duty of awakening from their hopeful illusions young beginners who send their first literary efforts for our judgment. On this occasion such a duty would have been very painful to me. But after I read, my fears lightened, and I was more and more captivated by the youthful directness, the honest, warm feelings which the story evinced. These qualities prepossessed me so in your favour, that I am afraid I continue under their influence, and therefore I dare not yet answer

categorically or impartially the question you ask as to whether you may in time become a great authoress. I can only say, further, that I shall be very happy to insert it in the next number of my journal. As to your question, I advise you to work and write—for the rest, time will show.

“ I will not hide from you that there is much in the story which is unfinished, much which is too *naïve* ; there are—forgive my bluntness—sins against the Russian grammar. But all these are only insignificant faults, which you can easily overcome by work, and the whole makes an undoubtedly pleasant impression.

“ Therefore I again repeat, Write, write. It would truly rejoice me if you would tell me something about yourself—how old you are, and in what surroundings you live ? It is of importance for me to know all this, in order to judge your talents.

“ Yours truly,

“ FEDOR DOSTOJEVSKY.”

Tanja read the note with the utmost astonishment, and its letters danced before her eyes. The name Dostojevsky was well known to her. During the last few years it had often been mentioned at the dinner-table in the quarrels between her father and sister. Tanja knew that he was one of the foremost Russian authors ; but how did he come to write to Anyuta, and what did it all mean ? For a moment she thought that her sister was playing a practical joke upon her, in order to make merry over her simplicity.

After she had finished reading the letter, Tanja

gazed silently at Anyuta without knowing what to say. The latter enjoyed her astonishment.

“Do you understand—do you see?” at last she exclaimed, with a voice shaking with glad emotion; “I have written a story and sent it to Dostojevsky without telling any one a word about it—and you see he thinks it very nice, and is putting it into his journal. So at last I have got my desire—I am an authoress!” She almost screamed the last word in an outburst of irresistible delight.

And in truth, if one wants to understand what this word “authoress” meant to the two sisters, one must remember that they lived in the wilderness, far from every (even the least) movement of literary life. The family, it is true, read much and ordered many books, but to all of them, each book, each printed word, came from a distance, from the unknown world with which they had not an interest in common. Wonderful as it may seem, it is nevertheless a fact that neither of the sisters had ever seen any one who had ever seen themselves in print. There certainly was in the district town a schoolmaster about whom a sudden rumour was spread that he was to be the correspondent of a newspaper for that district, and Tanja remembers well the respectful awe with which they met him; till at last it appeared that he was not the correspondent at all, but that it was some journalist from St. Petersburg who had stayed there on his journey through the town.

And now her own sister suddenly appeared before her as an authoress, Tanja had no words in which to express her delight and astonishment. She would only

throw herself round Anyuta's neck, pet her, and laugh and talk all sorts of nonsense.

Anyuta dared not mention her success to any other member of her family, not even to her mother, who would be startled and go and tell her father. In his eyes such an act as writing to Dostojevsky without parental sanction, and submitting to his decision, perhaps his scorn, would be a heavy crime. Poor General Rajevsky! He who had such a horror of women writers, and suspected them all and individually of every possible crime and misdemeanour which had no connection whatsoever with literature; he it was who was doomed to be the father of an authoress. Personally he had only known one blue-stocking, as he called them, the Countess Rostoptschin, a famous poetess. He had met her at Moscow at a time when she was a brilliant and fêted beauty, for whom the whole of the aristocratic youth of that day, the General included, sighed in vain. Later, many years after, he came across her abroad at the Baden gaming tables.

"I could hardly trust my eyes," the General would often say, "when I saw the Countess come into the gambling room with a whole train of vagabonds after her, one more vulgar than the other. They were all laughing and talking and joking together with her as familiarly as possible. She went up to the table and began to throw down a mint of money, piece by piece. Her eyes glittered and her cheeks flamed, and her chignon got all awry. She played away everything she had by degrees, and then cried out, 'Well, gentlemen, I am cleared out. Nothing goes right. Come, let us



forget our worries in champagne.' Well, one can see what it leads a woman to when she dabbles with pens and ink !”

It was therefore quite apparent that Anyuta would not be eager to boast of her success to her father. But it was just the mystery in which she was forced to envelop her first *début* in the path of literature which gave it its special charm. Ah, how delicious it was, a few weeks later, when the monthly number of the “Epoch” came, and the sisters read on the title-page, “Dreams ; a story by Juri Orbjälof” (this was the pseudonym Anyuta chose, as she could not use her own name). Anyuta had naturally already read her story to Tanja in MS., but when the child saw it in print it seemed to her something altogether new and wonderful.

The story was as follows. The heroine, Liljenka, lived in a circle of very elderly people, who had been badly treated by life, and who had withdrawn to a quiet corner there to find peace and forgetfulness. They sought to implant in Liljenka their own fear of life and its troubles. But the unknown life allured her and drew her forth, as its distant echo came to her like a far-off murmur of waves from an unseen ocean concealed behind the mountains. She thought that there was a place

“Where men lived in greatest happiness,  
Where they lived a living life,  
And did not spin their spider's web.”

But where should she find these people ?

Unconsciously Liljenka was herself infected by the

prejudices which surrounded her. Almost unconsciously she asked herself at every step, Is it suitable for a young lady to do so and so? She wanted to tear herself free from the narrow world in which she lived, but all that was common or "unbecoming" frightened her.

Once at a public festival in the town she made acquaintance with a young student. Of course every hero of a story in those days was a young student. This young man made a great impression upon her, but, as became a well-brought-up young lady, she did not show him how much she liked him, and their acquaintance broke off at their first meeting.

At first Liljenka sorrowed over this, but by degrees she calmed herself. At last it was only when accidentally, among the different memorials of her colourless life—which she, like most other young girls, kept in her drawer—she hit upon some reminder of that never-to-be-forgotten day, that she hastened to shut her drawer again, and would then during the whole day be sad and preoccupied.

But one night she had a dream; she thought that the young student came to her and upbraided her for not following him. The dream opened up to Liljenka the picture of a more industrious life with a sympathising friend, in a circle of good, talented men, a life filled with bright and sunny happiness in the present, and endless hope for the future. "Behold and repent; this is what your life might have been and mine!" said the student to her, and vanished.

Liljenka woke, and, under the influence of the

dream, decided that she would no longer be bound by the fear of what was becoming. She had hitherto never been in the street by herself without a maid or servant, but she slipped off by herself, took the first droska, and drove to the distant miserable street where she knew her dear student lived. After seeking him long, and after many adventures caused by her inexperience and unpracticalness, she at last found his dwelling, but there she was told by his companion that he had died of typhus some days before. His companion told her how hard and difficult his life had been, and how he had suffered, and how often, when delirious, he had spoken of a young girl.

In order to comfort her, or perhaps as a reproach to the weeping girl, he repeated for her Dobroljudof's verse—

“ I fear that death, like life, shall do me some ill turn ;  
I fear that all I vainly long for here—  
My heart's desire in life's first spring,  
Shall smile on me delusively and fair  
When strikes the hour of death upon my ear.”

Liljenka hurried home, and none of her family knew how she had spent the day. But she herself has the full and abiding conviction that she has thrown away her life. She dies shortly after, bemoaning her wasted youth, from which she has not retained even one sweet memory.

Anyuta's first success made her venturesome, and she immediately began another story, which she finished in

a few weeks. The hero this time was a young man named Michael, who was educated far from his family in a monastery by his uncle, who was a monk. This story Dostojevsky praised even more than the first, and found her much improved.

But with its publication all the happiness was at an end. Dostojevsky's letter reached the General's hands, and the storm broke.

It happened on the 5th of September. A memorable day in the Rajevsky family annals, as usual a number of people had arrived. The post, which came once a week to Palibino, was expected on that day. The housekeeper, in whose name Anyuta corresponded with Dostojevsky, usually met the postboy and took from him the letters addressed to her before she carried the post in to the General. But to-day she was busy with the arrangements for the party, and unfortunately the postman had had a drop too much in honour of Madame Rajevsky's name's-day—that is to say he was dead drunk, and they had sent a boy instead, who did not know all these arrangements. So the postbag came into the General without having undergone preliminary sorting and sifting. The first letter which caught the General's eye was a registered one addressed to the housekeeper, and bearing the "Epoch" stamp. "What is this little game?" the housekeeper was asked, and told to open the letter in his presence. One can, or rather more justly speaking one cannot, picture what followed on this. As ill luck would have it, Dostojevsky sent Anyuta in this very letter the honorarium for her stories, some three hundred roubles. This circumstance, the fact of

his daughter receiving money from an unknown person, was to the General so shameful and insulting, that he had a bad attack of serious illness. He had heart disease as well as gall-stones, and the doctor had explained that every excitement was bad for him, and might even cause death. The possibility of such a catastrophe kept the family in constant anxiety. If any of the children angered him, his face became dark blue, and they were seized with fear lest he should die. What would happen now when he was struck by such a blow, and the house into the bargain full of guests? A regiment was quartered in the district town, in the neighbourhood of Palibino, and it being Madame Rajevsky's name's-day, all the officers and their colonel appeared to surprise her with the regimental band.

The name's-day banquet was already over. In the big drawing-room, on the upper floor, all the chandeliers and candelabra were lit, and the guests, who had rested after dinner, had dressed, and were now assembling for the ball. The young lieutenants were puffing over the work of putting on their white gloves. Before the mirrors were crowds of young girls in tarlatan dresses and the huge crinolines which were then the fashion.

Anyuta felt generally superior to the pleasures of this small society, but to-day she was quite intoxicated by it all—the gaily-clad guests, the music, the flood of light, and the consciousness that she herself was the most beautiful and admired person there. She forgot her new dignity as a Russian authoress, forgot how little these red-headed frowsy lieutenants were like the

ideal hero of whom she had dreamed ; she flitted about, smiling at every one and everything, and enjoying the consciousness that she could turn all their heads. They only waited for the General to begin the dance. Suddenly a servant entered and went up to Madame Rajevsky. " His Excellency was ill—would her ladyship go down to him in his study ? "

Every one was startled. Madame Rajevsky got up, hastily picked up her long silk train, and hastened downstairs. The musicians in the next room, waiting for the signal agreed upon to commence the quadrille, got orders to wait awhile.

Half an hour passed. The guests became uneasy. Suddenly Madame Rajevsky returned. Her countenance was flushed with emotion, but she tried to appear calm, and forced a strained smile. To the anxious inquiries of her guests how the General was, she answered evasively that he was not very well, but begged them to excuse him and to begin the dance at once.

All noticed that there was something wrong, but politely refrained from questions, but all started off dancing as busily as possible, as they were dressed for it and had assembled for that purpose. And so the ball began. When Anyuta now and again in the quadrille passed her mother, she cast anxious glances at her, and saw by her eyes something dreadful had happened. She availed herself of a minute's interval between two dances to take her mother aside with a storm of questions.

