

## CHAPTER VIII.

After the disappointment at the prison, Nekhludoff drove down to the Governor's Bureau to find out whether they had received there any news concerning the pardon of Maslova. There was no news there, so he drove back to his hotel, and wrote at once to the lawyer and to Selenin concerning it. Having finished the letters, he glanced at his watch; it was already time to go to the general.

On the way he thought again of how he might hand over the pardon to Katiousha; of the place she would be sent to, and how he would live with her.

At dinner in the general's house all were not only very friendly to Nekhludoff, but, as it seemed, very favorably inclined to him, as he was a new, interesting personality. The general, who came in to dinner with a white cross on his breast, greeted Nekhludoff like an old friend. On the general's inquiry as to what he had done since he saw him in the morning, Nekhludoff answered that he had been at the postoffice, that he had found out the facts concerning the pardoning of the person they were talking of in the morning, and he asked permission to visit her.

The general seemed displeased, began to frown and said nothing.

"Will you have some whisky?" he said in French to the Englishman who had walked up to him. The Englishman took some, and related that he had been to see the cathedral of the city, and the factory, and expressed the desire to see the great jail in which criminals were confined on their way to Siberia.

"This idea is excellent!" exclaimed the general, turning to Nekhludoff. "You may go together. Give them a pass!" he added, turning to his lieutenant.

"What time do you wish to go?" Nekhludoff asked the Englishman.

"I prefer to visit prisons in the evening," the Englishman replied.

"All are then at home, and there are no preparations."

After dinner, Nekhludoff followed her into the ante-chamber, where the Englishman was already waiting for him to visit the prison, as they had agreed. Having taken leave of the whole family, he walked out, followed by the Englishman.

The sombre looking prison, the soldier on guard, the lantern behind the gate, notwithstanding the pure white layer of snow which had covered everything--the sidewalk, the roof and the walls--made a gloomy impression. The proud looking superintendent, walking out to the gate and glancing at Nekhludoff's pass in the light of the lantern, shrugged his broad shoulders, but obeyed the order and

invited the visitors to follow him. He first led them to the yard, and then to a door on the right hand and up the stairs leading to the office. Offering them seats, he asked them in what way he could serve them, and learning from Nekhludoff that he wished to see Maslova, he sent the jailer for her and prepared himself to answer the questions which the Englishman wished to ask him, before going to the cell.

Nekhludoff translated the Englishman's questions. While they were conversing they heard approaching footsteps, the door opened and the jailer entered, followed by Katiousha in her prison garb, with a scarf tied around her head.

Nekhludoff rose and made a few steps toward her. She said nothing, but her excited expression surprised him. Her face was lit up with a wonderful decision. He had never seen her look like that. Now the blood rushed to her face, and now she turned pale; now her fingers twisted convulsively the edges of her jacket, now she looked at him, and now she dropped her eyes.

"You know what I called you for?" asked Nekhludoff.

"Yes, he told me. But now I am decided. I will ask permission to go with Vladimir Ivanovitch." She said this quickly, as if she had made up her mind before what to say.

"How with Vladimir Ivanovitch?" asked Nekhludoff. But she interrupted

him.

"But if he wants me to live with him?" Here she stopped in fear, and added, "I mean to stay with him. I could expect nothing better, and perhaps I may be useful to him and others. What difference does it make to me?"

One of the two things had happened--either she had fallen in love with Simonson and did not wish his sacrifice, which weighed so heavily on him, or she was still in love with Nekhludoff and renounced him for his own good, burning all bridges behind her, and throwing her fortunes in the same scale with those of Simonson. Nekhludoff understood it, and felt ashamed.

"If you are in love with him," he said.

"I never knew such people, you know. It is impossible not to love them. And Vladimir is entirely unlike any person I have ever known."

"Yes, certainly," said Nekhludoff. "He is an excellent man, and I think----"

Here she interrupted him, as if she were afraid that he would speak too much, or she would not say everything.

"You will forgive me for doing that which you did not wish. You, too,

must love."

She said the very thing that he had just said to himself.

But now he was no longer thinking so, but felt altogether different.

He felt not only shame, but pity.

"Is it possible that all is at an end between us?" he said.

"Yes, it looks like it," she answered, with a strange smile.

"But nevertheless I would like to be useful to you."

"To us," she said, glancing at Nekhludoff. "We don't need anything. I am very much obliged to you. If it were not for you"--she wished to say something, but her voice began to tremble.

"I don't know which of us is under greater obligation to the other. God will settle our accounts," said Nekhludoff.

"Yes, God will settle them," she whispered.

"Are you ready?" asked the Englishman.

"Directly," answered Nekhludoff, and then he inquired of her what she knew of Kryltzoff.

She quieted down and calmly told him:

"Kryltzoff became very weak on the road and was taken to the hospital. Maria Pablovna wanted to become a nurse, but there is no answer yet."

"Well, may I go?" she asked, noticing the Englishman who was waiting for him.

"I am not yet taking leave of you," said Nekhludoff, holding out his hand to her.

"Pardon me," she said in a low tone.

Their eyes met, and in that strange, stern look, and in that pitiful smile, with which she said not "good-by," but "pardon me," Nekhludoff understood, that of the two suppositions concerning her decision the latter was the right one. She still loved him and thought she would mar his life by a union with him, and would free him by living with Simonson.

She pressed his hand, turned quickly, and left the room.