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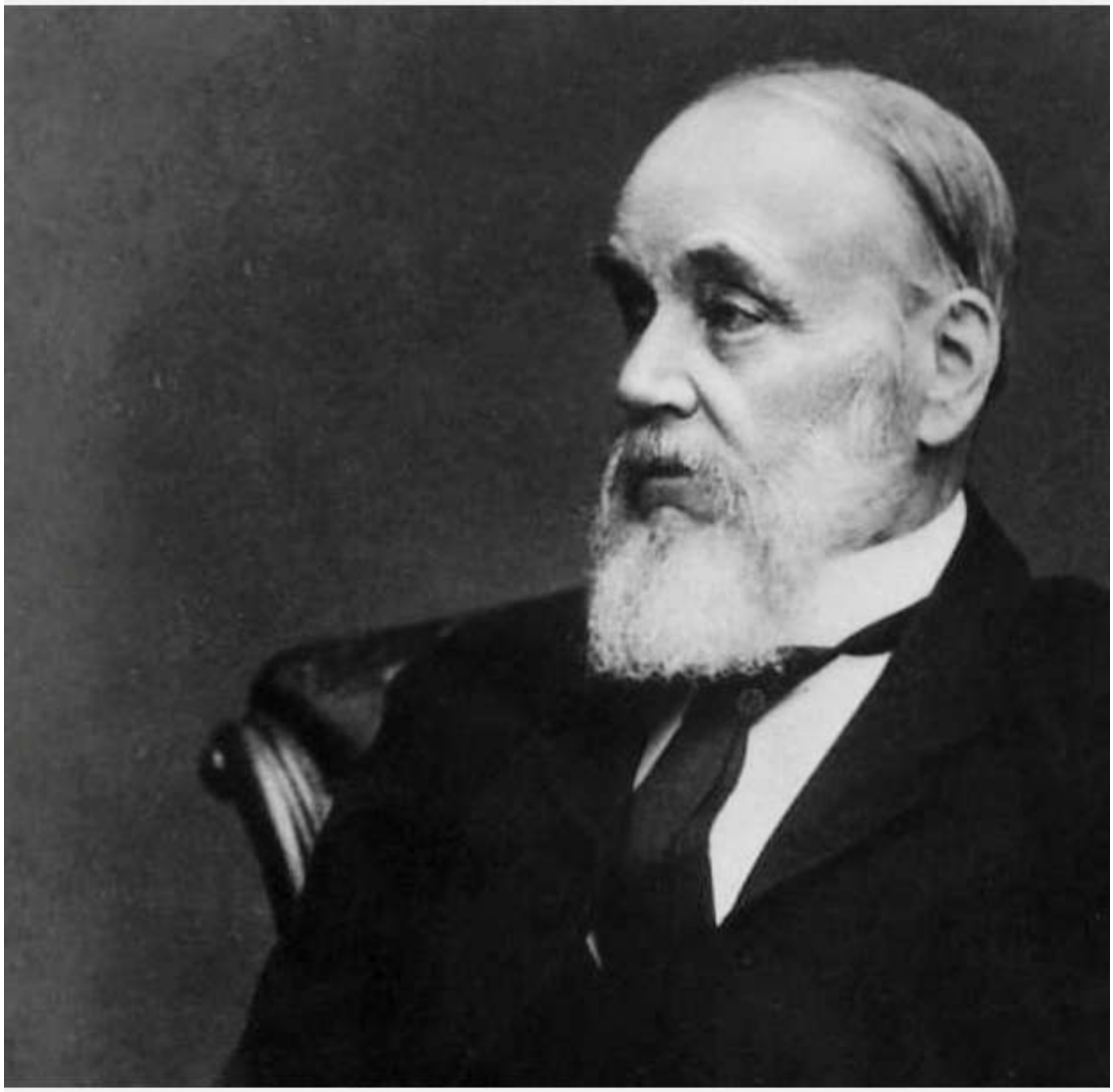
Ivan Goncharov

Complete Novels



Series Twelve

The Complete Novels of

IVAN GONCHAROV

(1812-1891)

Contents

Version 1

The Complete Novels of

IVAN GONCHAROV

By Delphi Classics, 2022

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Complete Novels of Ivan Goncharov

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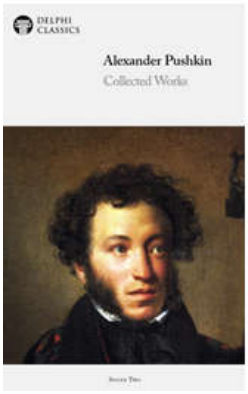
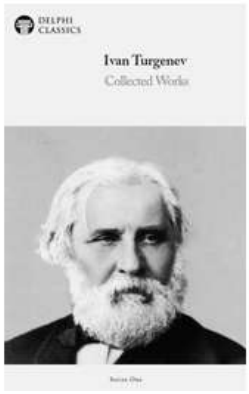
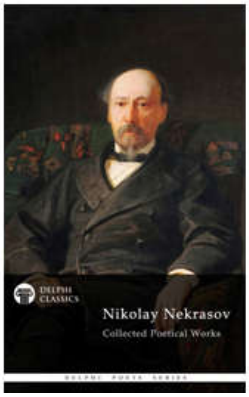
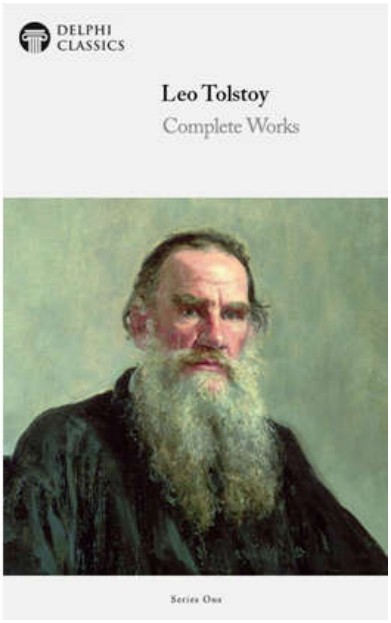
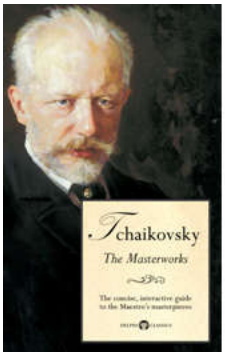


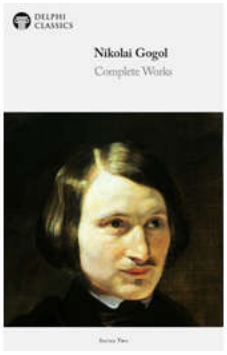






Explore the Russian Masters at Delphi Classics…





The Novels

Simbirsk (now Ulyanovsk), a city in Russia, located on the Volga River, 438 miles east of Moscow — Ivan Goncharov's birthplace

The birthplace, where the author was born on 6 June, 1812

A Common Story (1847)

Translated by Constance Garnett, 1894

Ivan Goncharov was born into a wealthy merchant family and, after graduating from Moscow University in 1834, he served for nearly thirty years as an official, first in the Ministry of Finance and afterward in the Ministry of Censorship. However, as a novelist he would go on to pen highly esteemed novels that dramatise social change in Russia and feature some of Russian literature's most vivid and memorable characters.

His first novel, *A Common Story* was first published in serialised form in the literary magazine *Sovremennik (The Contemporary)* in 1847. *Sovremennik* was a political, social and literary journal established by Alexander Pushkin in 1836. The critic, Pyotr Pletnyov, assumed the editorship of the magazine after Pushkin's death and the writer, poet and critic, Nikolay Nekrasov took over control in 1847. It was under Nekrasov's ownership that the journal became very successful. He insisted that the magazine should feature writings by great Russian authors, while also publishing translations of popular foreign novelists, such as Charles Dickens and George Sand.

Goncharov wrote the majority of *A Common Story* over the course of 1844 and 1845. In the spring of 1846, he asked his friend, a famous poet of the period, Nikolay Yazykov, to read the novel and then forward it to the prominent literary critic, Vissarion Belinsky, to assess. Yazykov was unmoved by the work and it was not until several months later that the manuscript was finally passed along to Belinsky. He thought it was excellent and mocked Yazykov for not recognising Goncharov's talent.