" What have you done ? All is discovered. Father

has read Dostojevsky's letter to you, and is almost dying of shame and anger," bemoaned poor Madame Rajevsky, with difficulty keeping back her tears.

Anyuta became deadly pale, and her mother hastened to add, "For God's sake command yourself! Remember the house is full of guests, who would be only too pleased if they had something to gossip about. Go and dance as if nothing had happened."

And so both mother and daughter continued dancing till morning, both half dead with fear of the tempest which would burst over their heads as soon as the guests were gone.

And a fearful tempest it was.

So long as the guests were there, the General shut himself into his room and allowed no one in. In the intervals of the dance Madame Rajevsky and Anyuta rushed out of the ballroom and listened at his door, but dared not venture in, but turned to each other, tortured with the thought, "How is he? Is he very ill?"

When all was quiet in the house, he sent for Anyuta and gave her a severe scolding. Among other things he said—and he said much to her—was one special phrase which engraved itself on her memory: "One may well expect anything from a young girl who can venture without her parent's knowledge to enter into correspondence with a stranger and take money from him. Now you sell your work, but I am not at all sure the day will not come when you will sell yourself."

Poor Anyuta was seized with horror at these dreadful words. She knew for certain that they were only

empty talk, but her father spoke confidently, and with such deep conviction in his tone, and was deeply disturbed and moved. His authority in her was so great that for a moment she felt an awful suspense. Had she really demeaned herself? Had she perhaps, without knowing it, done something fearfully improper?

The next few days, as always happened after any household disturbance, every one went along as though cold water had been thrown over them. The servants already knew the whole story. Ilja had, as usual, played the eaves-dropper at the interview between the General and Anyuta, and explained things in his fashion. Of course the tale was also rumoured round, in an exaggerated and disfigured fashion, among the neighbours; and indeed for long after, the fearfully improper behaviour of the young ladies of Palibino was discussed in the neighbourhood.

By degrees the storm was laid. A phenomenon took place among the Rajevskys which is pretty common in Russian families. The children educated their parents. The educational process began with the mother.

At first, as in all the children's quarrels with their father, she took entirely his side. His illness frightened her. How could Anyuta trouble her father in this way! Sometimes she went to Anyuta and tried to persuade her. "Darling Anyuta, do as your father desires. Promise never to write again, but turn to something else. I remember when I was a girl I wanted very much to learn to play the violin. But my father would not permit it, because he thought it ungraceful



for a woman to use the fiddle-stick. Well, what did it matter? I, of course, did not oppose him; I began to take singing lessons instead. Why cannot you abandon literature and take up some other occupation instead?" But when she saw that all her persuasion was no good, but that Anyuta went about with the same troubled, injured air, she began to think she was wrong. There also awoke in her a curiosity to read Anyuta's story, and then she became privately quite proud that her daughter was an authoress.

In this way she gradually came over to Anyuta's side, and the General found himself standing alone.

In the first moment of anger he had required a promise from his daughter that she would never write again, and only on this condition would he pardon her. Anyuta naturally would not give in nor make this promise, and the result was that they would not speak to each other for many days, and Anyuta would not appear at table. Madame Rajevsky ran from one to the other, persuading and mediating; till at last the General gave in, and the first step in the path of reconciliation was that he consented to hear Anyuta's story.

The reading took place most solemnly. The whole family was assembled. Fully conscious of the importance and meaning of the moment, Anyuta read with a voice quivering with emotion. The heroine's position, her desire to get away from her own circle, her suffering under the yoke of the prejudices which oppressed her—all this was so like the authoress's own experiences that it was recognised by every one. The

General listened silently, without uttering a word during the reading. But when Anyuta came to the last page, and could hardly suppress her own sobs as she read how the dying Liljenka bewailed her own wasted youth, her father's eyes suddenly filled with tears. He got up without speaking, and left the room. Neither that evening nor on the succeeding days did he speak to Anyuta of her story, but he behaved towards her with great tenderness, and every one understood her cause was won.

From that day there was in truth for the Rajevskys a time of gentleness and peace. The first event in the new era was that the housekeeper, whom the General had in his first anger sent about her business, was graciously forgiven and kept her place.

The next act of indulgence was still more surprising. The General permitted Anyuta to write to Dostojevsky, on the condition only that she showed him her letter, and promised that she should make acquaintance with him in the approaching visit to St. Petersburg. As has been already mentioned, Madame Rajevsky and Anyuta were accustomed almost every winter to travel to St. Petersburg, where the former had quite a colony of old unmarried aunts on her mother's side. They all lived together in a big house in the Vasili Ostroff, and always kept two or three rooms at the service of any relatives who might like to visit them. The General usually remained quietly in the country, and Tanja also, hitherto under the governess's care. But as the Englishwoman had left, and the newly-imported Swiss governess had not yet acquired sufficient authority,

Madame Rajevsky determined, to Tanja's great joy, to take her with her.

The Rajevskys generally left in January, as the sledging was then good. It was not quite an easy undertaking in those days to travel to St. Petersburg. First they had to go through sixty versts of country roads with their own horses, then two hundred versts on the state roads with post-horses, and then lastly there was nearly a day's railway journey. The mother and her two daughters travelled together in a great covered carriage on a sledge drawn by six horses, and behind followed the sledges with the maid and trunks. These sledges had three horses each abreast, caparisoned with bells, which jingled a merry accompaniment all the way and echoed through the travellers' sleep, as they came now nearer, now more distant, and then died away in the distance, and then fell again upon the ear.

What an amount of preparation that journey required! In the kitchen there was all the business of providing dainties sufficient for the whole expedition. The cook was famous through the whole country for his pastry, and never did he display so much zeal in this branch of his work as when he had to make pastry for the family's journey.

And what a wonderful journey it was! The first sixty versts were through forests—thick, deep-towering forests, only broken by a number of larger or smaller lakes. In winter these lakes looked like huge plains of snow, against which the solemn pine-forests surrounding them were dark and sharply defined. The

journey was wonderful enough by day, but still more so by night. Tanja slept soundly one minute, only to wake the next with a sudden jolt of the vehicle, and never knew at first where she was. The freshly-lighted little carriage-lamp which hung from the roof of the carriage cast a faint light over the strange sleeping figures, in their heavy pelisses and white travelling caps. Were those really her mother and sister? The frozen window-panes were encrusted with wonderful silver patterns, and the sledge-bells rang at intervals. All was so wonderful, so strange, that for the first moment she was not able to realise it all, and she only knew she was very stiff with lying in an uncomfortable position. Suddenly a ray of intelligence would bring to her brain the consciousness where they were and whither they were travelling, how many wonders and new things were awaiting her, and her heart leapt with joy. Yes, it was a wonderful journey. It was for Tanja one of the brightest memories of her childhood.

## CHAPTER XI.

ON their arrival in St. Petersburg, Anyuta at once wrote to Dostojevsky and asked him to call. He appeared on the day fixed. With what feverish anxiety both sisters awaited him! An hour before the right time they were listening eagerly for every sound in the hall. This first visit of his, however, passed off very unpleasantly.

As already mentioned, General Rajeovsky was very suspicious of everything which was connected with the literary world, and it was only with an anxious heart and secret trepidation that he gave his daughter leave to make Dostojevsky's acquaintance.

"Remember, Lina, it is a great responsibility which is resting upon you," he said to his wife before they started. "Dostojevsky is a person who does not belong to our class. What do we know about him? Nothing, but that he is a journalist, and has to boot been in prison. That, I must say, is a first-class recommendation! You must promise to be very cautious with him."

The first precaution he took was to insist that she should be present at the first interview between Dostojevsky and Anyuta, and she was not to leave them together alone for a moment. Tanja had also asked

leave to be present at the interview. Two old German aunts of Madame Rajevsky's also had, on some pretence or other, called at this very moment, and stared curiously at the author, as though he were a wild beast, while they seated themselves on a sofa and would not move till he had left.

Anyuta was extremely annoyed that this first meeting with her great poet, which she had dreamt about so much, should take place under such unfavourable circumstances. Dostojevsky felt awkward and ill at ease in the constrained atmosphere among all these old ladies, and he too was annoyed. He appeared that day to be sick and old, which was always the case when he was not in a good temper. The whole time he kept fingering his thin yellow beard and biting his lips, and thus contorted his whole face.

Madame Rajevsky tried her very best to keep up an interesting conversation. With her most fascinating and attractive smile, but at the same time evidently perplexed and ill at ease, she tried to say all sorts of polite and pretty things to him, and to bring forward deep questions.

Dostojevsky answered in monosyllables, with apparent rudeness. At last Madame Rajevsky was at the end of her resources also, and became silent. After he had sat about half an hour, Fedor Dostojevsky took his hat, bowed awkwardly and hurriedly, and went off without shaking hands with any one.

When he had gone, Anyuta rushed into her room and threw herself on her bed, weeping. "They

always spoil everything for me," she exclaimed, sobbing convulsively.

Poor Madame Rajevsky felt herself guilty without knowing why, and at the same time was vexed, for she had striven so very hard to please every one. It was rather hard on her. She also burst out weeping. "There, you see—you are never, never pleased. Papa allows you your way, gives you leave to know your ideal, I sit a whole hour listening to his rudeness, and then you throw all the blame on us."

In a word, every one was made unhappy, and had an unpleasant impression of this visit which they had all looked forward to with so much pleasure.

But five days later, Dostojevsky appeared at the Rajevskys', and this time he came at a lucky moment. Neither Madame Rajevsky nor her aunts were at home, only the two sisters; and the ice was broken. Dostojevsky seized Anyuta's hand. They sat together on the sofa, and began to talk away like old friends of many years' standing. The conversation did not languish as on the first occasion, nor did it halt along from one dull subject to another. But Anyuta and Dostojevsky were equally eager to say all they had in their hearts, and outdid each other in their bright talk.

Tanja sat by them without mixing in the conversation, and without taking her eyes off Dostojevsky, whose least word she drank in eagerly. He appeared to her to be quite another man—quite young, and so simple and good, and at the same time full of genius. "Can he really be forty-three?" she thought; "can he be three times older than I am and more than twice as

old as Anyuta? And he is into the bargain a great author, and yet one can really converse with him as with a friend." And Tanja thought, as she sat there so intimately, that she liked him very much.

"And such a dear little sister as you have here!" he said, quite unexpectedly. The instant before he had been talking to Anyuta on quite different subjects, and seemed not to have remarked Tanja at all.

Tanja blushed crimson, and her heart filled with gratitude to her sister, who, in answer to his remark, began to tell Dostojevsky what a good, dependable little sister Tanja was, and how she was the only one in the family who understood and sympathised with her. Anyuta warmed up in her praise, endowed her with all sorts of wonderful abilities, till at last she informed Dostojevsky that Tanja also wrote verses—"really not at all bad ones, for her age"; and, notwithstanding the child's protests, she jumped up and fetched two fat budgets of Tanja's poems, from which Dostojevsky, with a little smile, read two or three bits, which he praised. Anyuta beamed with content. How Tanja loved her at that moment! She could have given her life for both these individuals, whom she admired so greatly.

