

THE SERF ;

OR,

LOVE LEVELS ALL.

An Original Drama,

IN THREE ACTS.

BY

TOM TAYLOR, ESQ.,

(Member of the Dramatic Authors' Society.)

AUTHOR OF

The Hidden Hand, Settling Day, Sense and Sensation, or the Seven Sisters of Thule; Our American Cousin, The Ticket of Leave Man, Babes in the Wood, The Fool's Revenge, Nine Points of the Law, Payable on Demand, The House or the Home, The Contested Election, An Unequal Match, Victims, Still Water Run Deep, Going to the Bad, A Nice Firm, A Blighted Being, To Oblige Benson, A Trip to Kissengen, Diogenes and his Lantern, The Philosopher's Stone, The Vicar of Wakefield, To Parents and Guardians, Our Clerks, Little Red Riding Hood, Helping Hands, Prince Dorus, &c. &c. &c.; and one of the Authors of Masks and Faces, Plot and Passion, Slave Life, Two Loves and a Life, The King's Rival, Retribution, &c.

THOMAS HAILES LACY,

THEATRICAL PUBLISHER,

LONDON.

THE SERF.

First performed at the Olympic Theatre (the management of Mr. Horace Wigan) on

Characters.

COUNT FEDOR KARATEFF.....	Mr. GEO. VINCENT.
PRINCE VLADIMIR KHOVALENSKI.....	Mr. E. F. EDGAR.
IVAN KHORVICH	Mr. H. NEVILLE.
KHOR.....	Mr. H. WIGAN.
STEINHARDT	Mr. MACLEAN.
JATCHKA	Mr. D. EVANS.
OSIP	Mr. RIVERS.
PAOLI	Mr. FRANKS.
MISTIGRIS.....	Mr. C. COGHLAN.
MADAME LE COMTESSE DE MAULEON	Miss KATE TERRY.
ACOULINA	Miss LINDLEY.
THE PRINCESS BARIATINSKI.....	Mrs. STEVENS.

Male and Female Serfs.

Costumes.

IVAN.—*First dress:* Short velvet gaberdine, such as is worn by artists in Rome, cut straight, with buttons down the front. *Second dress:* A travelling suit, with long boots, and a cloak with a hood to it, and Brandebourg fastenings; black felt hat. *Third dress:* A serf's shirt of brown stuff, with canvas wrappings fastened round the legs by bands; coarse buff or straw slippers.

KHOVALENSKI AND KARATEFF.—*In Act I:* Fashionable morning dresses. *In Act II:* Travelling suits—furred cloaks and caps, and long boots.

KHOR.—A long loose coarse gaberdine; fur-trimmed cap; trousers tucked into rough boots; red sash; hair cut square.

STEINHARDT.—Loose overcoat with hood attached; fur waistcoat; trousers worn tucked into boots; fur cap.

SERFS.—Worn shirts of coarse canvas; fur caps; boots worn outside trousers, some with leg wrappings of canvas.

MISTIGRIS.—*First dress:* Fanciful artist's costume of velveteen. *Second dress:* Loose travelling coat and fur gloves. *Third dress:* Full black evening costume.

MADAME DE MAULEON.—*First dress:* Fashionable morning walking dress of white muslin. *Second dress:* Velvet pardessus trimmed with fur and velvet round cap, with fur border to match the dress; green silk skirt. *Third dress:* Elegant ball dress.

ACOULINA.—White shirt trimmed with red on breast and sleeves; short coloured skirt; handkerchief knotted round the head; red or blue stockings and shoes with coloured embroidery round the top.

FEMALE SERFS.—Like Acoulina, coloured handkerchief tied under the chin.

T H E S E R F ;

OR,

LOVE LEVELS ALL.

ACT I.

SCENE.—*The Atelier of Ivan at Paris. A handsome room furnished fancifully and artistically, with carved chairs, old china, arms, tapestry, busts and casts, pictures in various stages standing about, and all the picturesque confusion of a painter's studio—folding doors, c.—doors, R. and L.—window, R. U. E.—MISTIGRIS discovered listening at door, R.*