A Common Story centres on a young nobleman, Aleksander Aduev, who grows up in a sheltered environment in the provinces. When he leaves for Saint Petersburg, he is consumed by Romantic ideals and noble feelings. He is soon confronted by a city dominated by money and commercialism. It confounds his idealistic beliefs and forces him to reassess his world view. The novel provides an exploration of the egoism of Romantic ideals and a critique of an old system of custom, sentimentality and emotionalism. It was received warmly by most critics and was reportedly highly successful in Saint Petersburg literary circles. One of the most negative reviews came from a critic for *The Northern Bee*: a political and literary newspaper which served as little more than a propaganda organ for the authoritarian Tsarist regime. Since *Sovremennik* often advocated for a more democratic Russia, it is not surprising that the works it published were often savaged by the pro-government paper. Interestingly, a young Leo Tolstoy was a great admirer of Goncharov's first novel.

Vissarion Belinsky (1811-1848) was a Russian literary critic of Westernizing tendency. Goncharov's first novel was a direct response to Belinsky's call for exposing a new type, that of the complacent romantic, common at the time; it was lavishly praised by the famous critic as one of the best Russian books of the year.

Portrait of Goncharov, aged 35, by Kirill Gorbunov, 1847 — the year he published 'A Common Story'

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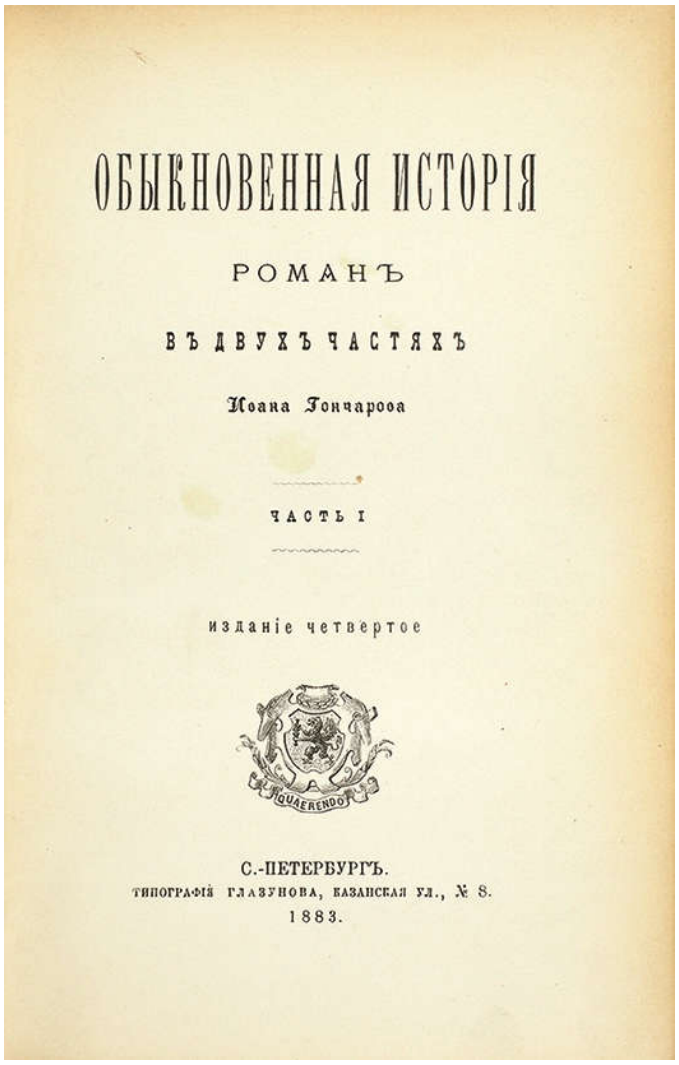
ОБЫКНОВЕННАЯ ИСТОРІЯ

РОМАНЪ

ВЪ ДВУХЪ ЧАСТЯХЪ

Иоана Гончарова

ЧАСТЬ I

изданіе четвертое

QUAERENDO

С.-ПЕТЕРБУРГЪ.
ТИПОГРАФІЯ ГЛАЗУНОВА, БАЗАНСКАЯ УЛ., № 8.
1883.

Title page of the fourth edition, 1883

PREFACE

IT IS A disadvantage to Gontcharoff to be introduced for the first time to English readers who are already acquainted with the writings of his more thrilling and vivid successors, Tourgenieff, Dostoieffsky and Tolstoi. In the rapid development of the Russian realistic novel, Gontcharoff takes the second place in point of time. He was the first man to be roused by the example of Gogol, who wrote, shortly before he died in 1852: "I have pursued life in its reality, not in dreams of the imagination, and I have thus reached Him who is the source of life." So could those later masters whom I have mentioned say, but Gontcharoff, who came a little before them, and was the first to take up the challenge thrown down by Gogol, if he had not penetrated to the sacred essence of things, could at least maintain that he had studied life in its reality. And this is why, although he is no poet, and cannot rend the heart like the young men who came after him, he is deserving of all recognition as an element in modern Russian literature.

Ivan Alexandrovitch Gontcharoff was born at Simbirsk, on the Volga, on the 18th of June, 1813. His father, a rich merchant, died when the boy was three years old, and left him to the care of his mother and of his godfather, an aged retired officer of the navy. This old salt regaled the child with endless stories of adventures at sea, and awakened in him a longing to sail about the world. At the village school to which he was sent, Ivan learnt French well from the wife of the pope of the parish, who had married a Frenchwoman. In 1825, he went to the Gymnasium in Moscow, where he was a diligent and blameless student. In 1831, he passed on to the University of Moscow, taking philology as his special subject. In 1835, he went up from the maternal house at Simbirsk, very much as Alexandra Fedoritch does in *A Common Story,* to St. Petersburg, and received at the Ministry of Finance the post of Translator.

The earliest literary work undertaken by Gontcharoff, was exclusively in the line of translation. He published several Russian versions of well-known foreign novels. As a man of letters, he was absolutely the child of a romantic interest in the poet Pouschkine. He has recorded the emotion with which he gazed at the poet when he was pointed out to him for the first time in the church of the Nikitsky monastery in Moscow. Several years later, at the shop of the publisher Smirdine, Gontcharoff was presented to Pouschkine, and from this time forth he was in the habit of meeting him frequently, particularly in the studio of Maikoff, the painter. At that time, Pouschkine was the centre of all the hopes and the enthusiasm of the youth of Russia. The news of the assassination of the poet, in 1837, produced a sort of despair among those whose aspirations he had encouraged, and whose thoughts he had led. Gontcharoff has written: "Never shall I forget the news of the death of Pouschkine. I was then a small employé in a public department. I had leisure enough to write a little, to translate, to study the poets, and to dabble in æsthetics. Winckelmann was my great hobby, but Pouschkine dominated everything. His works held the place of honour on the book-shelves of my modest room. Every line he had published had been meditated upon and felt by me. And suddenly they come and tell me that some one had killed him, that he exists no longer! At that moment I was seated at my desk in my office. I groped my way out into the corridor, and then, with my face to the wall, I covered my eyes with my hands and wept bitterly. I wept as a lad weeps who receives a message

that his mother is dead.... Three days later a portrait of Pouschkine appeared in the shop-windows, bearing these words, 'The fire is extinguished on the altar.' It was immediately seized and destroyed by the police." The story recalls that of Tennyson's boyish emotion at the news of the death of Byron.

To the influence of Pouschkine, romantic and inflammatory, succeeded that of Gogol, with his new naturalistic ideas. The publication of the first part of *Dead Sauls,* in 1842, was an epoch for Gontcharoff, as for so many others. But he was slow in finding confidence to write. It was not until 1847 that he published, in the columns of a St. Petersburg newspaper, *Obyknowennaia istoriia*, which is here for the first time presented to English readers as *A Common Story.* The novel enjoyed a very great success, and, in 1848, it was succeeded by a lighter and more comic sketch of *bureau* life in St. Petersburg, called *Ivan Savite Poddjabrin.* In 1852, the Russian Government suggested to Gontcharoff that he should accompany Admiral Pontiatine, in the capacity of private secretary, on a voyage around the world. To see foreign countries had always been the first desire of his heart, and he accepted the offer with enthusiasm. The special mission of the admiral was to proceed to Japan to negotiate a new treaty of commerce.

The tour, which occupied three years, closed with a land-journey across the steppes and mountains of Siberia.

The events of this memorable expedition were described by Gontcharoff in two large volumes, The Frigate "*Pallada*".