Three hours passed unnoticed. Suddenly there was a ring at the vestibule bell. It was Madame Rajevsky, who returned home from her shopping. Without knowing of Dostojevsky's presence, she came in, with her hat on, laden with parcels and apologising for being late for dinner.

When she saw Dostojevsky sitting there so much at



home, alone with her daughter, she was astonished, and began to be a little anxious. "What would the General say about this?" was her first thought. But the girls flung themselves round her neck, and when she saw them so bright and beaming she also thawed, and ended by asking Dostojevsky to share their simple dinner with them.

From that day he was quite at home at the Rajevskys', and as their visit to St. Petersburg was to be a very short one, he visited them often three or four times a week. It was particularly delightful when he came in the evenings, and when there were no other strangers there. Then he was specially charming and captivating. In general conversation he could not talk. He spoke best in monologue, and that only under the condition that those present were sympathetic to him and listened with strained attention. But if this condition were fulfilled he could talk more brightly and lucidly and vividly than any one.

Sometimes he would narrate the contents of novels he intended to write; sometimes scenes and circumstances of his own life. "Life has done me many an ill turn," he would say sometimes. "But it may have been so in order to prevent my being spoiled, and it has managed this so thoroughly and completely that I would gladly yield up my life now."

Some of Dostojevsky's brightest memories were those connected with the publication of his first novel, "Poor People." He began to write it when he was quite young, when he was a pupil in an engineer's school; and ended it when he was twenty-

three, and after he had become a soldier. He sent it to a journal, "Our Age," which had just been started under the famous critic Bjälinsky, and the then rising star, Nekrasof the poet, and the novelist Grêgorovitsch, who later became so famous. But he had hardly sent off the manuscript when he repented it. Like most authors, he suffered from the psychological peculiarity that, so long as he was writing a romance, he himself was delighted with it, and thought he had made a great success and that it was a work of genius. But as soon as his manuscript was ready and sent off to the editor of some journal, he was seized with misgivings, all the novel's faults stood out clearly before him, and all the rest of the work he thought dull and meaningless. He felt an aversion to his own work, and was ashamed of it. Perhaps there is no author who does not go through this psychological drubbing some time or other, but Dostojevsky, with his nervous and suspicious nature, suffered from it probably in an unusual degree. "Bjälinsky will only laugh at my "Poor People," he said to himself, sadly; and this idea gradually grew into a conviction with him. His depression of spirit was so great during the first few days after this manuscript was sent off, that he actually tried to drown despair in dissipation. "All night," he told his young friends, "I roamed about hither and thither to different places, without enjoying myself, in the depths of depression and in the bitterness of spirit. The clock was striking four in the morning when I came home. It was the month of May, and the bright St. Petersburg nights were as bright as day. I

never could bear those nights : they always upset my nerves and make me low-spirited. It was so at that time. I could not sleep, but sat, with open windows gloomy and sullen. I felt inclined to go and drown myself. Suddenly I heard a ring at the door bell. Who on earth could be coming at that hour? I opened the door. Nekrasof and Grigorovitsch rushed in and began, without saying a word, to embrace me madly. I could not understand a thing, but gazed at them wildly. At last I understood that they had, on the previous evening, begun to read my book, just to try the first ten pages or so ; then the next ten pages ; and so on and on until they, before they knew where they were, had read the whole at one sitting. When they had got to the place where Pokrovsky's old father runs after the son's coffin, Nekrasof—so Grigorovitsch told me later—had struck the book with his hand, 'The very devil of a lad.' They both determined to go straight off after me. 'If he is sleeping, we will wake him. It can't be helped ; it is more important than all the sleep in the world.'

"You can imagine what it was to me," said Dostojevsky, so carried away by his tale that he could hardly speak for gladness. "There are many who have succeeded, who have won fame, and who have been congratulated ; but only think ! they came rushing to me at four in the morning, with tears in their eyes, to wake me—because it was worth more than sleep."

But however dear to Dostojevsky was Nekrasof's and Grigorovitsch's sympathy, he considered Bjälinsky's judgment of still greater importance, and was still

afraid of him. But even that severe critic was fascinated by "Poor People," although he was at first very cool towards the new author. Nekrasof had unfortunately taken him the manuscript, exclaiming: "A new Gogol has appeared."

"Well! they grow like mushrooms out of the ground," remarked Bjälinsky, unsympathetically, and the unfortunate praise made him so cross that he could not for long be induced to read the story. But at last he read it, and at once called the young writer to him.

"I went to him with beating heart," said Dostojevsky, "and he received me with the utmost dignity and reserve." He looked at me silently, as if trying to fathom me, and then said, 'Do you yourself understand what you have written?' And he asked this in so severe a tone that I was frightened, and did not know what to make of it. But after this introduction followed a magnificent tirade. I was altogether aghast, and thought, 'Have I really done anything so wonderful?'"

Now came a time of life and activity in literature. During the next year Turgenyef Gontscharof and Herzen brought out their first work. Many other new lights also illumined the literary heaven, which later certainly proved only bright vanishing meteors, though at their rising it was considered that they would rank as stars of the first magnitude. The public also evinced an unusual interest in literature. More books and periodicals were purchased in Russia at this time than at any other. From the west came slight breezes of the tempestuous winds of 1848. All

Europe found itself in a state of combustion. Every one awaited something. Every one prepared for what was coming. Liberty, equality, and the rights of the people were floating in the air, and still retained their first intoxicating freshness.

There arose at St. Petersburg, particularly among the students and pupils of the Polytechnic, numberless small circles which, at starting at all events, had merely a literary aim. Young men joined together to subscribe for foreign books and journals, and met to read them aloud. But in consequence of the severity of the police in inexorably forbidding all meetings of any kind whatsoever, the young men had to use the greatest secrecy, and this led, in its turn, to the associations quickly taking a political character. Petrashevsky, an unusually gifted young man and a warm supporter of Fourier's views, was the first who thought of uniting all these small circles into a common organisation, and forming them into a sort of political association. For the rest, the object of the society by the documents of the organisation—as it appeared in the action against Petrashevsky—was wholly and purely of a theoretical nature and perfectly innocent, if one compares it with the later Nihilistic propaganda. Petrashevsky and his kindred spirits had nothing in their minds which was in any way aimed at the Emperor's life, or at open disturbance. They certainly surrounded their meetings with the greatest secrecy, but the questions which they discussed all took an abstract aspect, and were sometimes almost naïve—as, for example, “Can one reconcile the principle of love in man with the murder

of spies and traitors?" or, "Is the Greek religion at variance with Fourier's ideal?"

Dostojevsky also joined Petrashevsky. In the inquiry which took place, he was charged with having read at one of their meetings an account of Fourier's theory, and had moreover proposed to establish a secret press. For this small, unimportant crime Dostojevsky had to pay with—Siberia.

The 23rd of April, 1849, was a fatal day for Petrashevskytes. Petrashevsky himself and thirty-four of his comrades were arrested.

"On the evening of April 22nd, I came home at two o'clock at night from one of our comrade's," said Dostojevsky. "I undressed myself and went to bed, and slept at once. But after an hour or so, I noticed in my sleep that my room was full of strange and suspicious-looking people. I heard the clank of swords, which were hacking at something. What did it all mean? I opened my eyes with an effort, and heard a gentle, sympathetic voice say, 'Get up.' I looked up and saw a police officer with a magnificent beard. But it was not he who had spoken, but an officer in a light blue uniform, with lieutenant-colonel's epaulets. The light blue uniform is worn exclusively by gendarmes, a regiment which is always placed at the service of the secret police. 'What on earth is the matter?' I asked, as I raised myself in bed. 'In the Emperor's name.' I looked round. It was evidently in the Emperor's name.

"At the door stood a soldier, also in light blue. 'Aha! is that how it stands?' I thought. 'Allow

me——’ ‘Not a word. Dress yourself; we can wait,’ interrupted the lieutenant-colonel, with a still more sympathetic voice.

“While I dressed they turned over the leaves of my books and inspected the room. They did not find much, but poked about everywhere. They carefully tied up my papers and letters. The commissary of police seemed to inspect everything with the greatest care. He crept into the stove and poked about with his pipe-stem in the ashes. At his orders the gendarme got a chair and climbed up to look on the top of the stove, but the upper tier gave way, and he fell noisily, first on to the chair and then on to the floor. This seemed to convince both astute gentlemen that nothing was at the top of the stove.

“We filed out, led by the frightened housekeeper and her servant Ivan, who also was much frightened, but who looked on with a kind of dull solemnity, as though more suitable to the occasion.

“By the door stood a carriage. We went by the canal to Kedjebron. There was a bustle and a stir and a crowd of people. I met many friends, who were all sleepy and silent. An official met us. A continuous succession of gentlemen came up in light blue uniforms with new victims. They put us into different rooms, and the whole of the day passed in painful uncertainty. For the rest they treated us handsomely, gave us tea, breakfast, coffee, and dinner, and the gendarmes pressed us to eat, bewailing we ate so little.

“Towards the afternoon we were all taken to prison.

Strangely enough, it never struck me on the road where I was going, but when I arrived I understood it at once. I was led into a miserable little cell, faintly lit by a little lamp standing on the high shelf by the window, and I was left alone. My cell was evidently so wet, that when the commandant on the next morning came in he could not refrain from remarking, 'This is really not proper.' On my asking why I had been arrested, he answered, 'That you will know altogether at the trial.' But the first examination did not take place till ten days later, and the whole time I was in utter idleness. I had neither papers nor books. The only interruption to the monotony was when the cell-door opened, five times a day : at seven o'clock, when they came to bring me water for washing and to dust the room ; ten o'clock, for the inspector's round ; twelve o'clock, to bring in dinner (two portions of cabbage or some other soup, and a bit of veal torn in shreds, as neither knives nor forks accompanied it) ; seven o'clock for supper ; and lastly, when it got dark, they brought the lamp, which after all was superfluous, as they gave me nothing to do. Thus we were kept eight months. After the first two months they gave us books, though only very few ; but we grew so weary that we regarded the days when we were examined as real festivals. How the examination was developing, how it would end, that we knew nothing about.

"But on the morning of February 22nd appeared an unexpected officer at my door, and read my sentence. I was to be shot. *When* was not mentioned. But an hour had hardly passed when the inspector came and



ordered me to dress myself in my own clothes, not in those of the State, which I had worn in prison. Under a strong guard I was led out into the courtyard, where already nineteen of my comrades were waiting. They put us into carriages, four in each, with a soldier. It was seven o'clock in the morning. Where they were taking us we knew not. We asked the soldier, but he answered that he dare not say. And as it was very cold out, we could not see anything through the frozen panes. I tried to rub the glass with my finger, but the soldier said, 'Don't do that, or I shall be beaten.' There was evidently nothing to be done but to abstain from satisfying our easily explicable curiosity.