MIST. (*calls*) Ivan—Ivan!—Snoring like a top. The lazy rogue ! Fortune comes to him sleeping, (*looks at pictures*) What impasto ! What verve ! Yes! though his pictures are hung on the line and mine skyed, he is a clever fellow, and a good fellow too, provincial as he is. I wonder where he comes from? Ivan—Ivan! It's a Breton name ; but not a man in Ingre's atelier could ever worm out of him a syllable about his birth, parentage or education. Deucedly handsome sitter he's got too. The Countess de Mauleon, A countess ! and I've never caught anything in my barn of a studio, but several colds and a *grisette*, and she was gratis. It seems this Countess invites him to her *soirees* too, and her opera box. What a splendid chance he had there last week. Pitched a fellow, who insulted her, clean into the Orchestra. Ah, such things only happen to some people ! I wonder if my luck's going to turn ? I've asked my uncle to ask his deputy to ask the Minister of Foreign Affairs to ask the Baron de Rochalais, our newly appointed Minister at St. Petersburg, to make me painter in ordinary to the Embassy. I shall rub shoulders with real swells there. By-the-bye the Baron's Madame de Mauleon's uncle. Shall I ask Ivan's

good word with the Countess ? No—hang interest! I'll trust to the true principle—my own merits. "Well, I can't wait for him all day; I'll leave my card, [*takes a piece of charcoal, and writes on a clean canvas, K.H.*] "Mistigris." With three notes of admiration, (*writes*) !!! and a flourish, [*makes a flourish*] That's artistic, [*bowing to portrait, L.*] Madame la Comtesse, Mistigris, historical painter, has the honour to wish you a very good morning.

Music.—going, c. Enter KHOR, c.

KHOR. Monsieur Ivan! is it here, my lord?

MIST. (*aside*) My lord ! takes me for an Englishman. Yes, my friend, it is here; that is, it is there. (*points to door, R.—aside*) Magnificent heard! Model, of course. I'll nail the old boy for a prophet in my " Destruction of Jerusalem." I say, my venerable parent, do you sit for the head, trunk, or extremities—upper or lower ? Let's feel your biceps.

KHOR. My lord!

MIST. Persists in his error; flattering to my appearance, but offensive to my nationality. I am not a milord, my worthy friend, but a child of Paris, and a distinguished painter.

KHOR. You are a friend of Monsieur Ivan ?

MIST. His cherished friend, admirer, and brother in art.

KHOR. (*examining room*) And all these are his works, and all these fine things belong to him ?

MIST. The trophies of his genius, the earnings of his toil. Oh, he's safe pay, old boy. What are your terms per hour ?

KHOR. I do not understand, my lord.

MIST. Pooh ; no use making mysteries with me. Come now, a franc, or a franc and a half; or say two francs, in consideration of that Rembrandtesque beard of yours? It is a perfect picture, (*going to take hold of his beard*) Let's feel the texture.

KHOR. (*starting back angrily*) Not so, my lord.

MIST. Honour bright, it isn't a false one, is it? I tell you I'm good for two francs. Ivan never goes beyond the franc and a half. You'd better come and be a prophet.

KHOR. A prophet! my lord is pleased to jest.

MIST. Why aren't you a model ?

KHOR. No, my lord. I am Khor !

MIST. Khor! *Corbleu!* if you're not a model, why couldn't you say so at once, and not keep me humbugging here? Then you won't sit to me? (KHOR *shakes his head*) Well, I'll go and find a patriarch on the boulevards. You're wrong, my venerable friend ; you would have been a profit to both of us. *Exit, c.*

KHOR. (*looks round*) Wonderful! how wonderful! 'Tis finer than the palace of the old Barine* himself. And all the work of his own hands and brain. No! Khor's brains have helped, too. Ha, ha, ha! sharp old Khor—sly old Khor—good old Khor! Shall I tell Ivan Khorvich this news : that he must leave all this and follow old Khor back to hard work, and black bread and the whip ? Will he come ? Ivan Khorvich is not such a fool; and if he do not come, then all Khor's pains are wasted. I'll see the count first and tell him this news. Yes; my lord will make much of me for it, and give me money and brandy. (*Music*) Ha, ha! a fine house, Ivan Khorvich—fine pictures, many pretty things—and Khor's poor old shaking hand holds them all—all—all! *Exit, c.*

IVAN. (*within door, R.*) Mistigris. I'll be out in a moment, old fellow, (*door, R., opens*) Just look at my portrait, and tell me if I've hit it.

Enter IVAN from door, R.