1856-57. To recover from the fatigue of his travels, Gontcharoff proceeded in 1857 to the baths of Marienbad, and there he wrote, in six weeks, the most famous of all his works, the novel called *Oblomoff.* It appeared in book-form in 1859. The rest of the novelist's life presented little that is of interest. In 1870, he published a third novel,' *Obryv* ("The Abyss"). In 1873, he was made chief director of the general post-office in St. Petersburg. He published a bibliographical and critical study of the radical and free-thinking critic, Belinsky, who died in 1847; his own *Souvenirs,* in 1879; a story, *Mark the Nihilist,* in 1886; and other minor contributions to literature. He died, in his seventy-ninth year, on the 28th of September, 1891.

At the time of the death of Gontcharoff, the distinguished critic, Michel Zagoulaieff, published a study of his work, from which I extract the following passages:

"More than forty years ago, replying to the question what was the position of Gontcharoff in Russian literary life, our great critic, Belinsky, with his astonishing prescience of the future, declared, after the publication of Gontcharoffs first novel, *A Common Story,* that the author of that book would never be anything but a great artist in words,' on account of the complete absence in him of all inclination to deal enthusiastically with any of the social questions of the day." We all know how hard Gontcharoff strove later on to protest against this verdict in a sort of *apologia* for his writings, entitled *Better Late than Never.* After having enriched the literature of Russia with three masterpieces, *A Common Story, Oblomoff,* and *The Abyss,* the great writer attempted to prove that these three beautiful books possessed more than mere literary merit, and that he too, like Tourgenieff, Dostoieffsky and Count Leo Tolstoi, had the right to be considered a commentator on the social life of his age. This interesting point has been the subject of much debate. There are those who are of opinion that the immortal type of Oblomoff is a synthesis of a certain condition of intelligent humanity as general as those of Don Quixote and of Hamlet. Others hold that in creating the hero of the most perfect of his three great novels, Gontcharoff has done no more than portray his own character, and that even in Russia this type is not

so universal as Dobroliouboff supposed when he created the word 'Oblomovism' to characterise the lack of energy supposed to be inherent in our national character....

"When *A Common Story* first appeared, we were passing through a period of transition, social as well as literary. The struggle between the new ideas and the ideas imposed on Russian society by the political *régime* which had been in force since 1825, was only beginning. A vague prescience of some change in the near future created among Russians an instinctive demand for something more than a mere platonic profession of beautiful sentiments. When Gontcharoff contrasted with the dreaming and sentimental hero of his first novel the man of action whom he has depicted in Peter Adouev, the public at once perceived the piquancy of the bitter irony of the uncle in face of the nonchalant and effeminate idealism of Alexandr Adouev. What was not at first perceived was that the sympathies of the author were really all on the side of the latter. That was more than Russian criticism, in those early days, could comprehend. The novel was written with an incomparable *maestria* of style, its author was proclaimed an 'artist' of the first order, and it was taken for granted that he was ironically indifferent to all that was fermenting in the Russian society of that time.

"Gontcharoff did not attempt to protest. On the contrary, when, several years later, he participated in the diplomatic mission of Admiral Pontiatine to Japan, he brought back; from his voyage around the world nothing but picturesque memorials, in which we may vainly seek for the least trace of a serious interest in the somewhat important political work to which he had been called to contribute. His beautiful work, *The Frigate* '*Pallada*,' is of deep interest in this connection, and we are astonished at the slight notice which has been given to it by the posthumous appreciators of the great writer.

"It was the novel called *Oblomoff* which raised the literary reputation of Gontcharoff to its height. Since the prose writings of Pouschkine, the Russian public had never been presented with a work of such technical perfection. The brilliant commentaries of Dobroliouboff, in spite of the paradoxical nature of that critic's explanation of the social range of the character of the hero of this novel, of the widespread presence of Oblomovism amongst us, placed Gontcharoff finally in the rank of those Russian writers who have understood their own age the best.

"When, many years later, *The Abyss* appeared, Dobroliouboff had passed away, and the views which he had defended with so much brilliant paradox were beginning to lose ground. This new novel was admired mainly for its literary qualities and no attempt was made to study its social aim. Gontcharoff was so much distressed at this, that, in spite of his inveterate hatred of literary polemics, he himself undertook to produce a commentary on his novel, and he published that *Better Late than Never,* of which we have already spoken.

"The great writer declared, in this essay, that his three novels had had but one and the same purpose, that of illustrating the struggle between the new spirit which came from the West in consequence of Peter the Great's reforms, and the instinctive resistance of the national Russian character against this stream of foreign influence. In spite of all his explanations, he scarcely made it plain why, after showing himself a resolute partisan of the new ideas in *A Common Story* and in *Oblomoff,* he came to place himself quite as firmly, in *The Abyss,* on the side of the past, as against the present and the future. His position, when he had explained it, remained as enigmatical as it was before.

"The only way in which this enigma is to be solved, is, we think, by examining the personality of Gontcharoff himself. It has generally been held that of all the authors of

the first order who adorned that literary Pleiad, of which ornaments he unquestionably was one of the purest and most splendid — Gontcharoff was also the most objective. He has always been represented as an impossible observer, disdainful even to indifference of the facts and the characters which he has depicted in his works. At the risk of seeming paradoxical, I venture to believe that this is a mistake, and that the basis of the three novels of the illustrious writer is nothing else than the permanent inward struggle between diametrically opposed sides of his own character. The two Adouevs of *A Common Story,* Oblomoff and Stoltz, Raisky and his old aunt in *The Abyss,* seem to me to be successive incarnations of the two contrasted facets of the soul of the man who created these types.

"By his temperament, Gontcharoff was all his life the typical representative of the national Russian *laisser-aller* against which his cultivated intelligence and his vast and varied knowledge energetically protested. This doubling of the type, so frequent with us Slavs, perpetually weighed down to the ground his great intellect and his beautiful soul. What will render immortal and for ever sympathetic to Russian readers the various works of this incomparable writer, is the constant recurrence in them of the most typical sides of our national character, the complexity of which is the real cause of all the incoherence of social life in Russia during nearly two centuries.

"When this is definitely understood and established, our critics will waste their time no longer in endeavouring to draw more or less ingenious parallels between Gontcharoff, on the one side, and Tourgenieff, Dostoieffsky and Tolstoi, on the other. The author of *Oblomoff* will take his place apart, and his works will be studied as a valuable testimony to a condition of mind which explains many of the historical faults which have been made in Russia during the last fifty years."

This lucid exposition of the place held by Gontcharoff among his contemporaries cannot, I think fail to be of service to those who make their first acquaintance with him in the pages of *A Common Story.*

EDMUND GOSSE.

CHAPTER I

IN THE VILLAGE of Grahae one summer day on the estate of Anna Pavlovna, a landowner of moderate means, every one in the house was up by daybreak, from its mistress to the house-dog Barbos.

But Anna Pavlovna's only son, Alexandr Fedoritch, was still sleeping the sound sleep of a boy of twenty; everyone else in the house was bustling and hurrying about. But they all walked on tip-toe and spoke in whispers, so as not to wake the young master. If any one made the least noise or spoke aloud, Anna Pavlovna would rush out at once like a lioness enraged and punish the indiscreet person with a severe rebuke or an abusive epithet, or, when her anger and her energy were equal to it, with a blow.

In the kitchen three servants were kept busy cooking on a scale fit for a dinner of ten persons, though the whole family consisted of no more than Anna Pavlovna and her son Alexandr Fedoritch. In the coach house they were rubbing and greasing the carriage. All were busy and were working with all their might. Barbos was the only one who was doing nothing, but even he took a share in the general activity in his own way. When a groom or coachman came near him or a maid ran by, he wagged his tail and sniffed the passing figure anxiously, while his eyes seemed to ask: "Are they ever going to tell me why we are all in such a bustle to-day?"

The bustle was because Anna Pavlovna was sending her son to Petersburg to get a post in the Civil Service there, or, as she herself expressed it, to see the world and show himself. A fatal day for her! This was why she was so broken-down and unhappy. Often in her distress she would open her mouth to give some direction, and would suddenly stop in the middle of a word, her voice failed and she turned aside, and wiped away her tears, or let them fall into the trunk which she was herself packing with Sashenka's linen.

Tears had long been gathering in her heart, they rose into her throat and choked her and were ready to burst out in torrents; but she was saving them up as it were for the leave-taking and did not often waste them drop by drop.