"After what seemed to us a never-ending journey, we arrived at last at the Semjenovskiplatsen; a scaffold was raised in the middle, and the whole twenty of us were led up there two by two. After a long imprisonment and separation from our comrades, we longed to greet each other and to talk to each other, but we were so closely watched we only succeeded in exchanging a few words with those who stood nearest us. The official stepped in front of the scaffold, and read out our sentence. The punishment was to be carried out. 'The twenty times repeated words—sentenced to be shot' graved themselves on my memory, and often in later years I would wake suddenly at night, thinking that some one was shrieking them in my ear.

"Another circumstance comes to my mind with equal vividness and clearness. I remember how the officer, after he had finished reading, folded up the paper and stuffed it into his pocket and stepped down from

the erection. At the same moment the sun came out of the clouds, and it distinctly flashed across me— 'It is impossible! they do not mean to shoot us.' I said it to my next neighbour, but instead of answering he pointed to the scaffold where stood a row of coffins covered by a cloth.

"When I saw this, I lost all hope, and instead was impressed with the conviction they meant to shoot us.

"I remember I became very frightened, but at the same time determined not to show it. Therefore I began to talk to my companion of every imaginable thing. He told me afterwards that I was not at all remarkably pale, and that I spoke all the time of a story which I thought out, and which I was very sorry not to write down. But I do not remember it in the least. On the contrary, I remember a whole number of isolated, inconsequent ideas which thronged upon me.

"A priest now stepped up on to the scaffold, and invited those who would to confess. Only one of us accepted his services, but when the priest stretched the crucifix to us we all touched it with our lips.

"Three of my comrades, Petrashevsky, Grigorjef, and Mombel, who were considered the most guilty, had already been bound to stakes, and had a sort of sack drawn over their heads. Opposite them a company of soldiers were drawn up, only waiting the commandant's fatal word 'Fire.' I had, as I supposed, at the most five minutes to live, and I decided to devote them to thinking of myself. I tried to picture to myself how it should all happen. Now I was full of life and consciousness: in five minutes I should be *nothing*, or

*someone* or *something* quite different." From the place where I stood the cupola of a church glittered in the sun. I remember that I stared perseveringly at that cupola and at the radiance which it gave forth, and I was seized with the fancy that this radiance was my new world, into which I should in five minutes be absorbed. I remember how painful it was, this physical aversion I had for the new unknown which approached nearer and nearer.

"A strange stir took place on the scaffold. My near-sightedness prevented me from distinguishing anything, but I knew something was happening. Suddenly I became aware of an officer riding full-tilt across the square in our direction, and waving a white handkerchief.

"This was an imperial messenger bringing us mercy. Later, it proved mercy had been determined upon previously ; and in truth how could it have been possible to have punished with death twenty youths, some hardly out of childhood, for offences so small? But the Emperor Nicholas had intended to punish us thus in order to frighten us, so that we should remember his laws.

"But the little comedy was one which had severe consequences for many of us. When Grigorjef, one of the ringleaders, was released from the stake he was silly ; he had lost his senses during the fearful five minutes he stood there with his eyes blindfolded waiting for the fatal word of command, and he never afterwards recovered his understanding. Furthermore, I do not think there is a single one amongst us who has not

had some trouble in our nervous system since that day.

“But there was another circumstance, which did not make any impression upon me personally, which I did not notice at the time, but which had also serious consequences for many of us, and cost the life of one of our party. It was the intense cold of that day, about twenty-two degrees of frost Réamur. When we were led on to the scaffold they took off not only our great-coats, but jackets and vests, and left us without wrap of any kind. We stood there for fully twenty minutes in our shirts. When we went back to prison several of us had our ears and toes frostbitten. One was ill with inflammation of the lungs, which later on developed into galloping consumption. But, I repeat, I cannot remember, however much I try to recall it, that I had the least consciousness of feeling cold.

“Instead of death we were sent for eight years’ penal servitude to Siberia, and were subjected for many years after to police supervision.”

Tanja and Anyuta knew that Dostojevsky suffered from epilepsy, but this illness was in their eyes surrounded by such a mysterious horror, that they never ventured to make the most distant allusion to the subject. To their astonishment he himself began to speak of it, and narrated the circumstances under which he was first attacked. It was after they had left their prison, and had been transported to Siberia as colonists. During this time he was fearfully lonely. Sometimes for months he did not meet a living soul with whom he could exchange a sensible word. Suddenly, and

quite unexpectedly, an old friend came to see him. It was Easter eve. But in the gladness of meeting they forgot the solemn occasion, and sat up the whole night together talking, not being conscious of weariness or how the time passed, and overwhelmed each other with their talk. They conversed on subjects dear to both—on literature, art, philosophy, and finally they came to religion. His companion was an atheist, Dostojevsky a believer, and both were warmly convinced of the truth of their views.

“There is a God—there is!” exclaimed at last Dostojevsky, quite beyond himself with excitement. At the same moment the bells of the neighbouring church rang the matins of Easter morn. The air trembled with the sound of their music. “And I felt,” said Dostojevsky, “as though heaven descended to earth and absorbed me. I literally felt inspired and penetrated by God’s spirit. ‘There is a God!’ I cried, and then I knew nothing more.”

“You strong people,” he added, “have no idea of the bliss which epileptics experience in the moments preceding their attacks. Mahomet assures us in his Koran that he had seen Paradise and had been there. All sensible folk mock, laugh at him, and call him a liar and a deceiver. But he did not lie. He had veritably been in Paradise in an attack of epilepsy, from which he suffered as I do.

“I do not know if this bliss lasted a second, an hour, or a month, but, believe my word, I would not exchange it for all the happiness life could give me.”

Dostojevsky uttered these last few words in his

peculiar passionate whisper. The sisters sat as though spell-bound by the magic force of his words. Both of them were suddenly seized by the same idea, "He is going to have another attack." His mouth was working convulsively, and his whole face was contorted.

Dostojevsky read clearly in their eyes what they feared. He suddenly interrupted himself, passed his hand over his face, and smiled a little.

"Do not be afraid," he said ; "I always know beforehand when it is coming over me."

The girls felt ashamed and distressed that he should have guessed their thoughts, as he certainly did. He left almost directly, but the next day he told them that he really had had a severe fit during the night.

Sometimes Dostojevsky was quite realistic in his mode of expression, and quite forgot he was talking to young girls, and put Madame Rajevsky into a fearful state of mind. But, nevertheless, she and Dostojevsky were soon very good friends. She thought him a fine fellow, though she sometimes almost lost patience with him.

At the close of their stay in St. Petersburg it occurred to Madame Rajevsky to have a farewell party, and to invite all her acquaintance. She also, of her own idea, asked Dostojevsky to come. He hesitated long, but at last she succeeded in persuading him—though she had some cause to regret that she had done so. The party was a melancholy affair. As the Rajevskys had lived for ten years in the country, they had naturally no circle of their own, in the ordinary meaning of the word, in St. Petersburg. They had only old acquaintances and

friends who had long been separated in every direction. Some of these had, during the ten years, made brilliant careers, and had clambered up to the top of the social ladder. Others had fallen into poverty and needy circumstances, and lived a penurious existence in remote quarters of the Vasili Ostroff, although possessing the necessaries of life. There was nothing in common between all these people, but nearly all accepted the invitation and came to Madame Rajevsky out of old friendship's sake, "pour est pauvre, chère Helène."

It was a somewhat large and strangely mixed party which met at the Rajevskys. Among the guests were the wife and daughters of a minister (the minister himself had promised to come later in the evening, for a moment, but did not keep his word). There was also an old, venerable, bald-headed, antiquated German, who occupied an important office, and who smacked his toothless mouth the whole time, while he constantly kissed Madame Rajevsky's hand, and kept repeating to the two girls, "Your mother was a great beauty; neither of her daughters are as lovely as she." There was also an old ruined landed gentleman from the Baltic provinces, who stayed in St. Petersburg in the vain hope of getting an advantageous appointment.

The guests moved about, interested in nothing and indifferent to each other. All were dull, but as well-bred people of the world to whom a dull party was an inevitable part of their existence, they abandoned themselves to their fate without a murmur and bore the deadly dulness with stoical bravery. One can imagine

how out of countenance Dostojevsky would be in such company. Both by manners and position he was cut off from the others. In honour of the great occasion he had sacrificed his coat for evening dress. His clothes fitted him badly, and made it difficult for him to move, so that he felt beside himself. Besides, he was put out from the instant he crossed the threshold of the drawing-room. Like all nervous people, he experienced a feeling of irritation when he was in a strange circle. The more superficial, commonplace, and uncongenial the company was, the more uncomfortable he became. He was vexed, and at last sought some circumstance on which to vent his bitterness.

Madame Rajevsky hastened to present him to the other guests, but instead of saying a few customary words, he only muttered something like a growl, and turned his back on them.

The worst was, he evidently intended to absorb Anyuta for his own exclusive benefit. He led her to a corner of the room with the evident intention of not letting her go. This was naturally at variance with every social idea of what was proper. Into the bargain, his manner towards her was not at all *comme il faut*; he took her hand and whispered several times into her ear during the course of the conversation. Anyuta became uncomfortable, and Madame Rajevsky was quite wild. At first she tried to give a gentle hint to Dostojevsky in order just to show him that he was behaving badly. She also went, as though accidentally, and called her daughter to send her off on some errand.



Anyuta tried to get up, but Dostojevsky held her down with the utmost coolness.

"No ; stay where you are, Anne Ivanovna ; I have not yet told you. . . ."

But here Madame Rajevsky quite lost patience, and went up to him.

"Excuse me," she said, "but as hostess Anyuta must attend to the other guests." She spoke sharply and carried off her daughter.

Dostojevsky, deeply offended, crept into a corner and sat sullenly there, glancing angrily round.

Among the guests was one who from the first moment displeased him. It was a distant cousin of the Rajevskys, an officer of cuirassiers. He was handsome, gifted, well educated, and moving in the best circles, and all this was in a pleasant, inoffensive way, with nothing *outré* or exaggerated about it. But by the rights of relationship he paid Anyuta court just in the same unobtrusive way, so that it never attracted attention but just gave a suggestion that he "had his plans." As usual on such occasions, the whole family knew he was an eligible lover and much run after, but every one, of course, pretended not to have the least suspicion of such a probability. Even when Madame Rajevsky was alone with her aunts, they would barely have ventured half a word on the subject, and only distantly alluded to this delicate subject. But Dostojevsky needed only to glance at the tall, well-proportioned, self-possessed man to conjure up a dislike to him almost bordering on hatred.

