

## CHAPTER V.

At last Nekhludoff succeeded in obtaining permission to visit Maslova in her cell among the politicals.

While passing the dimly-lighted court-yard from the officers' headquarters to "No. 5," escorted by a messenger, he heard a stir and buzzing of voices coming from the one-story dwelling occupied by the prisoners. And when he came nearer and the door was opened, the buzzing increased and turned into a Babel of shouting, cursing and laughing. A rattling of chains was heard, and a familiar noisome air was wafted from the doorway. The din of voices with the rattle of chains, and the dreadful odor always produced in Nekhludoff the tormenting feeling of some moral nausea, turning into physical nausea. These two impressions, mingling, strengthened each other.

The apartment occupied by the political prisoners consisted of two small cells, the doors of which opened into the corridor, partitioned off from the rest. As Nekhludoff got beyond the partition he noticed Simonson feeding a billet of pine wood into the oven.

Spying Nekhludoff he looked up without rising and extended his hand.

"I am glad you came; I want to see you!" he said, with a significant glance, looking Nekhludoff straight in the eyes.

"What is it?" asked Nekhludoff.

"I will tell you later; I am busy now."

And Simonson again occupied himself with making the fire, which he did according to his special theory of the greatest conservation of heat energy.

Nekhludoff was about to enter the first door when Maslova, broom in hand, and sweeping a heap of dirt and dust toward the oven, emerged from the second door. She wore a white waist and white stockings and her skirt was tucked up under the waist. A white 'kerchief covered her head to her very eyebrows. Seeing Nekhludoff, she unbent herself and, all red and animated, put aside the broom, and wiping her hands on her skirt, she stood still.

"You are putting things in order?" asked Nekhludoff, extending his hand.

"Yes, my old occupation," she answered and smiled. "There is such dirt here; there is no end to our cleaning."

"Well, is the plaid dry?" she turned to Simonson.

"Almost," said Simonson, glancing at her in a manner which struck

Nekhludoff as very peculiar.

"Then I will fetch the furs to dry. All our people are there," she said to Nekhludoff, going to the further room and pointing to the nearest door.

Nekhludoff opened the door and walked into a small cell, dimly lighted by a little metallic lamp standing on a low bunk. The cell was cold and there was an odor of dust, dampness and tobacco. The tin lamp threw a bright light on those around it, but the bunks were in the shade and vacillating shadows moved along the walls. In the small room were all the prisoners, except two men who had gone for boiling water and provisions. There was an old acquaintance of Nekhludoff, the yellow-faced and thin Vera Efremovna, with her large, frightened eyes and a big vein on her forehead. She was sitting nervously rolling cigarettes from a heap of tobacco lying on a newspaper in front of her.

In the far corner there was also Maria Pablovna.

"How opportune your coming! How you seen Katia?" she asked Nekhludoff.

There was also Anatolie Kryltzoff. Pale and wasted, his legs crossed under him, bending forward and shivering, he sat in the far corner, his hands hidden in the sleeves of his fur jacket, and with feverish eyes looked at Nekhludoff. Nekhludoff was about to approach him, but

to the right of the entrance, sorting something in a bag and talking to the pretty and smiling Grabetz, sat a man with curly red hair, in a rubber jacket and with spectacles. His name was Novodvoroff, and Nekhludoff hastened to greet him. Of all political prisoners, Nekhludoff liked him best. Novodvoroff glanced over his spectacles at Nekhludoff and, frowning, he extended his thin hand.

"Well, are you enjoying your journey?" he said, evidently in irony.

"Yes, there are many interesting things," answered Nekhludoff, pretending not to see the irony, and treating it as a civility. Then he went over to Kryltzoff. In appearance Nekhludoff seemed to be indifferent, but in reality he was far from being so to Novodvoroff. These words of Novodvoroff, and his evident desire to say something unpleasant, jarred upon his kindly sentiments, and he became gloomy and despondent.

"Well, how is your health?" he said, pressing Kryltzoff's cold and trembling hand.

"Pretty fair, only I cannot get warm; I am all wet," said Kryltzoff, hastily hiding his hand in the sleeve of his coat. "Those windows are broken." He pointed to the windows behind the iron gratings. "Why did you not come before?"

Expecting to have a private conversation with Katiousha, Nekhludoff

sat conversing with Kryltzoff. Kryltzoff listened attentively, fixedly gazing at Nekhludoff.

"Yes," he said, suddenly, "I have often thought that we were going into exile with those very people on account of whom we were banished. And yet we not only do not know them, but do not wish to know them. And, worse of all, they hate us and consider us their enemies. This is dreadful."

"There is nothing dreadful about it," said Novodvoroff, overhearing the conversation. "The masses are always churlish and ignorant."

At that moment there was an outburst of curses behind the partition wall, followed by a jostling and banging against walls, a clatter of chains, screaming and shouting. Some one was being beaten; some one shouted "Help!"

"See those beasts! What have they in common with us?" calmly asked Novodvoroff.

"You call them beasts, but you should have heard Nekhludoff telling of the conduct of one of them," Kryltzoff said excitedly.

"You are sentimental!" Novodvoroff said, ironically. "It is hard for us to understand the emotions of these people and the motives of their acts. Where you see magnanimity, there may only be envy."

"Why is it you do not wish to see good in others?" said Maria Pablovna, suddenly becoming excited.

"I cannot see that which does not exist."

"How can you say it does not exist when a man risks a terrible death?"

"I think," said Novodvoroff, "that if we wish to serve our cause effectively it is necessary that we stop dreaming and look at things as they are. We must do everything for the masses, and expect nothing from them. The masses are the object of our activity, but they cannot be our collaborators while they are as inert as they are now. And it is, therefore, perfectly illusive to expect aid from them before they have gone through the process of development--that process of development for which we are preparing them."

"What process of development?" said Kryltzoff, becoming red in the face. "We say that we are against the use of force, but is this not force in its worst form?"

"There is no force here," calmly said Novodvoroff. "I only said that I know the path the people must follow, and can point it out."

"But how do you know that yours is the right path? Is it not the same despotism which gave rise to the Inquisition and the executions of the

Great Revolution? They, too, knew the only scientific path."

"The fact that people erred does not prove that I am erring. Besides, there is a great difference between the ravings of ideologists and the data of positive economic science."

Novodvoroff's voice filled the entire cell. He alone was speaking; all the others were silent.

"Those eternal discussions!" said Maria Pablovna at a momentary lull.

"And what do you think of it?" Nekhludoff asked Maria Pablovna.

"I think that Anatolie is right--that we have no right to force our ideas on the people."

"That is a strange conception of our ideas," said Novodvoroff, and he began to smoke angrily.

"I cannot talk to them," Kryltzoff said in a whisper, and became silent.

"And it is much better not to talk," said Nekhludoff.