

## PART SECOND.

### CHAPTER I.

The Senate could hear the case in two weeks, and by that time Nekhludoff intended to be in St. Petersburg, and, in case of an adverse decision, to petition the Emperor, as the lawyer had advised. In case the appeal failed, for which, his lawyer had told him, he must be prepared, as the grounds of appeal were very weak, the party of convicts to which Maslova belonged would be transported in May. It was therefore necessary, in order to be prepared to follow Maslova to Siberia, upon which Nekhludoff was firmly resolved, to go to the villages and arrange his affairs there.

First of all, he went to the Kusminskoie estate, the nearest, largest black-earth estate, which brought the greatest income. He had lived on the estate in his childhood and youth, and had also twice visited it in his manhood, once when, upon the request of his mother, he brought a German manager with whom he went over the affairs of the estate. So that he knew its condition and the relations the peasants sustained toward the office, i. e., the landowner. Their relations toward the office were such that they have always been in absolute dependence

upon it. Nekhludoff had already known it when as a student he professed and preached the doctrines of Henry George, and in carrying out which he had distributed his father's estate among the peasants. True, after his military career, when he was spending twenty thousand rubles a year, those doctrines ceased to be necessary to the life he was leading, were forgotten, and not only did he not ask himself where the money came from, but tried not to think of it. But the death of his mother, the inheritance, and the necessity of taking care of his property, i. e., his lands, again raised the question in his mind of his relation to private ownership of land. A month before Nekhludoff would have argued that he was powerless to change the existing order of things; that he was not managing the estate, and living and receiving his income far away from the estate, would feel more or less at ease. But now he resolved that, although there was before him a trip to Siberia and complex and difficult relations to the prison world, for which social standing, and especially money, were necessary, he could not, nevertheless, leave his affairs in their former condition, but must, to his own detriment, change them. For this purpose he had decided not to work the land himself, but, by renting it at a low price to the peasants, to make it possible for them to live independent of the landlord. Often, while comparing the position of the landlord with that of the owner of serfs, Nekhludoff found a parallel in the renting of the land to the peasants, instead of working it by hired labor, to what the slave-owners did when they substituted tenancy for serfdom. That did not solve the question, but it was a step toward its solution; it was a transition from a grosser

to a less gross form of ownership of man. He also intended to act thus.

Nekhludoff arrived at Kusminskoie about noon. In everything simplifying his life, he did not wire from the station of his arrival, but hired a two-horse country coach. The driver was a young fellow in a nankeen regulation coat, belted below the waist, sitting sidewise on the box. He was the more willing to carry on a conversation because the broken-down, lame, emaciated, foaming shaft-horse could then walk, which these horses always preferred.

The driver spoke about the manager of the Kusminskoie estate, not knowing that he was carrying its master, Nekhludoff purposely refrained from enlightening him.

"A dandy German," he said, turning half around, cracking his long whip now over the heads, now under the horses. "There is nothing here to compare with his fine team of three bay horses. You ought to see him driving out with his wife! I took some guests to his house last Christmas--he had a fine tree. You couldn't find the like of it in the whole district! He robbed everybody, right and left. But what does he care? He is bossing everybody. They say he bought a fine estate."

Nekhludoff thought that he was indifferent to the manner of the German's management, and to the way he was profiting by it. But the story of the driver with the long waist was unpleasant to him. He was

enchanted with the fine weather; the darkening clouds, sometimes obscuring the sun; the fields over which the larks soared; the woods, just covering up the top and bottom with green; the meadows on which the flocks and horses browsed, and the fields on which plowmen were already seen--but a feeling of dissatisfaction crept over him. And when he asked himself the reason for it, he recalled the driver's account of the German's management.

But by the time he was busying himself with the affairs of Kusminskoie he had forgotten it.

After an examination of the books and his conversation with the clerk, who artlessly set forth the advantages of the peasants having small holdings and the fact that they were hemmed in by the master's land, Nekhludoff grew only more determined to put an end to his ownership, and give the land to the peasants. From the books and his conversations with the clerk he learned that, as before, two-thirds of the best arable land was cultivated by his own men, and the rest by peasants who were paid five rubles per acre--that is to say, for five rubles the peasant undertook to plow, harrow and sow an acre of land three times, then mow it, bind or press it, and carry it to the barn. In other words, he was paid five rubles for what hired, cheap labor would cost at least ten rubles. Again, the prices paid by the peasants to the office for necessaries were enormous. They worked for meadow, for wood, for potatoe seed, and they were almost all in debt to the office. Thus, the rent charged the peasants for lands beyond the

fields was four times as great as it could bring on a five per cent. basis.