The young cuirassier sat in an easy-chair in a pictur-

esque attitude which allowed him to show off a pair of most fashionable trousers, which fitted closely his long, well-made legs. He bent confidentially towards Anyuta as he sat near her, and told her some funny story, and Anyuta, who was still abashed at the episode with Dostojevsky, listened to him with a stereotyped smile—"smiling like a kind angel," as the English governess spitefully called it. Dostojevsky glared at the two. His head immediately conjured up a whole romance. Anyuta hated and despised that idiot, that self-conceited whipper-snapper, but her parents wished to marry her off to him and brought them together thus. The whole party was naturally made up for the purpose. After thinking out this romance, Dostojevsky thought himself much injured.

The fashionable subject of conversation this winter was a book published by an English clergyman, a parallel between the Greek and Protestant religions. In the Russo-German circles this was a subject which interested every one, and when the conversation naturally turned upon this topic, it really became a little more lively. Madame Rajevsky, herself a German, remarked that one of the advantages of Protestantism was that the Gospels were more read.

"Is the gospel written for women of the world?" asked Dostojevsky suddenly, who hitherto had preserved an obstinate silence. "In one place it is written, 'In the beginning God made male and female'; and in another place, 'A man shall leave his father and mother, and cleave unto his wife.' This is what Christ says of marriage. But what is to be said of those mothers

whose only thought is to get their daughters married as advantageously as possible? ”

Dostojevsky had spoken with marked emphasis. According to his wont when he was excited, he crouched his whole frame together, and, as it were, shot out his sentences. The words had an indescribable effect. All the well-bred Germans stared at him, struck dumb and frightened. Only after a few seconds they were struck with the impropriety of his words, and all began talking at once to obliterate the impression.

Dostojevsky darted looks of hatred and dislike at them, and withdrew into his corner and did not speak again during the whole evening.

When he next appeared at the Rajevskys', Madame Rajevsky behaved very coolly to him to show she was hurt. But with her extreme goodness and gentleness she could not long be angry with any one, least of all with such a man as Dostojevsky. So they were soon friends again, and everything was on its usual footing.

But the relationship between Anyuta and Dostojevsky was quite altered after the party. It passed, as it were, into a new stage. Anyuta no longer let herself be impressed by him, but seemed to enjoy being particularly contrary with him, worrying him at every turn. He, on his side, showed himself irritable and quarrelsome with her, began to require an account from her as to how she passed the day when he was not with her, and showed a dislike for any one she seemed to like. His visits were none the less constant ; on the contrary, he came oftener and stayed longer

than usual, though he quarrelled nearly all the time with Anyuta.

At the beginning of the acquaintance she had been ready to give up all pleasures and parties on the days when she expected Dostojevsky, and when he was in the room she thought of no one else. But now all was changed. If he came and there were other guests, she calmly entertained them; and if she happened to be invited elsewhere on the evenings Dostojevsky had promised to come, she wrote and excused herself to him. The next day Dostojevsky used generally to come in a very bad temper. Anyuta seemed as if she did not notice his dejection, but took her work and began to sew.

This annoyed Dostojevsky still more. He sat in a corner and was silent. Anyuta was also silent.

"Put down your sewing," he said at last, as he could no longer bear it, and took her work from her.

Anyuta resignedly folded her hands, but did not speak.

"Where were you yesterday?" asked Dostojevsky, irritably.

"At a ball," answered Anyuta, indifferently.

"And danced?"

"Naturally."

"With your cousin?"

"With him and with others."

"And that pleases you?" asked Dostojevsky, continuing his catechism.

Anyuta shrugged her shoulders. "Yes, of course,

for lack of anything better," she answered, and took up her work again.

Dostojevsky was silent for a moment.

"You are a light-minded, thoughtless doll—that is the truth," he would at last exclaim.

This was now their usual style of conversation, while the understanding between Anyuta and him became worse and worse. His friendship with the fourteen-year-old Tanja grew. She became each day more charmed with him and confided in him blindly. He naturally noticed her boundless worship and admiration, and was pleased with it. He was for ever holding Tanja up to her sister as an example.

When sometimes he uttered a deep thought, or made a paradoxical remark full of genius, or combated the whole accepted system of morals, Anyuta pretended not to understand him. While Tanja's eyes danced with delight, her sister answered him in order to irritate him with some stupid, trite truism.

"You have a dull and feeble mind," exclaimed Dostojevsky. "Look at your sister. She is hardly more than a child. She understands me. It is she who has cleverness and insight."

Tanja always blushed with pleasure, and if it had been necessary she would have let herself be cut in pieces for him.

And truly, however wonderful it may seem, the fourteen-year-old Tanja did understand him. She felt that his heart was full of tenderness and warm feelings. She honoured him, not for his genius only, but for the sufferings he had gone through. In consequence of

her lonely childhood, her humility, and her consciousness that her family loved her less than the others, her inner world was far deeper and more developed than that of other girls of her age. From her earliest years she had felt the need of a strong, exclusive affection, and with the intensity which formed the principal feature of her character, she concentrated all her thoughts, all her energies, in a rapturous worship of this highly-strung, gifted man.

She thought constantly of Dostojevsky, and when she was alone repeated in her thoughts all he had said during the last conversation, pondering deeply on now one, now another of his words, and trying to understand and develop the thoughts he threw out. It was just the originality of his thoughts, the fecundity of the new ideas which he brought to her, that thus captivated her. It happened also that she often gave way to the most fantastic dreams about Dostojevsky, never with regard to the future but always about his past history. For example, she dreamed for hours together that she was with Dostojevsky in prison. She filled up and completed in fancy many episodes of his life which he had only touched upon, and lived through them herself in thought with him. If Dostojevsky could have gazed into Tanja's heart, he certainly would have been troubled could he have seen what he had done. But it was just the misfortune of the so-called "awkward age" in which Tanja was that the feelings are almost as deep as those of grown-up people, and yet express themselves in a childish, laughable way, so that it is difficult for a

grown-up person to guess what is passing in the mind of a fourteen-year-old girl.

In the depths of her heart Tanja was very glad that Dostojevsky no longer cared as much for Anyuta as in the beginning of their acquaintance. She was ashamed of the feeling, and considered it a kind of treachery to her sister. Without being willing to admit it to herself, she sought to enter into a compromise with her conscience and to atone for her secret sin by special affectionateness and dutifulness, but her consciousness of sin did not prevent her involuntarily rejoicing when Anyuta and Dostojevsky quarrelled.

Dostojevsky called Tanja his little friend, and she thought in her innocence that she was dearer to him than her elder sister, and understood him better. He even praised her appearance to Anyuta.

"You fancy," he said to the latter, "that you are beautiful; but your little sister will in time be more beautiful than you. Her face is much more expressive, and she has regular gipsy eyes. You are only a rather pretty little German, that is all."

Anyuta smiled disdainfully. Tanja, on the contrary, drank in with rapture this praise of her beauty, which she had never heard before.

"But is it really true?" she asked herself, anxiously; and she began to be full of grave fears lest her sister should be injured by the preference he showed her.

Tanja was very anxious to know what Anyuta herself thought of it, and if it was true that she would be beautiful when she grew up. This last question was of special interest to her. In St. Petersburg both the

sisters slept in the same room, and at night, when they were undressing, they had their most confidential chats. Anyuta stood as usual before her big looking-glass, and shook out her long fair hair, which at night she plaited in two long plaits. This occupation took time, for her hair was unusually long and silky, and she drew the comb gently and carefully through it. Tanja sat on her bed already undressed, with her hands clasped round her knees, thinking how she should begin the conversation which was so much in her mind.

“What silly things Dostojevsky said to-day,” she began at last, trying to appear as indifferent as possible.

“Which things?” said Anyuta, for she had evidently quite forgotten what seemed to Tanja such an important conversation.

“Why, that I had gipsy eyes, and should be handsome some day,” said Tanja, and felt herself blushing red up to her ears.

Anyuta let her hands which held the comb sink, and turned her head with a graceful movement towards her sister.

“*You* fancy Dostojevsky thinks *you* pretty, prettier than I am?” she asked, looking at Tanja with a sly, enigmatical look.

This crafty smile, those green, laughing eyes, and the fair, loose, flowing hair made her look like a regular water-nymph. In the big mirror on the wall close by the bed, Tanja saw her own little dark face, and compared it with her sister's. It would be wrong to say that the comparison pleased her, but her sister's self-satisfied tone irritated her, and she would not give in.



“Tastes differ!” she exclaimed, hotly.

“Yes, tastes differ strangely!” remarked Anyuta, calmly continuing to comb her hair.

Tanja hid her face in the pillows, and meditated over the matter even long after the lights were put out.

“Can Dostojevsky really have such bad taste as to think I am prettier than Anyuta?” she wondered, mechanically; and, after her childish fashion, she prayed in thought, “O God, let all the world be in love with Anyuta, but let Dostojevsky, at all events, think me the most beautiful.”

But Tanja’s illusions on this point were soon to have a fatal blow.

Among the social talents which Dostojevsky encouraged Tanja to improve was music. She had learned to play the piano till then, much like other girls, without any special liking or dislike for it. She had only a pretty fair ear for music, but from her fifth year she had been forced to play scales and exercises for an hour and a half every day; so that by the time she was fourteen she had a good deal of execution, a certain amount of *aplomb*, and could read music pretty well.

Once, at the commencement of their acquaintance, she happened to play Dostojevsky a piece of music which she managed fairly well—variations on a popular Russian air. He was not musical. He was one of those people whose enjoyment of music depends entirely on subjective circumstances and on the humour of the moment. Sometimes the most exquisite artistic playing would only make him yawn; at other times he would be moved to tears by a street organ.

On the occasion in question, while Tanja was playing Dostojevsky happened to be in a susceptible mood. He therefore happened to be delighted with her playing, and, as was his wont with her, gave her exaggerated praise—she had so much talent, and feeling, and God knows what all !

It will be easily understood that Tanja had from that day a perfect passion for music. She asked her mother to let her have lessons from a clever teacher, and during the whole time of their stay in St. Petersburg she spent every spare moment at the piano, so that in three months she really made much progress.

She had prepared a great surprise for Dostojevsky. He had once in her presence chanced to say that of all music, he loved best the *Sontapathétique* of Beethoven, and that it always awoke in him a world of forgotten feelings. Notwithstanding that the piece surpassed in difficulty any which Tanja had yet played, she decided to learn this, cost what it might ; and after much trouble and effort, she had really managed to play it just tolerably. Now she only waited a suitable occasion on which to please Dostojevsky with it. And this opportunity soon offered itself.

The Rajevskys were leaving St. Petersburg in five or six days. Madame Rajevsky and all her aunts were invited to a big dinner at an ambassador's who was an old friend of her family. Anyuta had already wearied of dinners and parties, and feigned a headache, so that both sisters were alone together. Dostojevsky came the same evening.

The coming journey, the consciousness that none of

the elders were at home, and that such an evening would never come again, made both girls feel happy and in good spirits. Dostojevsky was also strange and nervous, but not irritable, as he had often been lately, but very gentle and friendly.

Now was the moment to play his favourite piece to him. Tanja delighted herself with the pleasure it would be to him.