Gone ! I heard his voice five minutes ago, I'm certain. Oh, he's left his card, I see. All the better; he leaves me alone with my Marguerite—my pearl! (*looks at portrait*) I could pitch brushes and palette to the devil when I measure what they can do with the face I carry in my heart, (*takes palette, brushes, &c., as to paint*) Oh! if I could only paint as the sun does, with a flash, and strike her living image from my soul upon the canvas! But I must toil, and toil, and feel her loveliness farther and farther beyond my reach. Oh, if those lips could speak—could confirm the promise of those eyes,—Marguerite, you love me, the poor nameless, friendless painter, (*paints*) How the softness of her cheek mocks the colour!

* Lord.

Door C. opens softly, and MADAME DE MAULÉON appears on the threshold.

Now it goes more like, but oh, how far below the sweet original!

MAD. M. (*smiling at his eagerness*) Thank you.

IVAN. (*rises confused*) Madame de Mauleon !

MAD. M. You must forgive my surprising the compliment, but you seemed so absorbed I was afraid of disturbing you.

IVAN. Do you think the sun disturbs me when he enters my studio?

MAD. M. Oh! he brings colour and life with him.

IVAN. Look at my canvas, and say if it does not need those you bring with you. Will you sit?

MAD. M. I had hoped our penance was at an end. (*answering his look of annoyance*) I beg your pardon, but I know I am a very bad sitter : I cannot wear that convenient mask of imperturbability which must be such a comfort to the painter.

IVAN. I do not think so: I like to read my sitter's face.

MAD. M. (*sitting, R.*) Happily you painters don't often betray what you discover there; if you did, who would be safe?

IVAN. There are some faces which need not fear deciphering.

MAD. M. Few women's. We are such slaves of convention, we are often afraid of our worthiest thoughts, our best impulses.

IVAN. I did not think you so timid.

MAD. M. Not by temperament. I value courage and manhood above everything; but a widow of four-and-twenty in Paris, who does the honours for a diplomatic uncle, has reason enough for caution were she a Bayard in crinoline. But I'm past cure, my uncle says. He has never been able to teach me that main axiom of diplomacy that first thoughts are to be distrusted, because in nine cases out of ten they're the noblest. However, I'm acting up to his maxim for once.

IVAN. How?

MAD. M. By overruling a first thought: I had determined not to sit to-day.

IVAN. Ah! second thoughts are best sometimes.

MAD. M. I called with no other object but to thank my champion.

IVAN. Oh, madam! forget the trifling service I was fortunate enough to render you, the impertinence that gave occasion for it.

MAD. M. It is not easy to forget either. I see every incident of the scene still—that flushed, insolent stranger who forced himself into my box, your sudden appearance, the struggle, and that crashing fall into the orchestra. I don't know how often I've started out of my sleep for dreaming of it.

IVAN. The offender deserved no such place in your thoughts.

MAD. M. Not the offender, perhaps, but my defender did. Besides, shall I confess I was afraid of the consequences?

IVAN. Afraid for me!

MAD. M. You have heard nothing from him since?

IVAN. Ruffians are generally cowards: he has borne his tumble patiently.

MAD. M. And yet I suppose he has the opinion of his world to fear. I have discovered he is a Russian of rank.

IVAN. A Russian!

MAD. M. Yes. I hate them—a people of tyrants and of slaves. What that is good or great can spring from such a stock?

IVAN. The slaves, at least, are to be pitied.

MAD. M. Pitied? say despised! None wear chains who are worthy to go free: the true badge of degradation is not upon the limbs, but in the heart. I am not a good hater, I think, but I loathe a slave. What's the matter—you do not paint?

IVAN. Only over eagerness about my work.

MAD. M. How I envy you! I hear women talk of their triumphs—I enjoy my own sometimes. But what is the privilege of beauty to that of genius. To hold the keys of another world peopled with no thoughts but what are great, no forms that are not beautiful. To move among these, scarce knowing whether as creator or as

guest, but surely knowing that you are welcomed in that bright company. Oh, it must be glorious !

IVAN. If it were not so lonely; and then to see the thoughts and forms afar off, and feel an iron hand thrusting you back. That is horrible ! and a word can do this sometimes, (*sadly, and laying down his pencil*)

MAD. M. This is not the mood for painting. I think I had better give up my sitting for this morning, (*rises*)

IVAN. Oh stay, madam ! Pray stay !

MAD. M. Then I will stay without sitting. You know how often you've promised to shew me your sketches. I adore sketches—they give such elbow-room to fancy. (*he rises to give portfolio*) No ; let me rummage for myself. I love a voyage of discovery about a studio. It's like travelling in a new country—one lights on the loveliest things in the dustiest holes and corners. What are these ?

