

## CHAPTER XXII.

The party of convicts, which included Maslova, was to leave on the three o'clock train, and in order to see them coming out of the prison and follow them to the railroad station Nekhludoff decided to get to the prison before twelve.

While packing his clothes and papers, Nekhludoff came across his diary and began to read the entry he had made before leaving for St. Petersburg. "Katiusha does not desire my sacrifice, but is willing to sacrifice herself," it ran. "She has conquered, and I have conquered. I am rejoicing at that inner change which she seems to me to be undergoing. I fear to believe it, but it appears to me that she is awakening." Immediately after this was the following entry: "I have lived through a very painful and very joyous experience. I was told that she had misbehaved in the hospital. It was very painful to hear it. Did not think it would so affect me. Have spoken to her with contempt and hatred, but suddenly remembered how often I myself have been guilty--am even now, although only in thought, of that for which I hated her, and suddenly I was seized with disgust for myself and pity for her, and I became very joyful. If we would only see in time the beam in our own eye, how much kinder we would be." Then he made the following entry for the day: "Have seen Katiusha, and, because of my self-content, was unkind and angry, and departed with a feeling of oppression. But what can I do? A new life begins to-morrow. Farewell

to the old life! My mind is filled with numberless impressions, but I cannot yet reduce them to order."

On awakening the following morning, Nekhludoff's first feeling was one of sorrow for the unpleasant incident with his brother-in-law.

"I must go to see them," he thought, "and smooth it over."

But, looking at the clock, he saw that there was no time left, and that he must hasten to the prison to see the departure of the convicts. Hastily packing up his things and sending them to the depot, Nekhludoff hired a trap and drove to the prison.

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The hot July days had set in. The stones of the street, the houses, and the tins of the roofs, failing to cool off during the suffocating night, exhaled their warmth into the hot, still air. There was no breeze, and such as rose every now and then was laden with dust and the stench of oil paint. The few people that were on the streets sought shelter in the shade of the houses. Only sun-burnt street-pavers in bast shoes were sitting in the middle of the street, setting boulders into the hot sand; gloomy policemen in unstarched blouses and carrying revolvers attached to yellow cords, were lazily shuffling about, and tram-cars with drawn blinds on the sides exposed to the sun, and drawn by white-hooded horses, were running up and down

the street.

When Nekhludoff arrived at the prison, the formal delivery and acceptance of the departing convicts, which began at four in the morning, were still going on. The party consisted of six hundred and twenty-three men and sixty-four women; all had to be counted, the weak and sick had to be separated, and they were to be delivered to the convoy. The new inspector, two assistants, a physician, his assistant, the officer of the convoy and a clerk were sitting in the shade around a table with papers and documents, calling and examining each convict and making entries in their books.

One-half of the table was already exposed to the sun. It was getting warm and close from want of air, and from the breathing of the convicts standing near by.

"Will there ever be an end?" said a tall, stout, red-faced captain of the convoy, incessantly smoking a cigarette and blowing the smoke through the moustache which covered his mouth. "I am exhausted. Where have you taken so many? How many more are there?"

The clerk consulted the books.

"Twenty-four men and the women."

"Why are you standing there? Come forward!" shouted the captain to the

crowding convicts.

The convicts had already been standing three hours in a broiling sun, waiting their turn.

All this was taking place in the court-yard of the prison, while without the prison stood the usual armed soldier, about two dozen trucks for the baggage, and the infirm convicts, and on the corner a crowd of relatives and friends of the convicts, waiting for a chance to see the exiles as they emerged from the prison, and, if possible, to have a last few words with them, or deliver some things they had brought for them. Nekhludoff joined this crowd.

He stood there about an hour. At the end of the hour, from behind the gates came the clatter of chains, the tramping of feet, voices of command, coughing and the low conversation of a large crowd. This lasted about five minutes, during which time prison officers flitted in and out through the wicket. Finally there was heard a sharp command.

The gates were noisily flung open, the clatter of the chains became more distinct, and a detachment of guardsmen in white blouses and shouldering guns marched forth and arranged themselves, evidently as a customary manoeuvre, in a large semi-circle before the gates. Again a command was heard, and the hard-labor convicts, in pairs, began to pour out. With pancake-shaped caps on their shaved heads, and sacks on

their shoulders, they dragged their fettered legs, holding up the sacks with one hand and waving the other. First came the men convicts, all in gray trousers and long coats with diamond axes on their backs. All of them--young, old, slim, stout, pale, and red-faced, dark-haired, moustached, bearded and beardless, Russians, Tartars, Jews--came, clanging their chains and briskly waving their hands as though going on a long journey; but after making about ten steps they stopped and humbly arranged themselves in rows of four. Immediately behind these came another contingent, also with shaved heads and similarly dressed, without leg-fetters, but handcuffed to each other. These were exiles. They walked as briskly as the others, stopped, and formed in rows of four. Then came the women in the same order, in gray coats and kerchiefs, those sentenced to hard labor coming first; then the exiles, and finally those voluntarily following their husbands, in their native costumes. Some of the women carried infants under the skirts of their coats.

Children--boys and girls--followed them on foot, hanging on to the skirts of their mothers. The men stood silently, coughing now and then, or exchanging remarks, while the women carried on incessant conversation. Nekhludoff thought that he saw Maslova as she was coming out, but she was soon lost in the large crowd, and he only saw a lot of gray creatures almost deprived of all womanly features, with their children and sacks, grouping themselves behind the men.

Although the convicts had been counted within the walls of the prison,

the guard began to count them over again. This counting took a long time, because the convicts, moving from one place to another, confused the count of the officers. The officers cursed and pushed the humbly but angrily compliant convicts and counted them again. When the counting was finally over, the officer of the guard gave some command, and suddenly all became confusion in the crowd. Infirm men, women and children hastened to the trucks, on which they first placed their sacks, then climbed in themselves, the infants crying in their mothers' arms, the children quarreling about the places, the men looking gloomy and despondent.

Some of the convicts, removing their caps, approached the officer and made some request. As Nekhludoff afterward learned, they were asking to be taken on the wagons. The guard officer, without looking at the applicants, silently inhaled the smoke of his cigarette, then suddenly swung his short hand at one of the convicts that approached him, who dodged and sprang back.

"I will elevate you to the nobility with a rope! You can walk!" shouted the officer.

Only a tall, staggering old man in irons was permitted to ride on a wagon. The old man removed his cap, and making the sign of the cross, dragged himself to the wagon; but his fettered legs prevented his climbing up until an old woman, sitting on the wagon, took his hand and helped him in.

When all the wagons were loaded with sacks and those that were permitted to ride, the guard officer uncovered his bald head, wiped with a handkerchief his pate, forehead and red, stout neck, made the sign of the cross, and gave command to proceed.

There was a clatter of weapons; the convicts, removing their caps, began to make the sign of the cross, some with their left hands; the escorting crowd shouted something, the convicts shouted in answer; a great wailing arose among the women, and the party, surrounded by soldiers in white blouses moved forward, raising a cloud of dust with their fettered feet. They marched in the order in which they formed at the prison gates, in rows of four, preceded by a detachment of soldiers. The rear was brought up by the wagons loaded with the sacks and the infirm. On top of one of the wagons, above all the others, sat a woman, wrapped up in her coat and sobbing incessantly.