She began to play. The difficult piece required her attention to every note. The fear of playing a false note so entirely took up her attention, that she gave no notice to what was going on around her. When she finished, in the self-satisfied consciousness that she had done it admirably, she sat there with weary fingers, but still so excited by the music and the pleasant emotion which always follows a well-done piece of work, and awaited the well-earned applause. But all was silent round her. Tanja looked round. There was no one in the room !

She was wounded to the heart. Still, with no definite suspicion, but with a suffocating feeling of coming misfortune, she went into the next room. That also was empty. Lastly, she lifted the curtain which hung before the opening into the little corner room, and there she perceived Fedor Dostojevsky and Anyuta—and she could not believe her eyes.

They sat near one another on the little sofa. The room was dimly lit by a lamp with a large shade, whose shadow fell on her sister so that Tanja could not distinguish her expression. But Dostojevsky's face she saw clearly. It was pale and excited ; he held Anyuta's

hand in his while he leant toward her and spoke to her in passionate whispers, which Tanja knew so well and loved so dearly.

“My darling Anna Ivanovna, don't you understand that I loved you from the first moment I saw you! Even before, when I read your letter, I had a presentiment of it. And it is not merely as a friend I love you, but passionately, with my whole being.”

Tanja's head swam. A feeling of bitter loneliness and of treachery seized her. The blood seemed to rush to her heart, and to rush in fiery flames to her head. She dropped the curtain and rushed out of the room. She heard a chair fall which she had knocked down. “Are you there, Tanja?” cried her sister's frightened voice. But she answered not nor stopped till she had reached her bedroom, in the other part of the house, at the end of a long corridor. When she got there, she hastened at once to undress, without a light. Pulling off her dress and petticoats, she threw herself, half-undressed, on her bed, and hid herself under the sheets. At this moment her only thought was one of fear that her sister might come and drag her back to the drawing-room. How could she see them?

A feeling she had never before experienced of bitterness, of injury and shame, and especially of shame and injury, filled her heart. Till now she had not, in her inmost thoughts, been aware of her feeling for Dostojevsky, or known that she was in love with him.

Even at fourteen she had already heard and read much of love; but it never occurred to her that to be

in love with people was anything which happened in real life, but only in novels. As far as Dostojevsky was concerned, all she desired was that all her life should pass like these three months.

“And now it is all over—all over!” she repeated, in distress; and now for the first time all was irrevocably lost, she saw for the first time how happy she had been during her whole time—yesterday—even today—even a few minutes ago—and now, oh, now!”

What it was that was over, what it was that was changed, she did not clearly know. She only knew that all of a sudden for her life was no longer worth living.

“And how they must laugh at me! Why did he cheat me so, and hide the truth from me?” she said, reproachfully, feeling sore at their betrayal of her. “Well, yes, he loves her, and may marry her for all I care,” she said a moment afterwards; but the tears continued all the same to flow, and she felt a bitter pain in her heart.

Time passed. Tanja began to long for her sister to come and look for her. She was angry with her for not coming.

“They don’t trouble about me—no, not if I lay here and die! Ah, if I could only die!”

And she felt all of a sudden so unspeakably sinful, that the tears ran over her face.

“What were they doing now? How happy they must be!” she thought; and with this thought she suddenly longed to jump in on them, and to fling their treachery in their faces. She jumped out of bed and

fumbled about with her hands, which trembled with emotion, to find a match in order to light a candle and dress. She could not find a match, and as she had thrown her clothes all over the place, she could not find them in the dark. She was ashamed to call the servant. So she threw herself on the bed, and broke out sobbing, finding herself helpless and hopeless.

The first tears of an organism unaccustomed to suffering are soon dried. The hasty attack of despair was followed by a dull numbness.

Not a sound from the reception-room penetrated Tanja's room; but from the neighbouring kitchen Tanja heard how the servants were getting ready to eat their evening meal. There was a clatter of knives and plates, and the servants laughing and talking. All were happy, all were merry, only she was alone. . . .

At last, after a perfect eternity, as it seemed to Tanja, she heard a hasty ringing. It was her mother and aunts returning from dinner. She heard the servant's heavy step, as he ran to open the door; afterwards there were the sounds of high-pitched, merry voices, as usual on a return from a party.

"Dostojevsky has not gone yet. Will Anyuta tell mother to-night of what has happened, or will she wait till to-morrow?" wondered Tanja. Now she distinguished his voice among the others. He took leave—had hastened off; Tanja's strained ears could even hear him pulling on his galoshes. Then the vestibule door shut, and shortly after Anyuta's elastic step was heard in the corridor. She opened the door, and a bright ray of light fell right on Tanja's face.

To her tear-swollen eyes the light seemed like an insult, and was unbearably strong. A feeling of uncontrollable enmity rose in her throat against her sister.

"The horror! she is triumphant," she thought bitterly, and, turning towards the wall, pretended to sleep.

Without making any haste Anyuta put down the light on the table, and went up to her sister's bed, where she stood for a moment silent. Tanja lay immovable, holding back her breath.

"I see you are not sleeping," at last exclaimed Anyuta.

Tanja remained silent.

"Well, if you like to play at pretending—all right. All the worse for you. You sha'n't hear anything," exclaimed the elder sister, and began to undress herself as though nothing had happened.

That night Tanja had a wonderful dream. Often in later life when she had had great sorrow, she had at night such delicious, lovely dreams. But how painful it is to rouse oneself from them. The dream pictures have not quite vanished. Some hours of heavy sleep has chased the weariness of the previous day's heavy sorrow, and only left behind a pleasant bodily weariness; a feeling of physical comfort and of restored peace. Suddenly beat, beat, as of a hammer in the brain, comes the memory of the terrible, irrevocable events which happened yesterday, and one becomes painfully conscious that one must go back to life and suffering.

Life is so sad here, and all kinds of sufferings are so hard to bear. How heavy are those first paroxysms of

despair when the whole being revolts against sorrow without giving way, though as yet it cannot comprehend the whole depth of its loss. Even heavier are the long days which follow, when the tears are shed and the stirred feelings laid, and when one can no longer knock one's head against a wall, but realises at last how inward sorrow, however slowly and unnoticed by others, lays everything low in dust and ruins.

But heaviest and worst of all burdens and difficulties is the first awakening to sad reality after a short period of unconsciousness. Tanja spent the next day in feverish expectation.

“What would happen?” She asked her sister no question; she felt, though in a less degree inimical towards her, as she had felt on the previous evening, and avoided her on every pretext. Seeing Tanja so miserable, Anyuta tried to go and pet her, but Tanja shook her off in an access of rage. Anyuta was naturally hurt, and left Tanja to her own sorrowful reflections. Tanja expected so confidently that Dostojevsky would come that day, and that something terrible would happen; but no Dostojevsky appeared. They sat down to dinner, and he did not show himself even then. Tanja knew they would go to the concert in the evening.

Some time passed and he did not come. Her heart grew light, and a faint, undefined hope lit up her heart. Suddenly it struck her, “Of course Anyuta will refuse to go to the concert, and will stay at home, and Dostojevsky will come to her while she is alone.”

Her heart contracted with jealousy at the thought.



But Anyuta did not refuse the concert, but was gay and talkative the whole evening.

When both the sisters were going to bed, and Anyuta was just ready to put out the light, Tanja could no longer bear it, but looked at her sister questioningly.

“When do you expect Fedor Dostojevsky?”

Anyuta smiled. “You seemed not to want to know. You would not talk to me, and behaved very badly.”

Her tone was so soft and kindly that Tanja thawed, and began secretly to love her.

“How can he help being in love with her, when she is so charming and I such a miserable wretch?” she thought, in a sudden bout of self-depreciation.

She crept over into her sister’s bed, nestled up to her, and burst out weeping.

Anyuta patted her head. “Be quiet, you simpleton! Such a simple little girl!” she repeated, petting her. Suddenly she could control herself no longer, and broke out in an almost uncontrollable laugh. “So then she fancied she must fall in love, and with whom?—a man three times as old as she is!”

These words and that laugh woke in Tanja a madness which filled all her being.

“And you do not love him?” she asked, whispering, and burning with excitement.

Anyuta pondered a moment. “You see,” she began, evidently making an effort and trying to choose her words, “I, of course, am naturally very fond of him, and respect him very highly. He is so good, so original, so inspired!”—she warmed up in her expres-

sions. Tanja's heart grew sick. "But how shall I explain it? I love him, but not as he—that is to say, I don't love him as I would love the man I would marry," and she stopped suddenly.

Oh, how bright Tanja's spirit became! She turned over to her sister and kissed her neck and hands. Anyuta, however, went on :

"Do you see, I was rather surprised when I found I did not care for him. He is so good and noble, I thought at first I should really fall in love with him. But I am not at all the wife he wants. His wife must belong to him out and out, devote herself absolutely to him, give her whole life up to him, think of him and him only. But that I cannot do. I must be true to myself. Besides, he is so sensitive, so *exigeant*. He seems to take me prisoner, and to absorb me into himself. In his presence I am never myself."

Anyuta said all this, apparently in response to her sister, but really to clear the matter in her own mind. Tanja appeared as though she understood and sympathised with her, but she thought to herself :

"Oh, God! What bliss it would be to be thus always with him, and entirely subordinate to him! How can Anyuta turn away from such happiness?"

However, Tanja, when she fell asleep that night, somehow or other felt far less miserable than on the preceding evening.

The day of the Rajevskys' departure was now near at hand. Dostojevsky came once again to say farewell. He did not stay long, but his behaviour to Anyuta was kindly and natural, and they promised to write to each

other. He took a very tender farewell of Tanja, kissed her at parting, but certainly had not the remotest idea of what kind of feeling she had for him, or how much suffering he had caused her.

Some six months later Anyuta received a letter from him, in which he told her he had met a charming young girl whom he loved, and who had promised to marry him. This young girl was Anna Grigorjevna, his second wife. "If any one had told me this six months ago, I would have given my word of honour that I did not believe him," remarked Dostojevsky naïvely at the end of his letter.

Tanja's heart-sore soon healed. During the few days they still remained at St. Petersburg she still felt miserable, and went about more sadly and more quietly than usual. But the journey removed the last trace of the past from her mind.

It was April when the Rajevskys left, and in St. Petersburg it was still winter, cold and shivering. But in the Vitebsk government they unexpectedly met spring — the Russian irresistible spring, which comes suddenly in one night and draws almost everything to it, and, like an attack of fever, affects earth and man and beast. Birches on the roadside were clad in a thick green down; the air was oppressive with resinous odours from the young leaf-buds, so that Anyuta and Tanja were giddy and intoxicated with it. They jumped out of the carriage at every station, and gathered, in the quarter of an hour's rest, handfuls of snowdrops, spring hyacinths, and violets, which grew, as it were, before their eyes out of the earth. Brooks

and streams overflowed their beds and formed great lakes, the earth thawed and the mud was bottomless.