Nekhludoff knew all that before, but he was now learning it as something new, and only wondered why he and all those who stood in a similar position could fail to see the enormity of such relations. The arguments of the clerk that not one-fourth of the value of the stock could be realized on a sale, that the peasants would permit the land to run to waste, only strengthened his determination and confirmed him in his belief that he was doing a good deed by giving the land to the peasants, and depriving himself of the greater part of his income. Desiring to dispose of the land forthwith, he asked the manager to call together the peasants of the three villages surrounded by his lands the very next day, for the purpose of declaring to them his intention and agreeing with them as to the price.

With a joyful consciousness of his firmness, in spite of the arguments of the manager, and his readiness to make sacrifices for the peasants, Nekhludoff left the office, and, reflecting on the coming arrangement, he strolled around the house, through the flower-garden, which lay opposite the manager's house, and was neglected this year; over the lawn-tennis ground, overgrown with chicory, and through the alleys lined with lindens, where it had been his wont to smoke his cigar, and where, three years before, the pretty visitor, Kirimova, flirted with him. Having made an outline of a speech, which he was to deliver to the peasants the following day, Nekhludoff went to the manager's

house, and after further deliberating upon the proper disposition of the stock, he calmly and contentedly retired to a room prepared for him in the large building.

In this clean room, the walls of which were covered with views of Venice, and with a mirror hung between two windows, there was placed a clean spring bedstead and a small table with water and matches. On a large table near the mirror lay his open traveling-bag with toilet articles and books which he brought with him; one Russian book on criminology, one in German, and a third in English treating of the same subject. He intended to read them in spare moments while traveling through the villages, but as he looked on them now he felt that his mind was far from these subjects. Something entirely different occupied him.

In one corner of the room there stood an ancient arm-chair with incrustations, and the sight of this chair standing in his mother's bed-room suddenly raised in his soul an unexpected feeling. He suddenly felt sorry for the house that would decay, the gardens which would be neglected, the woods which would be cut down, and all the cattle-houses, courts, stables, sheds, machinery, horses, cows which had been accumulated with such effort, although not by him. At first it seemed to him easy to abandon all that, but now he was loth to part with it, as well as the land and one-half of the income which would be so useful now. And immediately serviceable arguments come to his aid, by which it appeared that it was not wise to give the land to the

peasants and destroy his estate.

"I have no right to own the land. And if I do not own the land, I cannot keep the property intact. Besides, I will now go to Siberia, and for that reason I need neither the house nor the estate," whispered one voice. "All that is true," whispered another voice, "but you will not pass all your life in Siberia. If you should marry, you may have children. And you must hand over the estate to them in the same condition in which you found it. There are duties toward the land. It is easy to give away the land, to destroy everything; but it is very hard to accumulate it. Above all, you must mark out a plan of your life, and dispose of your property accordingly. And, then, are you acting as you do in order to satisfy conscientious scruples, or for the praise you expect of people?" Nekhludoff asked himself, and could not help acknowledging that the talk that it would occasion influenced his decision. And the more he thought the more questions raised themselves, and the more perplexing they appeared. To rid himself of these thoughts he lay down on the fresh-made bed, intending to go over them again the next day with a clearer mind. But he could not fall asleep for a long time. Along with the fresh air, through the open window, came the croaking of frogs, interrupted by the whistling of nightingales, one of which was in a lilac bush under the window. Listening to the nightingales and the frogs, Nekhludoff recalled the music of the inspector's daughter; and, thinking of that music, he recalled Maslova--how, like the croaking of a frog, her lips trembled when she said, "You must drop that." Then the German manager descended

to the frogs. He should have been held back, but not only did he come down, but he was transformed into Maslova and started to taunt him: "I am a convict, and you are a Prince." "No, I shall not yield," thought Nekhludoff, and came to. "Am I acting properly or improperly?" he asked himself. "I don't know; I will know to-morrow." And he began to descend to where the manager and Maslova were. And there everything ended.