It was not only Anna Pavlovna who was grieved at the coming separation. Sashenka's valet, Yevsay, was also terribly distressed. He was to set off with his master to Petersburg, and had to leave the warmest corner in the house, a place on the stove in the room of Agrafena, the prime minister of Anna Pavlovna's household, who was also, a fact of prime importance to Yevsay, in charge of the keys of the stores. Behind the stove there was only room for two chairs and a table, which was set with tea, coffee, and eatables. Yevsay had long had a place behind the stove and in the heart of Agrafena. On the other chair she was sitting herself.

The relations of Agrafena and Yevsay were by now ancient history in the household. They, like every one else in the world, had been the subject of gossip and scandal, and then like every one else they had been dropped. Even their mistress had grown used to seeing them together, and for ten whole years they had been happy. Can many people out of all their lives count up ten years of happiness? And now the moment of parting was at hand. Good-bye to the warm corner, good-bye to Agrafena Ivanovna, no more playing cards, and coffee and vodka and liqueurs — good-bye to it all!

Yevsay sat in silence, sighing deeply.

Agrafena, with a frown on her face, was bustling about her duties. She showed her sorrow in her own peculiar way. She poured out tea to-day with exasperation, and instead of giving the first cup of strong tea to her mistress as usual, she poured it away, as though she could not bear any one to get the benefit of it, and she took all reproof with stolid indifference.

She boiled the coffee too long, the cream was burnt, the cups slipped out of her hands. She could not put the tray down on the table without a crash; she could not shut the cupboard or the doors without slamming them. She did not shed tears, but was angry with everything and everybody instead. This, however, was always a prominent characteristic of hers. She was not often contented; things were mostly not to her taste; she used to grumble and complain of everything. But at this moment, so fatal for her, her character showed its full capabilities. More than anything she seemed to be angry with Yevsay.

"Agrafena Ivanovna!" he said in a sad subdued voice, quite out of keeping with his tall stout figure.

"Well, why did you sit down there, you booby?" she asked, just as though he had taken a seat there for the first time. "Get along with you, I want to get out a towel."

"Ah, Agrafena Ivanovna!" he repeated lazily, sighing and getting up from his chair, and then at once falling back into it when she had taken the towel.

"He can do nothing but whimper! Here the fellow sticks! Good Lord, what a nuisance, there's no getting rid of him!"

And she dropped her spoon with a loud clank, into the slop-basin.

"Agrafena!" broke in suddenly from the other room, "are you out of your senses? Don't you know that Sashenka is resting? Have you come to blows, or what is it, at parting with your sweetheart?"

"Mustn't stir for you — have to sit like the dead!" Agrafena hissed like a snake, wiping a cup with both hands as though she would have liked to have broken it to pieces.

"Good-bye, good-bye," said Yevsay, with a colossal sigh, "it's the last day, Agrafena Ivanovna!"

"And thank God for it! The devil's welcome to you for all I care, there will be more room. There — get along, one can't stir a step; you straddle your long legs all over the place!"

He touched her on the shoulder; how she answered him! He sighed again, but did not move from his place, and it would have been quite needless if he had; Agrafena did not really wish him to go. Yevsay knew this, and was not uneasy.

"Who will take my place, I wonder?" he asked always with a sigh.

"The devil!" she answered abruptly.

"So long as it's not Proshka. But who will play cards with you?"

"Well, if it were Proshka, what does it matter to you?" she asked angrily.

Yevsay got up.

"Don't play with Proshka, for mercy's sake, don't," he said anxiously, and almost menacingly.

"But who can prevent me? You, pray, you scarecrow?"

"My darling, Agrafena Ivanovna!" he began imploringly, seizing her round the waist, I should have said, if there had been any sign of a waist about her.

She responded to his embrace by a sharp elbow in his chest.

"My darling, Agrafena Ivanovna!" he repeated, "will Proshka love you as I do? Look at him; what an impudent fellow he is; not a woman in the house he does not

make up to. But me — ah! you are the only woman in the world for me. If it were not the master's will — oh!"

He choked at this point, and waved his hand in the air.

Agrafena could hold out no longer; even her sorrow at last found vent in tears.

"But will you go away from me, you villain?" she said, weeping. "What are you chattering about, stupid? Me keep company with Proshka! Can't you see for yourself that you can never get a word of sense out of him? He can do nothing but try to put his stupid arms round one."

"Did he do that? Oh, the brute! And you never told me! I'd have shown him."

"Let him try it on! Am I the only petticoat in the house? Me keep company with Proshka! What an idea! Even to sit by him makes me sick, the pig! And you have always to be on the look out with him, or he's trying to gobble up something on the sly; but you don't notice it, of course!"

"If such a thing should happen, Agrafena Ivanovna — the devil's too strong for us, you know — better let Grishka have my place here; at least he's a civil fellow and hard working: he didn't sneer—"

"There's an idea now!" Agrafena fell upon him. "Why do you foist some one on me, as if I were like — like that! Go away, I say. It's not the likes of me to go and throw myself into any one else's arms. Only with you, you wretch, the devil truly led me into temptation, and I repent it. The very idea!"

"God bless you for your goodness! it's a weight off my heart!" Yevsay cried.

"You're glad!" she shrieked savagely again; "it is a good thing you're glad at something — be as glad as you like."

And her lips grew white with anger. Both were silent.

"Agrafena Ivanovna," said Yevsay timidly, after a short pause.

"Well, what now?"

"Why, I was quite forgetting; not a drop nor a morsel of anything have I tasted this morning."

"Oh, that's what you're after."

"I couldn't eat for sorrow, my dear."

She took from the bottom shelf of the cupboard, from behind a loaf of sugar, a glass of vodka and two huge slices of bread and ham. All this had long before been made ready for him by her own careful hand.

She threw them to him, as one would hardly throw a bone to a dog.

One piece fell on the floor.

"Here, then, ready for you! yes! for you, may it choke you. But hush, don't munch for all the house to hear!"

She turned away from him with an expression of simulated aversion, but he slowly began to eat, looking doubtfully at Agrafena and covering his mouth with one hand.

Meanwhile the coachman appeared at the gates with the three horses, and took them under the shelter of the stable. Removing his cap, he took out of it a dirty towel and rubbed the sweat off his face. Anna Pavlovna saw him from the window, and she turned pale. Her knees trembled under her, and her arms hung limp, although she had been expecting it. Recovering herself with an effort, she called for Agrafena.

"Go on tiptoe, quietly, and see whether Sashenka is asleep," she said. "He will sleep too long, dear heart, perhaps, and it is the last day; so I shall see nothing of him. But no! you can't do it. You'll be sure to thump into the room like a cow. I had better go myself."

And she went.

“Go on, then, you’re not a cow, I suppose” grumbled Agrafena to herself. “A cow, indeed! you’d be glad of a few more such cows!”

Alexandr Fedoritch himself met Anna Pavlovna on her way, a fair young man in all the bloom of youth, health and strength. He said good-morning cheerfully to his mother, but suddenly catching sight of the trunk and packages he seemed rather disturbed, walked away to the window in silence, and began to draw with his finger on the window-pane. After a minute he spoke again to his mother and looked unconcernedly, even with pleasure, at the preparations for the journey.

“What made you sleep so late, dearie?” said Anna Pavlovna, “isn’t your face a little swollen? Let me moisten your eyes and cheeks with some rose-water.”

“No, I don’t want any, mamma.”

“What will you like for breakfast? Would tea be best or coffee? I have ordered some beef cutlets and sour cream fritters — what will you have?”

“It’s all the same to me, mamma.”

Anna Pavlovna went on packing the linen, then stopped and gazed at her son with a look of anguish.

“Sasha!” she said, after a pause.

“What do you want, mamma?”

She hesitated to speak, as if she were afraid of something.

“Where are you going, my dear one, and why?” she asked at last in a low voice.

“How, where, mamma? To Petersburg — why? — why to—”

“Listen, Sasha,” she said with great emotion, placing her hand on his shoulder, evidently with the intention of making a last appeal; “it is not too late; think again, and stop.”

“Stop! but how is it possible? Look, my clothes are packed,” he said, not knowing what to say.

“Your clothes packed, but there! — there! — see, now they are unpacked.”

In three armfuls she had emptied all out of the trunk.

“How can it be so, mamma? I am all ready — and to change so suddenly — what will they say?”

He looked distressed.