IVAN. (*puts portfolio on stand*) Travelling studies—figures. Here are landscapes, (*about to give another portfolio*)

MAD. M. No—no, let me enjoy these. What picturesque costumes. Eastern are they not ?

IVAN. (*aside, startled*) Ah, my Russian studies! Oh, they are boyish attempts, (*tries to close book*) Let me shew you something better.

MAD. M. No—no! they are charming, I tell you. I see, though, they are not Asiatic. Here is snow and pine forest. Where is the scene ?

IVAN. In Russia.

MAD. M. Oh : I've quite an interest in Russia now.

IVAN. Indeed!

MAD. M. Yes. You know my uncle has just accepted the embassy to St. Petersburg, and wishes me to accompany him. See! here's quite a picture—a young girl torn away by two bearded ruffians from an old woman, who clings round her ! What is the story?

IVAN. (*with suppressed emotion*) A serf girl who has given offence to her young master, and is being dragged from her mother's arms to the flogging place !

MAD. M. Flog women ! Horrible!

IVAN. The cause of the punishment is often more hideous than its brutality.

MAD. M. And this young man standing by with clenched hands ?

IVAN. Her brother. He is a serf too.

MAD. M. The coward ! (IVAN *starts*) he has an axe in his girdle. Were I a man—bond or free—they might kill me, but that axe should be in my oppressor's brain !

IVAN. You do not know the country.

MAD. M. Why do they not rise and strike, as our peasants did in the Jacquerie ?

IVAN. Your peasants were down-trodden men, not slaves.

MAD. M. True, true. Ah, there is the secret—the slave is not a man. Thank the fate that made you a Breton—of a race brave in war, devoted in loyalty, faithful in love. What slave was ever a painter? Liberty is art's breath. It owns no fetters but its own high laws, and lifts its votaries in all noble minds to honour that no slave can even comprehend, still less take part in.

IVAN. Take care, you are talking to a painter. Are you not afraid of making him presumptuous?

MAD. M. Genius is never presumptuous. It aspires—for aspiration is its very life breath,—but the heights it rises to are native to it.

IVAN. Love's wings are stronger even than art's. How high may he soar who is buoyed up by both ?

MAD. M. As high as his heart will carry him.

IVAN. What! Over the distinctions of rank—the conventions of society ?

MAD. M. The woman who looks up to a man cannot see these petty barriers—but she *must* look up to him, and live so looking up. Many men can inspire passion—few can keep it alive— Respect is to love, what air is to fire. But this has nothing to do with painting.

IVAN. It may be life or death to the painter; nay, you have not spoken so freely without intention. Madame de Mauleon, you are no coquette to play with a heart till it breaks, then toss the fragments from you. On your own ground I meet you—the equal ground of art and passion. I love you. May I love you, Marguerite ? (*throws himself at her feet—knock at door, c.*)

MAD. M. Rise, rise—some one comes—after they have gone—

IVAN. In that room—(MADAME DE MAULEON *crosses to L.*) Oh, think well, before you give me leave to love you.

MAD. M. Ivan, you said you could read faces. I will not say you have misread mine. Pardon me, if I have seemed bold, unwomanly—if I have spoken what the world tells us we should stifle, because my heart bade me utter it. I have all that society most prizes—birth, rank, position. Oh if you knew the joy with which I could lay all these at the feet of the man I love, and ask him to lift me up to him (*knock at door c.—gives him her hand, he presses it to his lips.—Exit MADAME DE MAULEON, L.*)

Enter PRINCE, door, c.

PRINCE. I have the honour of addressing Monsieur Ivan? (IVAN *bows—gives card*) I am Prince Vladimir Khovalenski—a friend of the gentleman you insulted on Thursday night at the Opera.

IVAN. I beg your pardon—you mean the person to whom I gave a lesson.

PRINCE. In the shape of a somerset from the grand tier into the orchestra. He calls it an insult—you call it a lesson. Suppose we refer to it as a catastrophe—the word is less ceremonious, but more accurate.

IVAN. As you please, sir. I like plain speaking.

PRINCE. So do I, sir. That is why I can't bear living in Russia.

IVAN. Russia! Pardon me, your name is Polish.

PRINCE. Yes; but we belong to Russia in the strictest proprietary sense of the word. However, waiving ethnological discussion, to the point. My friend demands satisfaction; apology is out of the question, of course, after—the catastrophe. Will you refer me to a friend of yours to settle the preliminaries?

