

CHAPTER IX.

After he had finished the instructions, the presiding justice turned to the prisoners.

"Simon Kartinkin, rise!" he said.

Simon sprang up nervously. The muscles of his cheeks began to twitch still quicker.

"What is your name?"

"Simon Petroff Kartinkin," he said quickly, in a sharp voice, evidently prepared for the question.

"What estate?"

"Peasant."

"What government, district?"

"Government of Tula, district of Krapivensk, Kupian township, village of Borki."

"How old are you?"

"Thirty-four; born in eighteen hundred----"

"What faith?"

"Of the Russian orthodox faith."

"Are you married?"

"O, no!"

"What is your occupation?"

"I was employed in the Hotel Mauritania."

"Were you ever arrested before?"

"I was never arrested before, because where I lived----"

"You were not arrested?"

"God forbid! Never!"

"Have you received a copy of the indictment?"

"Yes."

"Sit down. Euphemia Ivanovna Bochkova!" The presiding justice turned to the next prisoner.

But Simon remained standing in front of Bochkova.

"Kartinkin, sit down!"

Kartinkin still remained standing.

"Kartinkin, sit down!"

But Kartinkin stood still until the usher, his head leaning to the side, and with wide-open eyes, whispered to him in a tragic tone:

"Sit down, sit down!"

Kartinkin sat down as quickly as he rose, and wrapping himself in his coat began to move his cheeks.

"Your name?" With a sigh of weariness the presiding justice turned to the next prisoner without looking at her, and consulted a paper before him. He was so accustomed to the business that to expedite matters he could try two cases at once.

Bochkova was forty-two years old, a burgess of the town of Koloma; by

occupation a servant--in the same Hotel Mauritania. Was never arrested before, and had received a copy of the indictment. She gave the answers very boldly and with an intonation which seemed to add to every answer.

"Yes, Bochkova, Euphemia, have received a copy, and am proud of it, and will permit no one to laugh at me."

Without waiting to be told to sit down, Bochkova sat down immediately after the questioning ceased.

"Your name?" asked the presiding justice of the third prisoner. "You must rise," he added, gently and courteously, seeing Maslova still in her seat.

With quick movement Maslova rose with an air of submissiveness, and throwing back her shoulders, looked into the face of the presiding justice with her smiling, somewhat squinting black eyes.

"What are you called?"

"They used to call me Lubka," she answered, rapidly.

Meanwhile Nekhludoff put on his pince-nez and examined the prisoners while they were questioned.

"It is impossible," he thought, looking intently at the prisoner. "But her name is Lubka," he thought, as he heard her answer.

The presiding justice was about to continue his interrogation when the member with the eye-glasses, angrily whispering something, stopped him. The presiding justice nodded his assent and turned to the prisoner.

"You say 'Lubka,' but a different name is entered here."

The prisoner was silent.

"I ask you what is your real name?"

"What name did you receive at baptism?" asked the angry member.

"Formerly I was called Katherine."

"It is impossible," Nekhludoff continued to repeat, although there was no doubt in his mind now that it was she, that same servant ward with whom he had been in love at one time--yes, in love, real love, and whom in a moment of mental fever he led astray, then abandoned, and to whom he never gave a second thought, because the recollection of it was too painful, revealed too manifestly that he, who prided himself of his good breeding, not only did not treat her decently, but basely deceived her.

Yes, it was she. He saw plainly the mysterious peculiarity that distinguishes every individual from every other individual.

Notwithstanding the unnatural whiteness and fullness of her face, this pleasant peculiarity was in the face, in the lips, in the slightly squinting eyes, and, principally, in the naive, smiling glance, and in the expression of submissiveness not only in the face, but in the whole figure.

"You should have said so," again very gently said the presiding justice. "What is your patronymic?"

"I am illegitimate," said Maslova.

"But yet you were named after your godfather?"

"Michailova."

"What crime could she have committed?" Nekhludoff thought meanwhile, his breath almost failing him.

"What is your surname--your family name?" continued the presiding justice.

"Maslova--after my mother."

"Your estate?"

"Burgess."

"Of the orthodox faith?"

"Yes."

"Your occupation? What was your occupation?"

Maslova was silent.

"What was your occupation?" repeated the justiciary.

"You know!" said Maslova. She smiled and quickly glanced around, then looked squarely at the justiciary.

There was something so unusual in the expression of her face--something so terrible and piteous in the meaning of her words, in that smile, that quick glance which she cast over the court-room--that the justiciary hung his head, and for a moment there was perfect silence.

A burst of laughter from some spectator interrupted the silence. Some one hissed. The justiciary raised his head and continued the interrogation.

"Were you ever arrested?"

"No." Maslova said in an undertone, sighing.

"Have you received a copy of the indictment?"

"Yes."

"Sit down."

The prisoner raised her skirt with the customary movement of a fashionable lady, arranging her train, and sat down, folding her hands in the sleeves of her coat, and still looking at the justiciary.

Then began the recounting of witnesses, their removal to a separate room, the decision on the evidence of the medical expert. Then the secretary arose and began to read the indictment, loud and with distinctness, but so rapidly that his incorrect sounding of the letters l and r turned his reading into one continuous, weary drone. The judges leaned now on one side, now on the other side of their arm-chairs, then on the table, and again on the backs of the chairs, or closed their eyes, or opened them and whispered to each other. One of the gendarmes several times stifled a yawn.

The convulsions of Kartinkin's cheeks did not cease. Bochkova sat

quietly and erect, now and then scratching with her finger under her cap.

Maslova sat motionless, listening to the reading, and looking at the clerk; at times she shuddered and made a movement as if desiring to object, blushed, then sighed deeply, changed the position of her hands, glanced around and again looked at the clerk.

Nekhludoff sat on the high-backed chair in the front row, second to the aisle, and without removing his pince-nez looked at Maslova, while his soul was being racked by a fierce and complicated struggle.