“It is not so much for my own sake as for yours, that I persuade you not to go. Why are you going? To try and find happiness. But have you not been happy here, I wonder? Does not your mother think of nothing else all day long but how to gratify every wish of yours? Of course, at your age now, your mother’s devotion alone is not enough for your happiness: and I don’t expect it. Well, look round you; every one is eager to please you. And Maria Karpovna’s daughter, Sonushka? — There — you blushed. Ah, my darling, how she loves you — God bless her! They say she has not slept for three nights!”

“There! Mamma! how you talk! She is so—”

“Yes, yes! as though I don’t see. Ah, and, by-the-by, she has taken your handkerchiefs to hem. ‘I won’t let anyone else do them,’ she said, ‘I will mark them myself.’ You see. What more would you have? Stay!”

He listened in silence, hanging his head and playing with the tassel of his dressing-gown.

“What will you find in Petersburg?” she continued. “Do you think you will find life as easy there as here? Oh, my dear, God knows what you may have to bear and put up with; you will suffer cold and hunger and want. There are plenty of bad people everywhere, but you won’t meet with good ones so easily. As for social consideration, whether you are in town or country, you will be just as much a person of

consideration. Suppose you don't see Petersburg society — still you may think yourself the best in the land living here; and so it is in everything, my dear one. You are a well-educated, fine, good-looking fellow. I am an old woman, and the only happiness left me in this world is the sight of you. You spellmight marry, God might bless you with children, and I could nurse them and you could live without troubles or anxiety, a peaceful tranquil life, envying no man — but there, perhaps things may not go well — perhaps you will remember my words. Sashenka! stay!"

He coughed and sighed, but did not utter a word.

"And look out here," she continued, opening the door on to the balcony; "are not you sorry yourself to be leaving such a home?"

From the balcony came a fresh scent. Round the house right into the distance stretched the garden, full of old lime trees, thick wild roses, service-berries, and bushes of lilac. And among the trees were beds of bright-coloured flowers); and here and there, little paths ran zigzagging in and out, while in the distance was a softly splashing lake, on one side golden with the rays of the morning sun and smooth as glass, on the other as dark-blue as the sky mirrored in it, and stirred by faint ripples. And then an amphitheatre formed by the fields of waving corn and bordered by a dark forest.

Anna Pavlovna, screening her eyes from the sun with one hand, with the other pointed out every object in turn to her son.

"Look!" she said, "how abundantly God has blessed our meadows! There, from that field of rye alone we shall harvest four thousand bushels; and there is the wheat and the buckwheat: only the buckwheat is not as good this year as last; it looks as though it will be poor. And the forest too! how the forest has grown! Think how great is the wisdom of God! The fuel from our share we shall sell for a thousand at least. And the game, too! And you know all this is yours, my dear; I am only your steward. Look at the lake, how splendid! It is really heavenly! The fish are in shoals there; we only need to buy sturgeon; the carp and the perch and the gremilles are simply swarming, we have enough for ourselves and our people as well. Over there are your cows and horses grazing. Here you alone are master of all, but in Petersburg I daresay everybody will think himself as good as you are. And you want to run away from all this plenty, you don't even know what you are running to — to your ruin perhaps. God help you! Do stay!"

He was silent.

"But you are not listening," she said. "What are you looking at so steadily?"

He pointed with his hand silently and thoughtfully into the distance. Anna Pavlovna looked and her face fell.

There between the fields ran a path twisting like a snake and disappearing into the forest, the path to the promised land — to Petersburg.

Anna Pavlovna was silent for some minutes, trying to recover herself.

"That's how it is, then!" she said at last, sadly. "Well, my dear, God bless you! Go, then, if you are so bent on it. I will not oppose it. You shall not say anyway that your mother monopolised your young life."

Poor mother! This is all the recompense for your love! Was not this what you expected?

Ah, but mothers expect no recompense. A mother's love is without reason, without power of choice. If you are great, renowned, proud, handsome, if your name is on men's lips, and your exploits make a noise in the world, then your old mother's head is trembling with happiness, she weeps and laughs and prays long and fervently. And the son, for the most part, does not even think of sharing his triumphs with his mother.

If you are poor in mind and spirit, if nature has stamped you with the stigma of deformity, and the pangs of disease torture you body and soul, or if men spurn you from them and there is no place for you among them — the more place for you in your mother's heart. She clasps her misshapen, deficient child all the closer to her heart, and her prayers are still longer and more fervent.

How can we blame Alexandr for egoism, because he was determined to leave home? He was twenty. From his nursery life had been all smiles for him — his mother idolised him and spoiled him, as mothers do spoil an only son; his nurses all sang to him from his cradle that he would walk in gold and never know sorrow; his teachers declared that he would do something, and, in addition to the adoration of his own household, the daughter of their neighbour smiled on him. And the old cat, Vaska, seemed to be more amiable to him than to any one else in the house.

Sorrow, tears, trouble — all that he knew of only by hearsay, as we know of some disease, which has not appeared openly, but which lurks hidden away somewhere in men. So the future presented itself to him in rainbow colours. Something beckoned him into the distance, but what precisely, that he could not tell. Seductive phantoms glimmered before him, but he could never catch a close view of them; he could hear mingled sounds — now the voice of glory, now the voice of love — and all moved him to a sweet unrest.

The world of his home soon seemed narrow to him, Nature, and his mother's fondness, the devotion of his nurses and of all the household, his soft bed, and dainty food and purring cats — all these comforts, so dearly prized in the decline of life, he would have gladly exchanged for the unknown, full of alluring and mysterious fascination, Even his love for Sophia — a first, soft, rosy love — did not restrain him. What was this love to him? He dreamed of a colossal passion which should achieve great exploits and triumph over every obstacle. He loved Sophia meanwhile with a small love while waiting for the greater. He dreamed, too, of great deeds in his country's service. He studied many subjects and diligently. On his certificate it was recorded that he had mastered some dozen sciences and half-dozen languages, ancient and modern. Above all he dreamed of making a name as a writer. His verses were the admiration of his school-fellows. Before him stretched a number of paths; and they seemed each better than the other. He did not know into which to throw himself. Only the straight path was hidden from his eyes; had he seen it, even now perhaps he would not have gone away.

How could he stay? His mother wished it — that was quite another matter and very natural. In her heart all feelings had died away except one — love for her son, and it clutched feverishly at this last object. Except for him what was left for her? Nothing but death. It has long been an accepted fact that a woman's heart cannot live without love.

Alexandr had been spoiled, but was not demoralised by his home life. He was so happily formed by Nature that his mother's love and the adoration of all around him only influenced him in a good direction, prematurely awakening, for example, his sympathetic feelings, and inspiring in him an excessive confidence in every one. This very fact perhaps tended to kindle ambition in him, but ambition in itself is only a mould; all will depend on what is the substance you pour into it.

By far the greatest danger for him was the fact that his mother, for all her devotion to him, could not give him a true view of life, and did not prepare him for the struggle which awaited him and awaits every man in his turn. But this would have needed a master hand, a clear intellect, and a fund of great experience not bounded by the narrow provincial horizon. It would have needed some one who was even able to love

him rather less, not to think of him every minute, not to remove out of his way every care and every obstacle, not to weep and to suffer in his place even in his childhood, so as to enable him to feel the approach of difficulties for himself, to meet them with his own forces, and to think for his own future — in a word, to understand that he is a man. How was Anna Pavlovna to know all this, still more to put it into practice? The reader has seen what she was. Would he not like to see more of her?

She had already forgotten her son's selfishness. Alexandr Fedoritch found her engaged in packing a second time his clothes and linen. In the bustle and the preparations for the journey she had apparently completely forgotten her sorrow.

"Here, Sashenka, notice well where I put things,'' she said. "Below everything, at the bottom of the trunk, the sheets, a dozen. Look, is it right in the list?"

"Yes, mamma."