IVAN. I will find one and send him to you. (*crosses, R.*)

PRINCE. Let it be as soon as possible, if you please; for the Count is convalescent and impatient, (*crosses, L.*)

IVAN. I will secure my friend this instant, (*aside*) Mistigris will jump at the honour. May I beg of you to stay here till my return?

PRINCE. Certainly. I am delighted to make your ac-

quaintance : while you are gone I will make that of your delicious works. I adore the arts. *Sans adieu*, my dear Monsieur Ivan.

IVAN. *Au revoir*, Monsieur le Prince. *Exit, c.*

PRINCE. A charming person! It will be quite a pleasure to act against him. Foils, I see, and pistols ; I hope he can use both. Karateff deserves to be winged or run through the body, (*looking at pictures*) An exquisite colourist. What a pity so sweet a painter should be risking his life in such an affair. Some grisette, I suppose, whom Karateff took a fancy to : champagne invariably makes a brute of Karateff. However, as he's my friend I must see him through it. (*examining picture of Madame de Mauleon*) A portrait of my eccentric friend Madame de Mauleon; a good likeness, but with a softness in the eyes hers seldom shew—at least, when they look at me. (*stands looking at picture, with his back to door, L.*)

Enter MADAME DE MAULEON, door, L.— crosses to c.

MAD. M. Is he gone ?

PRINCE. (*down, L.*) Yes. Ah, Madame de Mauleon !!

MAD. M. Prince Kovalenski, I was not aware you knew Monsieur Ivan?

PRINCE. I have just made his acquaintance ; but I fear I have interrupted a sitting.

MAD. M. Yes; he was at work on my portrait when your knock frightened me away. *Apropos*, I was longing to see you. I want to learn the name of one of your countrymen—a new arrival in Paris, I think.

PRINCE. A new arrival; then it must be my friend Count Karateff.

MAD. M. As most of the Russians are presented to my uncle, I wonder we have not seen him.

PRINCE. I have promised to present him as soon as he is convalescent.

MAD. M. Has he been ill, then ?

PRINCE. No ; an accident. A severe fall at the Opera. Were you there on Thursday ? You must have heard it.

MAD. M. What? It was he, then?

PRINCE. He?

MAD. M. The person who insulted me so grossly, and was so deservedly punished by Monsieur Ivan.

PRINCE. You ! Is it possible he could so far forget himself to a woman of rank ? Good heavens! what champagne is answerable for! May I bring him a penitent to your feet. He shall apologize, do penance, renounce that seducing Cliquot for a twelvemonth.

MAD. M. You may bring him,—but on one condition: that he does not seek what you men call satisfaction from Monsieur Ivan.

PRINCE. Anything but that, Countess.

MAD. M. That or nothing, Prince.

PRINCE. The fact is—it is too late.

MAD. M. I see. You have come here to-day with a challenge ?

PRINCE. On that point, my lips are sealed to a lady.

MAD. M. Then, I will learn the truth from Monsieur Ivan himself. Hark, a carriage! (*looks out of window, R. U. E.*) Why, 'tis that man !

PRINCE. Karateff, himself, coming here ! He must have been at the champagne already.

MAD. M. I will leave you alone with him. (*crosses, L.*) Tell him my condition—the only one, on which I agree to overlook his on that night, (*retires, and exit, L.*)

PRINCE. Really, these women are incredible. She knows I'm the man's friend, yet asks me to prevent him from fighting.

Enter KARATEFF, C.

You here, Karateff?

KARA. Yes; don't preach. I know it's not according to rule—I hate rules. I was tired of waiting for his answer so I've come for it.

PRINCE. Let me feel your pulse, (*he does so*) He's not mad! Walk across the room. (*KARATEFF crosses to R., and puts his hat down on stool*) He's not drunk !

KARA. I'm as cool as ice, and as sober as a Mussulman ; but thirstier for his blood than ever I was for champagne. He accepts ?

PRINCE. Of course ; but you must not fight.

KARA. Must not fight?

PRINCE. The lady you insulted requires it.

KARA. The lady! Some *lorette*, I suppose, or a model—eh?

PRINCE. The Countess de Mauleon, niece of the Baron de Rochtalais, who has just been named Ambassador to St. Petersburg!

KARA. The devil! Should the Emperor hear of my escapade.

PRINCE. It would be a certain five years' campaign in the Caucasus, if not Siberia for life. I congratulate you on either prospect.

KARA. Curse it! to be baulked of one's revenge—I had made certain of killing him! I have been at Lepage's gallery all the morning, and I've hit the wafer twelve times running.