On the great highway it did not matter ; but when they got to the town they had to leave the big travelling carriage at the post station, and hire a pair of miserable little vehicles instead.

Madame Rajevsky and the coachman lamented over it in great anxiety. "However shall we get there?" Madame Rajevsky was really afraid of having vexed her husband, by having remained so long in St. Petersburg. However, notwithstanding all lamentations and sighs, all went well.

Tanja often remembered that journey afterwards, how late one night they went through the great forest. Neither she nor her sister slept ; they sat silent, living through in thought again all the different impressions of the last three months, and enjoyed inhaling the soft spring scents which filled the air.

It got darker and darker. On account of the bad roads they drove slowly. The postboy tried to sleep on the coach-box, and no longer called to his animals. Nothing was to be heard but the splashing of the horses' hoofs in the mud, and faint, uneven sounds of the horses' bells. The wood spread out on both sides—dark, mysterious, and impenetrable. Suddenly, as they came out into an open space, the moon shone from behind the trees and gilded everything with a shimmering glory so clear and surprising that one felt almost awestruck.

After the last conversation in St. Petersburg both sisters had avoided speaking of the subject, and there

was a kind of reticence between them as though there was something constantly dividing them.

But now there was a sort of silent reconciliation between the two, and they embraced each other lovingly. Both felt that nothing really divided them, but that they were both dearer to each other than ever.

They were returning to Palibino, where the grey monotonous life awaited them, but in this moment they knew that this could not last long, but that soon a change must come into their lives. It appeared to them as if a corner of the curtain which hid the future was lifted for them, and they had a vivid impression of something new, great, and unexpected awaiting them. A feeling of boundless, inexplicable gladness seized them. Ah !



## BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE.<sup>1</sup>

BY LILY WOLFFSOHN.

THE life of a woman by a woman," might be the subtitle of the book now presented for the first time to the British public ; and the adjectives " eminent and remarkable " might with justice be added to both nouns.

For Anna Carlotta Leffler, the author of " Sonya Kovalevsky," was no less gifted than the subject of the biography, and it is for this reason that, by way of introduction, we here give a sketch of her life founded on the following works : an inedited autobiography, kindly lent by the Duke of Cajanello, her second husband ; a biography in the Swedish language, by Ellen Key, published by A. Bonnier, Stockholm ; an article in the *Vie Contemporaine*, entitled " Femmes du Nord," by Count Prozor ; a biography, by Gegjerstam, in " Ord ô Bild " ; a biographical article by the Duchess of Andria.

Anna Carlotta was the only daughter of J. A. Leffler, a Swedish rector, and was born on October 1, 1849. From her mother, the daughter of a minister named Mittag, she inherited the literary tendencies which showed themselves so

<sup>1</sup> Since this biographical note was written, we have become acquainted with a biography of Anna Carlotta Leffler written by Madame Laura Marholm in her " Buch der Frauen," which contains many erroneous facts and data, and judgments which prove that the writer has never really known Anna Carlotta Leffler, but has gathered her information from incorrect sources.

early, that, when only six years old, she dictated a little tale to her brother Fritz, which the lad wrote down.

The little girl grew up in an atmosphere of tender affection, equally beloved by her parents and by her three brothers : Gösta Mittag-Leffler, who afterwards became an eminent mathematical professor in his own country, and also obtained a doctor's degree at Oxford ; Arthur, who became an architect, and Fritz.

The latter was nearest to her in age, was her constant playfellow, in whose company she enjoyed summer trips to Foglelos on the Vettern lake, which were repeated yearly up to 1858, and looked forward to by the children, during the long winters spent in Stockholm, with longing and delight.

During these sojourns in the beautiful scenery of Vettern Lake, Anna Carlotta imbibed the love of Sweden, its lakes and mountains, which remained true and strong even when she was transplanted to the fairer regions of the South.

Her intimate companionship with her brothers, and participation in their studies, were of great influence on Anna Carlotta's character. She became a frank intrepid girl, free from all feminine caprice, capable of simple, loyal friendship, looking at life with a wider charity.

As a young girl, she was of a placid and amiable disposition, and became a favourite with all the pupils of the Wallinska school which she attended for some years. Her masters praised her for several compositions in Swedish, but offended her by hinting that her brothers must have helped her. Even during her school years she indulged in writing fiction, and the strong religious impression she received at her confirmation found expression in a never-published romance, which she was busy writing from her fifteenth to her seventeenth year.

Very wisely her brothers would not allow her to publish her first attempts ; they rather encouraged her to study earnestly the language, history, and literature of her native land, and thus saved her from the peril of diletantism. But both they



and her parents never denied her that admiring sympathy which is so welcome to all young writers.

In autumn 1869, under the pseudonym of "Carlot," she published a collection of tales entitled "By Chance," which were well received by the public. In 1872 she married, under peculiar circumstances, Mr. G. Edgren, with whom she lived like an affectionate and tenderly-loved sister. She reserved full liberty to dedicate herself to a literary life, but never neglected the duties of the mistress of a household.

The excellent financial conditions in which she lived, and the high position she held, not only enabled her to pursue the vocation to which she felt herself called, but also gave her abundant opportunity of frequenting society, without, however, wasting her strength on mere frivolities.

She grew in experience, her imagination became more fecund, and her literary development made great progress. Yet some deeper aspirations of her soul remained unsatisfied, and the traces of this want may be found in the thirst for independence, for a personal life freer from conventionality, depicted in her drama "The Actress," and in "Elfvan," now that their true authorship is known. But at the time of their appearance this of course was unnoticed except by her intimate friends.

"The Actress" was represented on the stage in 1873; "Henpecked" and "The Curate" in 1876; "Elfvan" in 1880.

"The Actress," though it was played at the Stockholm Theatre during a whole winter, was never suspected to be the work of a woman, and no one would have believed it possible that a girl only twenty-three years of age, who had never been in a theatre above two or three times in her life, could have produced such a drama. Her parents, during their daughter's early youth, considered theatre-going a luxury, and her own religious convictions forbade her to indulge in such a pleasure often.

In this first work Anna Carlotta expressed the idea which dominated her life ; an idea set forth by her long before Ibsen wrote "The Doll's House" ; it was that love, in a woman, must be subordinated to duty, not in the limited sense of conjugal duty, but in the wide sense of duty to oneself and to mankind.

Contemporaneously with her dramatic works, the young author wrote short stories, descriptions of travel, essays, &c. ; principally for the *New Illustrated Journal*, of Stockholm.

Her works had already excited attention when, in 1882, she first published a collection of tales under her own name. The book was entitled "From Life" (a title that was added to all her later works), and made an immense impression.

At one stroke Anna Carlotta Leffler acquired an eminent place in northern literature, due, no doubt, partly to the fact that she had never habituated the public to associate her name with the immature literary attempts of a beginner.

By translation into Danish, Russian, German, and other languages, her name became famous abroad as one of the best Swedish writers of the time. Many of her dramas were represented on different northern stages, and even in Germany.

Not long ago, her comedy "A Charity Fair," was translated into Italian. Benedetto Croce, a distinguished Neapolitan critic, wrote an introduction to this publication. It is owing to the purely Swedish character of her first works that the social life of Sweden began to excite interest in Europe.

In 1883 the second volume of "From Life" was published. It was written in a freer manner, with fine sarcasm, and greater knowledge, but the public cried out against the tendency of some of the stories. "At Strife with Society," and "Aurora Bunge," the two most full of genius, were called "scandalous."

But the adverse critics laid down their arms on the appearance of the novel "Gustav the Pastor," which was rich in true Swedish humour.

Anna Carlotta possessed a very sensitive literary conscience,

and if she sometimes disobeyed its behests, it was only out of consideration for her family, who were wounded by the criticism to which she was exposed. But when she felt that the criticism was just, she was always modestly willing to revise her work.

Gradually the young author grew more courageous in representing real life, and began to touch on the problems of modern life.

But she never sympathised with "party," nor became the centre of a fanatic literary circle such as she has been falsely represented to have been. As her literary works became more important, and her fame increased, criticism grew more virulent, and even among her greatest admirers discussion arose as to her real meaning. Some said that her entire personality was to be found in her writings, while the fact is, that those produced later, and the change in her own being, have shown the error of this opinion. Others, and they were the most numerous, saw in all her novels and romances nothing but a struggle for the emancipation of woman, thus trying to limit within the narrow sphere of a single aim the large and liberal ideas of a writer, who, though displaying quite a special individuality, was thoroughly objective.

The most common opinion was indeed that Anna Carlotta Leffler fought for the emancipation of woman with more courage and energy than any other writer, and this opinion was confirmed by the fact that around her gathered all the pioneers of the new school, all the most illustrious champions of the woman question, and precisely at that epoch the emancipation of woman was passionately discussed in Sweden. Anna Carlotta's house was the rendezvous for all the adherents of the new literature, who rendered her homage, not only and not so much as a writer, but principally as a woman who had raised her voice, and obtained a hearing among the most famous men in Sweden. She was certainly impelled towards the promulgators of the rights of woman by her lively sympathy with the cause in its moral and social aspects, but she kept

herself free from any party spirit, and her literary sphere belonged to a larger and more serene field of thought.

But there was another thing that seemed to prove those to be right who, at all costs, sought to imprison Anna Carlotta within the strict limits of the woman question, and this was her manner of regarding and understanding love in the abstract, a manner to which she was led by all the woman movement.

Love, at this time, seemed to her only an episode of life, *not* life's essence, or, so to speak, the life of life. Her works seemed to be wanting in something indefinable, and this something was the intimate and complete conception of the sentiment only obtained by the absolute abandonment of the soul to love. In the story "Doubt," and another one, "At Strife with Society," very much is said, and well said, *about* love; but love itself is only seen by glimpses, as if the author deliberately wanted to deny to her own soul the knowledge of an invading power that she almost feared. And, in fact, it was only later in life that she possessed the entire and perfect knowledge of the power of love.

The famous representatives of Northern literature, who met at Anna Carlotta's house to discuss all things under the sun, were put at their ease by the sympathising amiability of their hostess, who gave the impress of her personality to the conversation, yet was as ready to listen as to speak. She often displayed, however, a coldness and pride of manner due to a shyness which she never entirely overcame, but these soon vanished on more intimate acquaintance.

In 1884 the young writer began to travel, taking with her a dear friend, Julia Kjellberg, now Madame von Vollmar. She obtained many introductions to different circles in foreign lands, partly through Madame Sonya Kovalevsky, who had come to Stockholm in 1883, and with whom she had become most intimate.

Thus Anna Carlotta became acquainted, especially in England, with some of the most noted personages, and acquired new ideas.

The new impulse given to her literary talent is shown in her description of travel in "From Modern London"; in the above-mentioned drama, "A Charity Fair," and in "True Women," published in English by S. French, London.