"All with your mark, you see. A. F. A., all our darling Sonushka. Without her our stupid creatures would not have been ready for a long time. What next? Ah, the pillow-cases. One, two, three, four — yes, all the dozen here. Here are your shirts, three dozen — what linen! Look at it — it's Dutch make — I drove myself to the shop, to Vassili Yassilitch's; he brought out the three best pieces he had. Mind you count them over by the list, dear boy, every time you get them home from the laundress; they are all bran new. You won't see many such shirts in Petersburg, very likely they will change them; there are such dishonest creatures to be sure, who have no fear of God. Socks — twenty-two pairs. Do you know what I have thought of? To put your pocket-book with your money in a sock. You will not need any till you get to Petersburg — so God grant, if anything should happen, they may rummage but they will not find it. And the letter to your uncle I have put there, too; how delighted he will be to be sure! Here's seventeen years gone by and we've never sent a word to one another — that's a long time. Here are your neckties, and here are the handkerchiefs; one half-dozen is still with Sonushka. Don't tear your handkerchiefs, my darling; they are all good cambric. I bought them at Mehëev's at two and a quarter roubles a yard. Now, that's all the linen, Now your clothes. But where is Yevsay? Why isn't he looking on? Yevsay!"

Yevsay came lazily into the room.

"What are your orders?" he asked still more lazily.

"What are my orders?" repeated Anna Pavlovna angrily, "Why aren't you looking where I pack the things? But when you want anything on the journey, you will go and turn everything topsy-turvy. He can't tear himself from his sweetheart, such a treasure! The day is long enough, you will have plenty of time. Is this how you mean to look after your master in Petersburg? You had better be careful. Look here: these are the dress clothes; you see where I lay them? And you, Sashenka, be careful of them; don't wear them every day; the cloth cost sixteen roubles a yard. When you go to see the best people wear it and don't sit down all anyhow, like your auntie, who never could sit down on an empty chair or sofa, but was bound to go and plump down where some one had put a hat or some such thing; the other day she sat down on a saucer of jam — such a mess she made! When you go out rather more quietly wear this coat here. Now your waistcoats — one, two, three, four. Two pairs of trousers. Well, there are clothes to last you the next three years. Ah! I am tired and no mistake, the whole morning I have been on my legs. You can go, Yevsay. Let us talk a little of something else. Soon our guests will be here, and then there will be no time." She sat down on the sofa and made her son sit down beside her.

"Well, Sasha," she said after a short silence, "you are now going to a strange land."

"A strange land! Petersburg! How you talk, mamma."

“Wait a little, wait a little, hear what I want to say! God alone knows what awaits you there, what you will meet with, good and bad. I trust He, our Father in Heaven, will guard you; and you, my dear, above all, don’t forget Him; remember that without faith there is no salvation anywhere or in anything. You will take a good position! there, you will mix with people of consequence — indeed, we are as good as anybody; your father was a nobleman, a major — all the same, humble yourself before the Lord God; pray both in good fortune and in bad; and not like the proverb—’ the peasant does not cross himself till he hears the thunder.’ There are men, who, while they have good luck, don’t even go to church, and then when they come to grief, they will put up candles at a rouble a piece, and will give alms to the poor — that is a great sin. And while we are talking of the poor — don’t waste money on them too often, don’t give away too much. Why should you spoil them? They won’t think any the more of you for it. They will spend it in drink and only laugh at you. You have a soft heart, I know; you would be ready, I dare say, to give away even a sixpenny piece. No, that’s not necessary; God will provide! Will you visit the house of God? Will you go every Sunday to Mass?”

She sighed.

Alexandr was silent. He remembered that while he was studying at the university and living in the capital of the province, he had not been very zealous in going to church, and in the country it was only from desire to please his mother that he had accompanied her to mass. He was ashamed to tell a lie. His mother understood his silence and sighed again.

“Well, I won’t compel you,” she continued, “you are a young man — how could you be as zealous in the house of God as an old woman like me? Perhaps your official duties now will hinder you, or you will be staying late at some grand houses and will oversleep yourself. God will have pity on your youth. Don’t be troubled; you have a mother; she will not oversleep. So long as there is a drop of blood left in my body, so long as my tears are not dried up in my eyes, and God has compassion on my sins, I will crawl, if I have not the strength to walk, along the road to church. I will give my last breath, I will shed my last tear for you, my dear. My prayers shall win you health and position and decorations and heavenly and earthly blessings. Can it be that He, our Father in Heaven, will despise the prayers of a poor old woman? For myself I want nothing. Let Him take everything from me, health, life, sight — only may He grant you every pleasure, every happiness and good—”

She could not finish. Tears began to fall from her eyes, Alexandr jumped up from his place. “Mamma,” he said.

“There, sit down, sit down!” she replied, hastily wiping away her tears. “I have still a great deal more to talk to you about. What was I going to say? It’s gone out of my head. You see what a memory I have. Ah! keep the fasts, my dear. That is a great thing! On Wednesdays and Fridays, God will pardon it, but Lent — God forbid! Look at Mikhailo Mikhailitch, he thought himself an enlightened man, but what happened to him? Festival and fast alike — he eat as greedily as ever. It positively makes my hair stand on end. He gave to the poor to be sure, but was his charity acceptable to the Lord? They say he once gave a sovereign to an old man; he took it to be sure, but turned his back and spat. All bowed to him, and God knows what they said to his face, but behind his back they crossed themselves when they thought of him, as though he were a devil.”

Alexandr listened with some impatience and gazed from time to time out of window at the distant road.

She was silent for a minute.

“Take care of your health before all things,” she continued. “If you are seriously ill — which God forbid! — write. I will make a great effort and come to you. Who would look after you in Petersburg? Why they would even seize the opportunity to rob you in your sickness. Don’t go into the streets after dark; keep away from ferocious-looking people. Take care of your money — save it for a rainy day. Spend it reasonably. From money — the accursed thing comes everything good and evil. Don’t be extravagant; don’t waste it on needless whims. You will receive from me, without fail, two thousand five hundred roubles a year. Two thousand five hundred roubles is no small matter. Don’t spend it on any kind of luxury, nothing of that sort, only don’t deny yourself anything you can have; lf you want any dainty, don’t grudge the money. Don’t give way to wine; ah, it is the greatest enemy of mankind! And,” here she dropped her voice, “beware of women! I know them. There are creatures so shameless, that they will throw themselves on your neck when they see such a —” She looked lovingly at her son.

“That’s enough, mamma; isn’t it time I had my breakfast?” he asked almost with vexation.

“Directly — directly — now one word more. Don’t set your heart on the wife of another,” she went on hurriedly, “that is a great sin!— ‘Do not covet your neighbour’s wife’ is written in the Scriptures. If any woman there tries to get hold of you — to marry you — God forbid! — don’t dare to think of it! They will be ready to entrap you, when they see you have money and are good-looking. I daresay at your chiefs or at some other distinguished and wealthy grandee’s, they will set their caps at you and try to make a match for their daughters. Well, then, it might be, only write to me. I will come somehow and will see that they are not palming off just any girl on you, simply to get rid of her, some old maid or poor creature. Every one will try to make up to a match like you. But if you yourself fall in love, and she proves to be a good girl — well then,” here she lowered her voice, “Sonushka need not be considered.” (The old woman in her love for her son was ready even to act against her conscience.) “After all, what was Maria Karpovna thinking about? Her daughter is no match for you. A country girl! There are others besides her who would be glad to get hold of you.”

“Sophia — no, mamma — I shall never forget her,” said Alexandr.

“Well, well, my dear, never mind, I only mentioned it. Work a little in your situation, come home here and then, as God sees fit — there are always plenty of girls. If you don’t forget her — well, then. But if—”

She wanted to say more, but had not the heart; and bending to his ear she asked softly, “And will you remember — your mother?”

“See what you’ve worked yourself up to,” he interrupted, “please let them serve what you have, omelet or whatever it is. Forget you; how could you imagine such a thing? May God punish me!”

“Hush, hush, Sasha,” she broke in quickly; “why are you calling down such things on your head? No, no, whatever happens, if such a thing comes to pass, let me suffer alone. You are young, you are only beginning life, you will have friends, you will marry — a young woman will fill the place of your mother and of every one for you. No, may God bless you as I bless you!”

She kissed him on the forehead and so ended her sermon. “But why is it nobody comes?” she said. “Not Maria Karpovna, nor Anton Ivanitch nor the priest are come, The mass must be over by now, I should think. Ah, here is some one coming! Anton Ivanitch, I fancy — yes, it is he; speak of the devil—”

Who does not know Anton Ivanitch? He is a Wandering Jew. He has existed always, everywhere, from the most ancient times, and has never become extinct. He was present at the Greek and Roman symposiums, and certainly tasted the fatted calf killed by the happy father on the return of the Prodigal Son.