PRINCE. A thousand pities to throw away such excellent practice; but you'll consent, nevertheless?

KARA. No! I'll rot in the mines first I (*takes stage, R.*)

Enter IVAN, C, not perceiving KARATEFF, he addresses the PRINCE, who is L.

IVAN. I am sorry, Prince, to detain you; but my friend was out; he returns in half an hour; till then I must ask your indulgence.

KARA. (*coming forward, R.*) And mine, sir?

IVAN. (*aside*) My adversary! I ask no indulgence of you, sir. Your presence here-----

KARA. (R.) I am aware, is against rules, but I was impatient.

IVAN. (C.) Take care, sir, impatience deranges a man's aim sadly.

KARA. Besides, I hardly knew if I was to find a gentleman.

IVAN. There I had the advantage. I knew the man I had to meet was not a gentleman.

KARA. Take care, sir! I may forget myself, and resort to your own mode of attack.

IVAN. Pardon me, I used brute force on one who was inaccessible to more refined argument. You have no such plea—I am sober. Besides, I think, that in a wrestling bout the advantage would hardly be on your side.

PRINCE. (*aside*) Karateff has found his match at last.

KARA/ (*aside*) Curse his coolness! (*aloud*) Hark ye, sir!

IVAN. Hark *you*, sir! for your conduct at the Opera I might have turned you over to the police. I preferred ridding the box of you in a more summary way. Your behaviour places you beyond the pale of honorable satisfaction ; I waive that advantage and consent to meet you as a gentleman; but my concession goes no farther—another insolent word—another threatening movement—and I repeat from that window the summary ejection so effectual at the Opera. It is two stories high, and the court-yard is paved with granite.

KARA. (*foaming with rage*) Very well, sir; you know I am still suffering from the consequences of your brutality, or----- (PRINCE *pacifies* KARATEFF *in action*)

IVAN. Prince, I am sorry you should be charged with so intractable a friend. (to KARATEFF) Sir, you have thought fit, in violation of all usage, to intrude on my studio. I will cede it to you till my friend's return enables us to meet where weapons replace words.

KARA. What! you beat a retreat ?

IVAN. No. I don't want to prevent an encounter in which whole bones are absolutely necessary, (*bows to PRINCE and exit, c.*)

PRINCE. My dear Karateff, you have brought this on yourself.

KARA. Confound my lame arm; but for that I would have shown him.

Enter a CHASSEUR, C.

Well ?

CHAS. Khor, the *starost** of the old Barine's village of Sitovka is below. Not finding my lord at his hotel, he has followed my lord here, and insists on speaking to my lord.

KARA. Send him up. *Exit CHASSEUR, C.*

A favourite serf of my old ass of a father-in-law. I wrote to him for a letter of credit, and I'll bet a thousand rubles he sends this grizzled fox with a sermon instead.

Music.—Enter KHOR—he bows low, and then prostrates himself, and kisses KARATEFF'S feet.

KARA. (R.) Get up, uncle : what brings you here ?

KHOR. (C.) First to kiss the foot of my lord and father,

* The oldest peasant, or head man

and to pray for a continuance of the kindness that Paul, the son of Paul, your sainted father-in-law, showed to poor old Khor.

KARA. You had better have asked that from him at St. Petersburg, than from me at Paris.

KHOR. He is dead. He died ten days ago.

KARA. Paul Paulovich dead—and my mother?

KHOR. She sent me to you with the news, and to request your return. After her death you will be Prince of Sitovka.

KARA. The old dotard gone, and my mother mistress ! This is news. Here, (*gives money*) old fox, here's to drown thy brains in *vodka** to my health, (*crosses to PRINCE*) Why Vladimir, my mother dotes on me. I'm Prince of Sitovka † already. Khor, I confirm thee starost. What *obrok* † and st thou pay the old Barine, uncle ?

KHOR. A hundred roubles, Oh Fedor, son of Nicholai, but it cost me flesh and blood to pay it—Oh my father—flesh and blood, and bone: I starved all the year to make it up.

KARA. I'll strike off fifty.

KHOR. Oh, St Nicholas bless my lord, (*kisses his feet again*) for his kindness to the poor old man. (KARA *crosses to R.*)

PRINCE. (L.) Touching effect of gratitude and corn brandy.

KHOR. I bring here an inventory of the serfs of Sitovka that can pay high obrok. (*shews paper*) They were let off too easy under the old Barine ; he was soft—soft; all cheated him—all but old Khor.