This drama, which seemed to have been written in favour of the emancipation of married women, was really the outcome of the author's pity for the domestic troubles of one very dear to her. After its publication many regarded her as a despiser of men, an amazon thirsting for battle; but they would have become aware of their mistake had they seen the tears in the author's eyes when she received the thanks of her friend for her expressions of noble indignation, a feeling which was a force in her writings, and was not the cold indignation proper to persons who only regard fictitious life from within their four walls, but the warm resentment against the wrongs of actual sufferers.

In 1866 our author published a romance entitled "A Summer Story," which has quite lately been translated and published in German, and which, more than any other of her productions, contains the personal feelings of the writer.

In this tale love already begins to appear as an actual force in human existence, as a thing that has tyrannous rights able to balance all other intellectual exigencies. Here still these intellectual exigencies triumph, and love is enslaved, but in all the life of "Ulla," the heroine of the romance, there is a lament and homesickness for the very love which she would conquer and trample upon, but which destroys the balance of her existence, and condemns her to a continual and sterile struggle between her old self and the new spirit born within her, because the latter is not so fully incorporated with love as to give it the victory over the former state of feeling. This story shows that a woman who sacrifices love to personal dignity—a sacrifice of which the writer nevertheless approves—can never be happy.

In the biography of Sonya Kovalevsky, now before the

reader, Anna Carlotta Leffler relates the circumstances of her intimacy with that gifted woman, and therefore we need not touch on the subject here.

At the beginning of 1888 she went to Africa with her brother, Professor Mittag-Leffler, and his wife, Signe, to attend the Mathematical Congress in Algiers. During this journey, while returning through Italy, she met, for the first time, with a mathematician, professor at the Naples University, who had long been in correspondence with her brother.

This was Signor Pasquale del Pezzo, the Duke of Cajanello. Their acquaintance ripened into a true and tender love, which, after the divorce of Anna Carlotta, and the overcoming of many difficulties made by the Duke's family, who objected to his future wife as a Protestant, was finally crowned by a happy marriage, which was celebrated in Rome, in May, 1890.

Previously to this, in 1889, Anna Carlotta published a new collection of tales also under the common title of "From Life."

The Duke and Duchess of Cajanello, after their marriage, spent a large portion of the year at Djursholm, near Stockholm.

The now happy woman shortly published a romance, "Womanliness and Erotics," inspired by the new sentiments and sensations which crowded upon her, and also a comedy called "This Love!"

This romance was much talked of, and was criticised with more than usual acrimony. The author herself considered it the most complete and vivid manifestation of her own personality. The first part had been written seven years previously, and, at one point of the heroine's destiny, there arose a question to which the writer at that time knew no answer. She felt that there was missing the real explanation of all the psychological evolutions in her heroine; that "Alie" was awaiting the full development of her personality from the love that must finally awaken and subjugate her. But how, and under what circumstances would Alie love? she "who was so much convinced that the reality could never afford her

anything but delusions, that 'she shrank back from all opportunities of executing what she had dreamed of."

The author herself did not yet know ; but then came that crisis in her own life which rejuvenised and transformed her, giving her the power to reply to the question that had arisen in the life of her heroine. *Alie loves*, because Anna Carlotta at last understood what love was—the love that rids life of all disharmony and all hesitation, and, from the perfect balance and fusion of the feelings, evolves the still intact but renovated and completed individual. "Womanliness and Erotics" indeed reveals the bliss derived by its author from an affection for the first time felt and requited.

After this, the Duchess wrote a drama in three acts, entitled "Domestic Happiness"; some character sketches; and a fantastic dramatic poem, "The Search after Truth," which, under the influence of the rich Southern imagination of her husband, displays a force of artistic representation not found in her early productions.

When Sonya Kovalevsky died in 1891, Anna Carlotta forsook all other work in order to write the biography of her friend. It was her own *last* work, and was generally considered to be one of the most exact and perfect psychological studies to be found in contemporary literature, and, at the same time, a delightful and genial work of art.

The newly married Duchess of Cajanello felt quite at home in Italy, and was never afflicted by homesickness. She was already perfectly acquainted with the Italian language, and surrounded herself with a select circle of scientific and literary men, old and new friends of her husband.

One of those who frequented the Duke's house in Naples, describes it as full of sunshine and happiness. The Duchess, tall and fair, had the charm of simple dignity, and at the same time the grace of cordiality. The Duke, on the other hand, had the ease and unconventionality of manner proper to a man of science, and one who had broken with the prejudices of his aristocratic class.

Much as Anna Carlotta had been beloved by her early friends in Sweden, she was now even more attractive in her new-found happiness.

The bliss of the husband and wife was completed by the birth of a son in June, 1892, and the letters written by the young mother during the summer of that year are proof that she had attained a height of human felicity which almost made her tremble. And indeed the last years of her life were a luminous progress to ever intenser joys. First the expectation of maternity, then maternity itself, beautified and consecrated by the love which shone forth in her eyes and her smile; by the complete happiness that caused her mature nature to bud and blossom anew, as if it had never before enjoyed a spring-time. With the cradle of her child close beside her, she wrote with ever-increasing delight, interrupting herself every now and then to attend to her infant, and again resuming her work without the least impatience. There also stood one who awaited the result of her work with intense sympathy, ready to hear her read the freshly written pages, which she communicated with the calmness induced by the certainty of being comprehended. She had trembled at all this happiness, and she was snatched away just as she had tasted its full sweetness.

She had been in *villeggiatura* on the island of Capri, had returned home and set her house in order for the winter, and was preparing for a long period of peace and quiet, during which she would devote herself to literature, and commence a new romance which she was meditating, to be entitled "Narrow Horizons."

For the first time for many years she felt at perfect rest within and without, enriched by new experiences, viewing the things of life with clearer eyes, and able, as she remarked to a friend, "to write a great book on a broad basis."

On Sunday, the 16th of October, she wrote a happy letter to her mother and brother, expressing her delight in her work, her hope for continued good health.



The very next day her husband was forced to insist on her giving up all work ; on laying down her pen in the middle of a sentence in order to nurse herself, for she had confessed to a rapidly increasing indisposition. In vain she exclaimed, "Oh, no ! I have still so much to write !" She was obliged to yield to her husband's entreaties, and laid down her pen—never to take it up again. That pen had just corrected the last proofs of "Sonya Kovalevsky."

Anna Carlotta had been seized with acute peritonitis, and, in spite of all efforts on the part of physicians, and the most tender nursing, succumbed to the terrible malady five days later, on the 21st of October, 1893, at the age of only forty-one years.

Anna Carlotta Leffler, Duchess of Cajanello, was more than a distinguished writer. She was a woman void of vanity and pretence, utterly sincere ; strong, but not violent ; possessed of great moral courage ; of a calm, cheerful, sanguine disposition ; of perfect sanity of mind and body ; regarding the problems of human life in such a simple manner as excited the admiration of her friends. She knew nothing of the hysterics and vagaries of the "new woman," and, more than all else, she possessed a thoroughly kind heart, and was so sweet and loving that those who knew her well forgot the genius in the perfect woman. Her ideal of happiness in this world had been realised. She had arrived at the summit of her desires—husband, child, a happy home, a true sphere of work—and ceased to be.

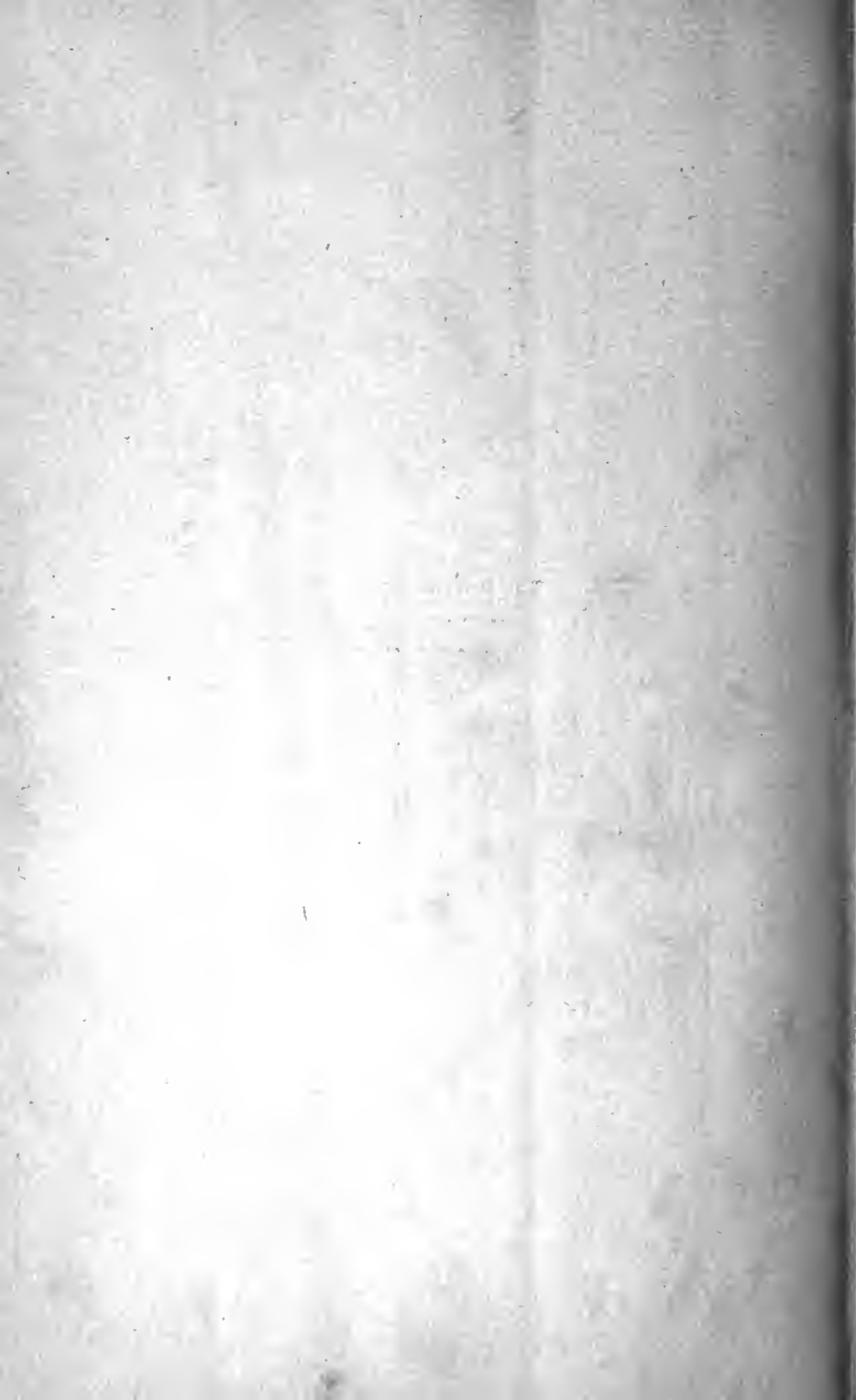
LILY WOLFFSOHN.



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(Leffler) Edgren, duchessa  
Sonya Kovalevsky

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