

## CHAPTER XI.

When the reading of the indictment was finished, the justiciary, having consulted with his associates, turned to Kartinkin with an expression on his face which plainly betokened confidence in his ability to bring forth all the truth.

"Simon Kartinkin," he called, leaning to the left.

Simon Kartinkin rose, put out his chest, incessantly moving his cheeks.

"You are charged, together with Euphemia Bochkova and Katherine Maslova, with stealing from the trunk of the merchant Smelkoff money belonging to him, and subsequently brought arsenic and induced Maslova to administer it to Smelkoff, by reason of which he came to his death. Are you guilty or not guilty?" he said, leaning to the right.

"It is impossible, because our business is to attend the guests----"

"You will speak afterwards. Are you guilty or not?"

"No, indeed. I only----"

"You can speak later. Do you admit that you are guilty?" calmly but

firmly repeated the justiciary.

"I cannot do it because----"

Again the usher sprang toward Simon and with a tragic whisper stopped him.

The justiciary, with an expression showing that the questioning was at an end, moved the hand in which he held a document to another place, and turned to Euphemia Bochkova.

"Euphemia Bochkova, you, with Kartinkin and Maslova, are charged with stealing, on the 17th day of January, 188-, at the Hotel Mauritania, from the trunk of the merchant Smelkoff, money and a ring, and dividing the same among yourselves, and with a view of hiding your crime, administered poison to him, from the effects of which he died. Are you guilty?"

"I am not guilty of anything," boldly and firmly answered the prisoner. "I never entered the room--and as that scurvy woman did go into the room, she, then, did the business----"

"You will speak afterwards," again said the justiciary, with the same gentleness and firmness. "So you are not guilty?"

"I did not take the money, did not give him the poison, did not go

into the room. If I were in the room I should have thrown her out."

"You are not guilty, then?"

"Never."

"Very well."

"Katherine Maslova," began the justiciary, turning to the third prisoner. "The charge against you is that, having come to the Hotel Mauritania with the key to Smelkoff's trunk, you stole therefrom money and a ring," he said, like one repeating a lesson learned by rote, and leaning his ear to the associate sitting on his left, who said that he noticed that the phial mentioned in the list of exhibits was missing. "Stole therefrom money and a ring," repeated the justiciary, "and after dividing the money again returned with the merchant Smelkoff to the Hotel Mauritania, and there administered to him poison, from the effects of which he died. Are you guilty or not guilty?"

"I am not guilty of anything," she answered, quickly. "As I said before, so I repeat now: I never, never, never took the money; I did not take anything, and the ring he gave me himself."

"You do not plead guilty of stealing twenty-five hundred rubles?" said the justiciary.

"I say I didn't take anything but forty rubles."

"And do you plead guilty to the charge of giving the merchant Smelkoff powders in his wine?"

"To that I plead guilty. Only I thought, as I was told, that they would put him to sleep, and that no harm could come from them. I did not wish, nor thought of doing him any harm. Before God, I say that I did not," she said.

"So you deny that you are guilty of stealing the money and ring from the merchant Smelkoff," said the justiciary, "but you admit that you gave him the powders?"

"Of course, I admit, only I thought that they were sleeping powders. I only gave them to him that he might fall asleep--never wished, nor thought----"

"Very well," said the justiciary, evidently satisfied with the results of the examinations. "Now tell us how it happened," he said, leaning his elbows on the arms of the chair and putting his hands on the table. "Tell us everything. By confessing frankly you will improve your present condition."

Maslova, still looking straight at the justiciary, was silent.

"Tell us what took place."

"What took place?" suddenly said Maslova. "I came to the hotel; I was taken to the room; he was there, and was already very drunk." (She pronounced the word "he" with a peculiar expression of horror and with wide-open eyes.) "I wished to depart; he would not let me."

She became silent, as if she had lost the thread of the story, or thought of something else.

"What then?"

"What then? Then I remained there awhile and went home."

At this point the assistant public prosecutor half rose from his seat, uncomfortably resting on one elbow.

"Do you wish to question the prisoner?" asked the justiciary, and receiving an affirmative answer, motioned his assent.

"I would like to put this question: Has the prisoner been acquainted with Simon Kartinkin before?" asked the assistant prosecutor without looking at Maslova.

And having asked the question he pressed his lips and frowned.

The justiciary repeated the question. Maslova looked with frightened eyes at the prosecutor.

"With Simon? I was," she said.

"I would like to know now, what was the character of the acquaintance that existed between them. Have they met often?"

"What acquaintance? He invited me to meet guests; there was no acquaintance," answered Maslova, throwing restless glances now at the prosecutor, now at the justiciary.

"I would like to know why did Kartinkin invite Maslova only, and not other girls?" asked the prosecutor, with a Mephistophelian smile, winking his eyes.