KARA. Who's this Ivan, with no sum opposite his name, but a large cross ?

KHOR. That's he! my son! my dear son!

KARA. But why is he thus distinguished in the list ?

KHOR. Because he can bring my lord more than all the rest put together. My old lord and father had him taught. Oh, he can coin money for my lord, if he will.

KARA. Never mind *his* will; mine must decide now. Where is this genius?

* Corn brandy.

† The sum paid to his lord by a serf for permission to work on his own account.

KHOR. Here; where he was sent by the old lord to study.

KARA. To study !

KHOR. Yes; the old lord loved him. The last letter he wrote was to bid him come back. He never lived to send it—here it is. (*gives KARATEFF letter*)

KARA. (*reads*) "Ivan! Must I close my eyes without seeing thee once again ? Come back to freedom, and thy second father, Bariatinski." This to a serf! The drivelling old dotard! And this man, you say, is in Paris ?

KHOR. Here!

KARA. What do you mean by *here* !

KHOR. Here, in this house. This is his chamber; these are his pictures. He is lord over all you see, and you are lord over him.

KHOR. Ha, ha, ha! Oh, I could die of this! (*crosses to PRINCE*) Vladimir, is it not excellent? This painter—this defender of dames—this insulter of gentlemen—is a slave! is my slave! (to KHOR.) Does he know of the old Barine's death?

KHOR. No.

KARA, (*aside*) That's well. You will start to-night for St. Petersburg with my answer to my mother's letter.

KHOR. May I not give him that letter?

KARA. I'll have it delivered.

KHOR. May I not see my son—my dear son?

KARA. Dog ! Who taught thee to question ? Go !

KHOR. My father knows best. Khor is dirt under the Barine's feet. (*Music*) Khor will go; Khor can wait till his time comes. *Exit, c.*

PRINCE. Why send the poor old wretch away so roughly?

KARA. Don't you see ? If this Ivan learnt he had passed from the hands of the old man, who has treated him so kindly, into mine, with the score I have to settle with him, do you think I shall ever get him back to Russia ? No! I'll keep the secret till he's in my power, and then-----

PRINCE. At all events you can't fight him now, so you may safely make Madame de Mauleon the promise she insists on. She is in the next room, (*going*)

KARA. What! Here ? Vladimir, can it be possible that she cares for this serf?

PRINCE. People here take him for a Breton. I *have*

heard their names put together at De Rochalais; if there were not something between them, she would hardly be so concerned for his safety.

KARA. We shall soon learn that. She has seen him insult me; she shall see me insult him.

PRINCE. (*aside*) I always knew he was a brute in his cups; but in his sober moments, *parole d'honneur*, he's a devil.

Enter IVAN, C.

IVAN. Prince, my friend has returned, and waits for us. Come.

KARA. Stay! I have changed my intention.

IVAN. Ah! you have grown cooler. We shall meet on more equal terms.

KARA. No ; we shall not meet at all.

IVAN. Not meet! (*aside*) A coward, like most bullies! (*aloud*) You withdraw your challenge?

KARA. Yes. I came here to fight a gentleman; I stay to chastise a serf!

IVAN. Ha! (*staggers back—recovering himself*) How dare you?

KARA. Hush! The Countess de Mauleon may overhear you. I know you, Ivan Khorvich, serf of Sitovka!

IVAN. No ! no! for mercy's sake, sir. My lord, speak lower; she will hear. I love her!

KARA. Insolent dog! You *dare* to use the word. Listen! our meeting now is impossible. I will apologize to the lady, but I will not be the only one humiliated. I will tell her who and what her redoubtable champion is.

IVAN. No, no ! My lord, serf as I am, I am a man ! If I were a convict, you would not strip my shoulder and show my brand to the woman I love; at least, not before others. I will bear anything, do anything—only keep this from her! I will renounce my art—Paris—only keep this secret! Strike me! spurn me! spit on me! but do not tell her I am a slave! Do not, oh, do not!

PRINCE. (*aside*) Poor devil !

KARA. So you can bear anything but that discovery? We shall see. Ask the Countess de Mauleon to come here.

IVAN. My lord !

KARA, If I ask her, it will be to tell her all.

IVAN *staggers to door—Exit, L.*

PRINCE. Karateff, this is diabolical!

KARA. Vladimir, I'm drinking my revenge, drop by drop. It's delicious!

Re-enter IVAN, conducting MADAME DE MAULEON, L.