Among us in Russia he takes various forms. The one in question had twelve serfs mortgaged over and over again; he lived almost in a hut, a kind of queer building resembling a loghouse — the entrance somewhere behind over some timber, close up to the hedge; but for twelve years he had been continually declaring that in the following spring he would start building a new house. He kept no housekeeper in his house. There was not a man of his acquaintance who had dined, supped or drunk a cup of tea in his house, but also there was not a man with whom he had not dined, supped or drunk tea fifty times a year. In days gone by Anton Ivanitch used to walk about in loose pantaloons and a full skirted overcoat, now he wears on weekdays a surtout and trousers, on holidays, a frockcoat of what sort of cut God only knows. In figure he is fat, because he has no sorrows, no cares, no emotions, though he pretends that he spends his whole life in the sorrows and cares of others; but it is well-known that the sorrows and cares of others do not make us thin; that is a fact admitted on all hands.

In reality Anton Ivanitch was never of use to any one, yet without him not a single ceremony took place, not a wedding, nor a funeral. He was at all the formal dinners and evening parties and at all family gatherings; no one would stir a step without him. You may imagine perhaps that he was very useful, giving good advice here, arranging some difficulty there. Not a bit of it! No-one had ever entrusted him with anything of the kind; he understood nothing, could do nothing; could not manage a matter in the law courts, could not act as go-between or mediator, could do absolutely nothing.

But yet they did commission him sometimes to call in and take a polite message from such a one to such a one, and he takes it without fail and seizes the opportunity to get a breakfast there; or to inform such a one that certain papers have been received, but their exact nature they would not confide to him; or to take somewhere a little jar of honey or a handful of seeds with the precept “not to spill and not to spoil;” or to carry congratulations on some one’s birthday. And they employ Anton Ivanitch, too, in such matters as they consider it unsuitable to leave to a servant. “We can’t send Petrushka, he would be sure to make a mistake about it. No, better let Anton Ivanitch go with it! It would never do to send a man; so and so would be offended, better get Anton Ivanitch to go!”

So every one would have been astonished if he were nowhere to be seen at a dinner or a supper. “But where is Anton Ivanitch?” every one would be sure to ask in surprise. “What’s wrong with him? — why isn’t he here?” And the dinner would hardly seem a dinner at all.

Anton Ivanitch came in and took Anna Pavlovna’s hand. “Good-morning, ma’am, good-morning, Anna Pavlovna! I have the honour of congratulating you on something new.”

“What is that, Anton Ivanitch?” inquired Anna Pavlovna, looking at herself from head to foot.

“Why the little bridge at the gates! You must have only just had it put up. Why, I listened — the planks didn’t dance under my feet. I looked, and it was new!”

He always used when he met acquaintances to congratulate them on something or other, either on Lent, or on the spring, or on the autumn; if, after a spell of warm weather, frost had set in, then he would congratulate them on the frost, if the frost had just broken up, then on the thaw.

On this occasion there was nothing of this kind to fix on, but he still managed to find something.

"Kind regards to you from Alexandra Vassilievna, Matrena Mihailovna and Piotr Sergeïtch," said he.

"I thank you sincerely, Anton Ivanitch! Are their children well?"

"Yes, thanks be to God. I bring you the blessing of the church, the good father is just on my heels. But have you heard, ma'am, our good Semen Arkhipytch?"

"What is it?" asked Anna Pavlovna, in dismay.

"Ah, he has taken leave of us for ever."

"You don't say it? When did it happen?"

"Yesterday morning. They sent to let me know in the evening; a lad galloped up; and I set off and did not sleep all night. They were all in tears; I had to console them and see to everything; every one in the house was quite overcome, nothing but weeping. I was all alone."

"Merciful heavens," said Anna Pavlovna, shaking her head, "such is life! But how could it happen? Only this week he sent us his greetings."

"Yes, ma'am — ah! but he had been ailing a long while, the old man was a good age, the wonder is that he had never been laid up till now."

"A good age? He was only a year older than my poor husband. Well, God's peace be with him!" said Anna Pavlovna, crossing herself. "I am grieved for poor Fedosia Petrovna, she is left with little children on her hands, it's a serious matter — five, and almost all little girls. And when is the funeral to be?"

"To-morrow."

"Ah, every heart has its own sorrow, Anton Ivanitch, here am I seeing my son off."

"There's no help for it, Anna Pavlovna, we are all mortal; 'man is born to sorrow,' is written in the Scriptures." Well, don't be vexed with me for distressing you a little, let us sorrow together; you love us like one of our own family."

"Ah, Anna Pavlovna! and whom could I love as I do you? Have I many friends like you? You know how precious you are. I have so many cares, and that reminds me of my building. Only yesterday I was disputing all the morning with the contractor, but somehow we could not agree on anything. Yet how, thought I, am I to keep away? What, thought I, will she do without me? herself!"

"God reward you, Anton Ivanitch, for not forgetting us! And, indeed, I am not myself; my head is in such a whirl. I can see nothing; my throat is sore with crying. I beg you to take a little to eat; you must be tired and hungry."

"I thank you sincerely. I confess that I had a drop at Piotr Sergeïtch's as I was passing and took a mouthful with him. But that is no hindrance. The father is coming; let him give the benediction. Yes, here he is on the stairs!" The priest came in. Maria Karpovna, too, arrived with her daughter, a plump and rosy girl, with a smile and tearful eyes. The eyes and the whole expression of face of Sophia said plainly: "I will love simply without caprice, I will be married like a nursemaid, and will obey my husband in everything and never think I know better than he; indeed, and how could one know better than one's husband? it would be a sin. I will be diligent in housekeeping and sewing; I will bear him half-a-dozen children, and will suckle them, tend them, dress them and make their clothes." The plumpness and brilliance of her cheeks and the fine contours of her throat confirmed the promise of robust motherhood. But the tears in her eyes and her pathetic smile lent her at this moment a more romantic interest.

Before anything else they listened to a prayer, for which Anton Ivanitch called in the domestics, lighted the candle, and took the book from the priest, when he had

finished reading it, and handed it to the deacon, and afterwards poured the holy water into a little flask and put it into his pocket, saying “That’s for Agafea Nikitishnya.” They sat down to table. Except Anton Ivanitch and the priest, they could hardly eat a morsel, but to make up for this, Anton Ivanitch did full justice to the Homeric breakfast. Anna Pavlovna kept weeping and stealthily wiping her eyes.

“Don’t keep on so, ma’am,” said Anton Ivanitch with assumed vexation, pouring out some liqueur for himself. “Why, are you sending him to certain death, do you imagine?” Then he drank up half the liqueur and smacked his lips.

“What liqueur! What an aroma it has! Ah, ma’am, you wouldn’t find such liqueur anywhere in the district!” he said, with an expression of great pleasure.

“It is no more than thr-ee-ee years old!” said Anna Pavlovna, sobbing, “it has — only to-day — been uncorked for you.”

“Ah, Anna Pavlovna, it makes me ill to see you, began Anton Ivanitch again, “I don’t know what you deserve.”

“But only imagine, Anton Ivanitch, an only son, and he going out of my sight; it will kill me and there will be no one to bury me.”

“And what do we count for? What? Am I a stranger or what? And why in such a hurry to die? More likely to be married than that — I would dance at the wedding. But do give over crying.”

“I cannot, Anton Ivanitch, indeed I cannot; I don’t know myself why my tears will come.”

“The idea of keeping such a young man shut up! Let him have his freedom, he will find his wings, and then he will do wonders; there he will gain a position.”

“Good luck to your words! And why have you taken so little pie? Take some more.”

“Yes, I will have some; just this piece. To your health, Alexandr Fedoritch! A lucky journey, and come home quickly and get married! Why do you blush, Sophia Vassilievna?” —

“I? — oh, no. I’m so—”

“Ah, young people, young people — he! he! he!”

“In your company one cannot feel one’s sorrow, Anton Ivanitch,” said Anna Pavlovna, “you know so well how to comfort one. God give you health! But do take a little liqueur.”

“I will drink a little, ma’am, I will indeed; who would not drink at such a leave-taking!”

The breakfast came to an end. The coachman had long ago packed the carriage. They brought it round to the steps. The servants ran about one after another. One carried a trunk, another a bundle, a third a little bag, and then ran back after something else. Like flies round a drop of syrup, the servants clustered round the carriage, and every one wanted to have a hand in it.

“Better lay the trunk so,” said one, “and here the hamper with the provisions.”