"I don't know. How can I tell?" answered Maslova, glancing around her, frightened, and for a moment resting her eyes on Nekhludoff. "He invited whomever he wished."

"Is it possible that she recognized me?" Nekhludoff thought, with horror. He felt his blood rising to his head, but Maslova did not recognize him. She turned away immediately, and with frightened eyes gazed at the prosecutor.

"Then the prisoner denies that she had intimate relations with

Kartinkin? Very well. I have no more questions to ask."

He removed his elbow from the desk, and began to make notes. In reality, instead of making notes, he merely drew lines across his notes, having seen prosecutors and attorneys, after an adroit question, making memoranda of questions which were to crush their opponents.

The justiciary did not turn immediately to the prisoner, because he was at the moment asking his associate in the eye-glasses whether he consented to the questions previously outlined and committed to writing.

"What followed?" the justiciary continued.

"I came home," Maslova continued, looking somewhat bolder, "and went to sleep. As soon as I was asleep our girl, Bertha, came and woke me. 'Your merchant is here again. Wake up.' Then he"--again she pronounced it with evident horror--"he wished to send for wine, but was short of money. Then he sent me to the hotel, telling me where the money was and how much to take, and I went."

The justiciary was whispering at the time to his associate on the left, and did not listen to Maslova, but to make it appear that he had heard everything he repeated her last words.

"And you went. Well, what else?" he asked.

"I came there and did as he told me. I went to his room. I did not enter it alone, but called Simon Michaelovich and her," she said, pointing to Bochkova.

"She lies; I never entered----" Bochkova began, but she was stopped.

"In their presence I took four ten ruble bills," she continued.

"And while taking this money, did the prisoner see how much money there was?" asked the prosecutor.

Maslova shuddered as soon as the prosecutor began to speak. She could not tell why, but she felt that he was her enemy.

"I did not count it, but I saw that it was all hundred ruble bills."

"The prisoner saw hundred ruble bills. I have no other questions."

"Well, did you bring back the money?" asked the justiciary, looking at the clock.

"I did."

"Well, what then?"



"Then he again took me with him," said Maslova.

"And how did you give him the powder in the wine?" asked the justiciary.

"How? Poured it into the wine and gave it to him."

"Why did you give it to him?"

Without answering, she sighed deeply. After a short silence she said:

"He would not let me go. He exhausted me. I went into the corridor and said to Simon Michaelovich: 'If he would only let me go; I am so tired.' And Simon Michaelovich said: 'We are also tired of him. We intend to give him sleeping powders. When he is asleep you can go.' 'All right,' I said. I thought that it was a harmless powder. He gave me a package. I entered. He lay behind the partition, and ordered me to bring him some brandy. I took from the table a bottle of feen-champagne, poured into two glasses--for myself and him--threw the powder into his glass and handed it to him. I would not have given it to him if I had known it."

"And how did you come by the ring?" asked the justiciary.

"He presented it to me."

"When did he present it to you?"

"When we reached his room. I wished to depart. Then he struck me on the head and broke my comb. I was angered, and wished to go. Then he took the ring from his finger and gave it to me, asking me to stay," she said.

Here the assistant prosecutor again rose, and with a dissimulating naiveness asked permission to ask a few more questions, which was granted, and leaning his head on his gold-embroidered collar, he asked:

"I would like to know how long was the prisoner in the room with Smelkoff?"

Maslova was again terror-stricken, and with her frightened eyes wandering from the prosecutor to the justiciary, she answered, hurriedly:

"I do not remember how long."

"And does the prisoner remember entering another part of the hotel after she had left Smelkoff?"

Maslova was thinking.

"Into the next room--an empty one," she said.

"Why did you enter that room?" said the assistant prosecutor, impulsively.

"To wait for a cabriolet."

"Was not Kartinkin in the room with the prisoner?"

"He also came in."

"Why did he come in?"

"There was the merchant's feen-champagne left, and we drank it together."

"Oh, drank together. Very well."

"And did the prisoner have any conversation with Simon, and what was the subject of the conversation?"

Maslova suddenly frowned, her face turned red, and she quickly answered:

"What I said? I know nothing more. Do what you please with me. I am

innocent, and that is all. I did not say anything. I told everything that happened."

"I have no more questions to ask," said the prosecutor to the court, and uplifting his shoulders he began to add to the memorandums of his speech that the prisoner herself confessed to entering an empty room with Simon.

There was a short silence.

"Have you anything else to say?"

"I have told everything," she said, sighing, and took her seat.

The justiciary then made some notes, and after he had listened to a suggestion whispered by the associate on the left, declared a recess of ten minutes, and, hastily rising, walked out of the court-room.

After the judges had risen, the jury, lawyers and witness also rose, and with the pleasant feeling of having already performed part of an important work, began to move hither and thither.

Nekhludoff walked into the jury-room and took a seat near the window.