

CHAPTER XXXVII.

For a long time that night Maslova lay awake with open eyes, and, looking at the door, mused.

She was thinking that under no circumstances would she marry a convict on the island of Saghalin, but would settle down some other way--with some inspector, or clerk, or even the warden, or an assistant. They are all eager for such a thing. "Only I must not get thin. Otherwise I am done for." And she recalled how she was looked at by her lawyer, the justiciary--in fact, everybody in the court-room. She recalled how Bertha, who visited her in prison, told her that the student, whom she loved while she was an inmate at Kitaeva's, inquired about her and expressed his regrets when told of her condition. She recalled the fight with the red-haired woman, and pitied her. She called to mind the baker who sent her an extra lunch roll, and many others, but not Nekhludoff. Of her childhood and youth, and especially of her love for Nekhludoff, she never thought. That was too painful. These recollections were hidden deeply in her soul. She never saw Nekhludoff even in a dream. She failed to recognize him in court, not so much because when she last saw him he was an army officer, beardless, with small mustache and thick, short hair, while now he was no longer young in appearance, and wore a beard, but more because she never thought of him. She had buried all recollections of her past relations with him in that terrible dark night when, on his return from the army, he

visited his aunts.

Up to that night, while she hoped for his return, the child which she bore under her heart was not irksome to her. But from that night forward everything changed, and the coming child was only a hindrance.

The aunts had asked Nekhludoff to stop off at their station and call on them, but he wired that he would not be able to do it, as he had to reach St. Petersburg in time. When Katiousha learned this, she decided to go to the railroad station to see him. The train was to pass at two o'clock in the morning. Katiousha helped the ladies to bed, and, having induced the cook's girl, Mashka, to accompany her, she put on an old pair of shoes, threw a shawl over her head, gathered up her skirts and ran to the station.

It was a dark, rainy, windy, autumn night. The rain now poured down in large, warm drops, now ceased. The road could not be distinguished in the field, and it was pitch dark in the woods. Although Katiousha was familiar with the road she lost her way in the woods, and reached a sub-station, where the train only stopped for three minutes. Running on the platform, she espied Nekhludoff through the window of a first-class car. The car was brightly illuminated. Two officers sat on plush seats playing cards. On the table near the window two thick candles were burning. Nekhludoff sat on the arm of the seat, his elbow resting on the back, laughing. As soon as she recognized him she tapped on the window with her cold hand. But at that moment the third

bell rang, and the train began to move, the cars jostling each other forward. One of the players rose with the cards in his hands and began to look through the window. She tapped again, and pressed her face against the window-pane. At that moment the car beside which she stood was tugged forward, and it moved along. She ran alongside, looking in the window. The officer tried to lower the window, but could not. Nekhludoff rose, and, pushing the officer aside, began lowering it. The train went faster, so that Katiousha was obliged to run. The train moved still faster when the window was lowered. At that moment the conductor pushed her aside and jumped on the car. She fell back, but continued to run along the wet boards of the platform, and when she reached the end of the platform and began to descend the steps to the ground, she almost fell exhausted. The first-class car was far ahead of her, and while she was running the second-class cars passed her, then came with greater speed those of the third class. When the last car with the lanterns flew by her she was already beyond the water-tank, unsheltered from the wind which lashed her, blowing the shawl from her head and tangling her feet in her skirt. But still she ran on.

"Aunt Michaelovna!" shouted the little girl, "you have lost your shawl."

Katiousha stopped, threw back her head, and, covering her face with her hands, began to sob.

"He is gone!" she cried.

"While he is in a lighted car, sitting on a plush seat, jesting and drinking, I stand here in the mud, rain and wind, crying," she thought. She sat down on the ground and began to sob aloud. The little girl was frightened, and, embracing her wet clothing, she said:

"Auntie, let's go home."

"I will wait for the next train, throw myself under the wheels, and that will end it all," Katiousha was meanwhile thinking, not heeding the girl.

She made up her mind to carry out her intention. But as it always happens in the first moment of calm after a period of agitation, the child, his child, suddenly shuddered. Immediately all that which so tortured her that she was willing to die, all her wrath and her desire to revenge herself even by death, passed. She became calm, arranged her clothing, put the shawl on her head, and went away.

She returned home exhausted, wet and muddy. From that day began in her that spiritual transformation which ended in her present condition.

From that terrible night on she ceased to believe in God and in goodness. Before that night she herself believed in God, and believed that other people believed in Him; but after that night she became convinced that no one believed, and all that was said of God and His

law was false and wrong. The one whom she loved, and who loved her--she knew it--abandoned her and made sport of her feelings. And he was the best of all the men she knew. All the others were even worse. This she saw confirmed in all that had happened. His aunts, pious old ladies, drove her out when she was no longer as useful as she used to be. All the women with whom she came in contact tried to make money by her; the men, beginning with the commissary and down to the prison officers, all looked upon her as a means of pleasure. The whole world was after pleasure. Her belief in this was strengthened by the old author whom she met during the second year of her independent life. He had told her frankly that this--he called it poetical and esthetic--is all of life's happiness.

Every one lived for himself only, for his own pleasure, and all the words about God and goodness were deception. And if the questions sometimes occurred to her, Why were the affairs of the world so ill arranged that people harm each other, and all suffer, she thought it best not to dwell on it. If she became lonesome, she took a drink, smoked a cigarette, and the feeling would pass away.