

CHAPTER IV.

Nekhludoff managed to see Maslova only twice between Nijhni and Perm--once in Nijhni while the prisoners were being placed on a net-covered lighter, and again in the office of the Perm prison. On both occasions he found her secretive and unkind. When he asked her about her prison conditions, or whether she wanted anything, she became confused and answered evasively and, as it seemed to him, with that hostile feeling of reproach which she had manifested before. And this gloomy temper, due only to the persecutions to which she was being subjected by the men, tormented him.

But at their very first meeting in Tomsk she became again as she was before her departure. She no longer frowned or became confused when she saw him, but, on the contrary, met him cheerfully and simply, thanking him for what he had done for her, especially for bringing her in contact with her present company.

After two months of journey from prison to prison, this change also manifested itself in her appearance. She became thin, sun-burnt and apparently older; wrinkles appeared on her temples and around her mouth; she no longer curled her hair on her forehead, but wore a 'kerchief on her head, and neither in her dress, coiffure, nor in her conduct were there any signs of her former coquetry. And this change called forth in Nekhludoff a particularly joyous feeling. The feeling

he now experienced toward her was unlike any he had experienced before. It had nothing in common with his first poetic impulse, nor with that sentimental love which he felt afterward, nor even with that consciousness of a duty performed, coupled with self-admiration, which impelled him, after the trial, to resolve on marrying her. It was that same simple feeling of pity and contrition which he experienced at their first meeting in the prison and afterward, with greater force, when he conquered his disgust and forgave her conduct with the physician's assistant in the hospital (the injustice he had done her had subsequently become plain). It was the same feeling with the difference that, while it was temporary then, now it was permanent.

During this period, because of Maslova's transfer to the politicals, Nekhludoff became acquainted with many political prisoners. On closer acquaintance he was convinced that they were not all villains, as many people imagined them to be, nor all heroes, as some of them considered the members of their party, but that they were ordinary people, among whom, as in other parties, some were good, some bad, the others indifferent.

He became particularly attached to a consumptive young man who was on his way to a life term at hard labor. The story of the young man was a very short one. His father, a rich Southern landlord, died while he was a child. He was the only son, and was brought up by his mother. He was the best scholar in the university, making his specialty mathematics. He was offered a chair in the university and a course

abroad. But he hesitated. There was a girl of whom he became enamored, so he contemplated marriage and political activity. He wished everything, but resolved on nothing. At that time his college chums asked him for money for a common cause. He knew what that common cause was, and at the time took no interest in it whatever, but from a feeling of fellowship and egoism gave the money, that it might not be thought that he was afraid. Those who took the money were arrested; a note was found from which it was learned that the money had been given by Kryltzoff. He was arrested, taken to the police station, then to the prison.

After his discharge he traveled now South, now to St. Petersburg, then abroad, and again to Kieff and to Odessa. He was denounced by a man in whom he placed great faith. He was arrested, tried, kept in prison two years and finally death sentence was imposed on him, but was afterward commuted to hard labor for life.

He was stricken with consumption while in prison, and under the present circumstances had but a few months to live, and he knew it.