“And where are they to put their legs then?” answered the other, “the trunk’s better lengthways, and the hamper we can fix alongside.”

“The feather bed will roll off, if the trunk goes lengthways; better across. What next? Were the slippers packed?”

“I don’t know. Who packed them?”

“I didn’t. Go and see whether they are still there upstairs.”

“You go yourself.”

“And why not you? I haven’t time!”

“Here, don’t forget this,” screamed a girl, holding up a small parcel above her head.

“Give it here!”

“Stuff this in somehow into the trunk, it’s been forgotten to the last,” said another, jumping on the steps and handing in a brush and comb.

“Where can one stuff it now?” cried the stout valet angrily to her. “Get away with you, you see the trunk is at the very bottom.”

“It’s the mistress’s orders; doesn’t matter a straw to me!”

“Well, give it here, look sharp; we can put it here in the pocket at the side.”

The shaft horse continually lifted and shook his head. The bell every time gave a shrill tinkle, reminding one of partings, but the trace horses stood thoughtfully, their heads lowered, as though they understood all the charms of the journey which lay before them, and sometimes lashed their tails or thrust out an underlip at the shaft horse. At last the fatal minute came. There was another little prayer offered up.

“Be seated, be seated, all of you!” was Anton Ivanitch’s order. “Pray sit down, Alexandr Fedoritch; and you, Yevsay, sit down. Sit down, sit down!” And he himself just sat for a second on the edge of a chair. “Now let us go, in God’s name.”

At this point Anna Pavlovna broke down and fell upon Alexandr’s neck.

“Farewell, farewell, my dear,” was heard among her sobs. “Shall I see you again?” Nothing more could be distinguished. At this moment the tinkle of another troika-bell was heard; a telega flew into the court, drawn by three horses. From the telega leaped out a young man, covered with dust, who rushed into the room and threw himself on Alexandr’s neck.

“Pospyeloff!” “Adouev!” they exclaimed, at the same instant clasping each other in an embrace.

“From where — how — have you come?”

“From home. I have been galloping day and night, on purpose to say good-bye to you.”

“Friend, friend! true friend!” said Adouev with tears in his eyes. “To journey 150 miles to say good-bye! Oh, there is friendship in the world! For life, isn’t it?” said Alexandr, passionately clasping his friend’s hand and falling into his arms.

“Till death,” he replied, pressing his hand still more warmly as he returned his embrace.

“Write to me!”

“Yes, and you too write.”

Anna Pavlovna did not know how to make enough of Pospyeloff. The departure was delayed for half an hour. At last they were ready.

All went on foot as far as the wood. Sophia and Alexandr seized their chance, while passing through a dark passage, to throw themselves in each other’s arms.

“Sasha, dear Sasha!”

“Sonitchka!” they stammered, and their words were lost in a kiss.

“You will forget me there?” she said tearfully.

“Oh, how little you know me! I shall come back; believe me, and never another—”

“Here take this quickly; it is my hair and a ring.”

He quickly put both in his pocket.

First walked Anna Pavlovna with her son and Pospyeloff,’ then Maria Karpovna and her daughter, and lastly the priest and Anton Ivanitch. At some distance followed the carriage. The coachman could scarcely hold in the horses. All the servants surrounded Yevsay at the gates.

“Good-bye, Yevsay Ivanitch; good-bye, old boy, don’t forget us!” was heard on all sides.

“Good-bye, brothers, good-bye, don’t remember ill against me.”

“Good-bye, Yevsushka, good-bye, my darling,” said his mother, hugging him. “Here is a holy image for you; it is my blessing. Remember the faith, Yevsav. Don’t give way to drink or thieving; serve the master faithfully and well. Good-bye, good-bye!”

She hid her face in her apron and went away.

“Good-bye, mother,” said Yevsay lazily.

A little girl of twelve rushed up to him.

“Say good-bye to your little sister!” said an old woman.

“And where have you come from?” said Yevsay, kissing her, “well, good-bye, good-bye! Run home now to the hut, bare-legs.”

Agrafena stood last of all, apart from the others. Her face was livid.

“Good-bye, Agrafena Ivanovna!” said Yevsay, slowly, raising his voice and holding out his hand to her.

She let him embrace her, but did not respond to his embrace, only her face worked.

“Here’s something for you!” she said, taking a little bag of something from under her apron and thrusting it upon him. “Well of course you will walk out with the Petersburg girls, there!” she said, with a side-long glance at him. And in that glance was apparent all her suffering and her jealousy.

“I walk out, I?” began Yevsay. “God blast me, strike me blind, may I sink into the earth, if I do any such thing there.”

“All right, all right!” muttered Agrafena, incredulously, “but inside you — ugh!”

“Ah, I’d almost forgotten!” said Yevsay, taking from his pocket a greasy pack of cards. “For a keepsake, Agrafena Ivanovna, to you; you know you could not get any here.”

She stretched out her hand.

“Give it to me, Yevsay Ivanitch!” screamed Proshka out of the crowd.

“You! I’ll be damned before I give it to you,” and he put the cards into his pocket.

“But give them to me, stupid!” said Agrafena.

“No, Agrafena Ivanovna, you may do as you like, but I won’t give you them; you would play with him. Good-bye!”

Without looking round he waved his hand and slowly moved off to the carriage which he looked as if he could have carried off on his shoulders — Alexandr, coachman and horses and all.

“Cursed fellow!” said Agrafena, looking after him and wiping away her falling tears with a corner of her apron.

At the forest a halt was made. While Anna Pavlovna was sobbing and saying good-by to her son, Anton Ivanitch patted one of the horses on the neck, then took him by the nose and shook him backwards and forwards, with which the horse seemed rather displeased, snorting and showing his teeth.

“Tighten the girth on the off-horse,’’ said he to the coachman, “you see the pad is on one side.”

The coachman looked at the pad and seeing that it was in its place did not get off the box but only straightened the breach a little with his whip.

“Well, it’s time to start, God be with you!” said Anton Ivanitch. “Leave off tormenting yourself, Anna Pavlovna! And you take your seat, Alexandr Fedoritch; you must reach Shishkov in daylight. Farewell, farewell! God give you happiness, rank, honours, all things good and happy, every kind of wealth and blessing! Now, in

God's name, whip up the horses, but see you drive quietly along the slope! "he added turning to the coachman.

Alexandr took his seat in the carriage dissolved in tears, but Yevsay went up to his mistress, knelt down at her feet and kissed her hand. She gave him a five-rouble note.

"See, Yevsay, remember, be a good servant and I will marry you to Agrafena, but if not—" She could say no more. Yevsay got on to the box. The coachman wearied with the long delay, seemed to revive; he grasped his hat, set it straight on his head and took the reins, the horses set off at first at a slight trot. He whipped the trace horses in turn one after the other, with a bound they began to draw and the troïka flew along the road to the forest. The crowd of escorting friends stood silent and motionless till the carriage had passed altogether out of sight.

Anton Ivanitch was the first to recover himself.

"Well, now we must go home," he said.

Alexandr looked back from the carriage as long as anything was to be seen, then fell with his face hidden in the cushions.

"Do not leave me in my trouble, Anton Ivanitch," said Anna Pavlovna; "dine here."

"Very good, ma'am, I am ready; if you like I will sup here too."

"Yes, and you might stay the night as well."

"How can that be? the funeral is-to-morrow."

"Ah yes; well, I must not keep you. Remember me to Fedosia Petrovna; tell her that I grieve from my heart for her affliction, and I should have visited her myself, but God has sent, tell her, sorrow upon me — I have just parted with my son."

"I will tell her, I will tell her, I will not forget."

"Ah, Sashenka, my darling!" she murmured looking round. "There is nothing to be seen of him, he is gone."

Madame Adouev sat the whole day silent, and ate no dinner or supper. Anton Ivanitch talked and dined and supped to make up for her.

"Where is he now, my darling?" was all she could utter from time to time.

"By now he must be at Nefaeva. No, what am I saying? — he is not yet at Nefaeva, but not far off; there he will drink tea," answered Anton Ivanitch.

"No, he never takes tea at this time."

And so Anna Pavlovna in spirit travelled with him. Afterwards, when according to her calculations he must have reached Petersburg, she divided her time between praying, telling fortunes on cards and talking to Maria Karpovna.

And he?

We shall meet him again at Petersburg.

The Biography

Ivan Goncharov by Ivan Kramskoi, 1874

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