PRINCE. Let me present Count Fedor Karateff to Madame de Mauleon.

KARA. (*bowing*) Madam, let me express my deep contrition that, under the miserable influence of wine, I should have forgotten what was due to your rank.

MAD. M. To my sex, sir.

KARA. To both. May I say—to your beauty, before either ? I dare not plead in excuse the admiration which, flushed as I was-----

MAD. M. Was an insult, sir, not a compliment;

KARA. May I not be allowed to prove the sincerity of my repentance ?

MAD. M. Prince, you told the Count of the condition I exacted?

KARA. He did, madam. It was one I could not have agreed to as a gentleman; luckily, it is no longer necessary.

MAD. M. No longer necessary ?

KARA. This person has rendered it superfluous.

MAD. M. Monsieur Ivan ! How?

KARA. By apologizing to me.

MAD. M. He apologize to you ! For what reason ?

KARA. The usual one, I presume ; to avoid the more disagreeable alternative, to *him*, of fighting.

MAD. M. (*almost fiercely*) Count Karateff! (*turns to IVAN*) Pardon me, Mons. Ivan, it is for you to answer him. (*crosses to IVAN*) You do not speak! What does this mean ? You turn away! Still silent! One word, only one—the reason—you have a reason ?

IVAN. Yes.

MAD. M. And you will tell it me ?

IVAN. I am a (*pauses*)—no, no, I cannot speak the word.

KARA. Nay, madam, we do not ask even a coward to proclaim himself.

(IVAN starts and clenches his fists, but restrains himself)

PRINCE. This is almost too much—even for a friend.
(goes up, L.)

MAD. M. Count Karateff, I do not know the influence you have brought to bear on this gentleman.

KARA. Gentleman!

MAD. M. But if you hoped to revenge yourself for the lesson he gave you, by humiliating him in my eyes—

KARA. (pointing to him) It would be superfluous.

MAD. M. It would be impossible. Our family device is an anchor, our motto, "I hold true." When Marguerite de Mauleon has once given her trust, it is not withdrawn lightly, (to IVAN) I respect your secret, sir. Till you think proper to confide in me, we must be strangers—we need not be enemies. (IVAN covers his face with his hands—KARATEFF offers MADAME DE MAULEON his arm—she declines it) Your arm, Prince, (to KARA) May I ask you to order up my carriage (IVAN looks up with an appealing glance—she turns from him) I will wait for it—in that room.

Exit MADAME DE MAULEON with PRINCE, L. door—

KARATEFF crosses to R. in front of IVAN, takes his hat and crosses to c.

KARA. By the way, you can read: here is a letter for you. (throws letter on ground) Pick it up.

(IVAN does not obey, and KARATEFF goes towards the door where MADAME DE MAULEON went off, and IVAN immediately picks up letter)

KARA. (comes close to IVAN on his L.) You see I did keep your secret. Exit, c.

IVAN. And I have lived through this! I thought my heart would burst. My noble Marguerite ! Oh, when she knows the terrible truth ! By her very nobleness I can measure the abyss that separates us. But this letter, (looks at it) 'tis my good lord's hand, (reads it) Oh! this is providential: I will return to him at once. A free man and on French ground again, her love and his life are mine.

Re-enter KARATEFF, C, crosses down to L. door.

But how to get out of Paris ? At the Russian embassy

they will not *visa* my passport without formal authority from my lord. Oh, how shall I bear the time till that can reach me!

KARA. (*at door, L.*) Your carriage, madam, (*to IVAN*) It is a pity you should not try an appeal to your lord at once. You may find a difficulty about your passport: I start for Russia to-morrow; I will take you with me—that is, if my valet has no objection.

IVAN. You ! I accept the offer.

Re-enter PRINCE, with MADAME DE MAULEON—she bows to KARATEFF, pauses, and looks at IVAN—KARATEFF offers his arm.

MAD. M. I can dispense with your escort, Count. Not one word! Oh, what can have changed him thus! I cannot look in his face and believe that he is a coward?

IVAN, (*moving towards her with an imploring gesture*) A month, madam; give me a month. You shall know all, or you shall never see me more !

MAD. M. A month ! Ivan, I will wait, and I will wait hopefully, (*holds out her hand—IVAN throws himself at her feet, seizes her hand, and kisses it*)

PRINCE.

IVAN.

COUNTESS.

KARATEFF.

END OF THE FIRST ACT.

ACT II.

SCENE.—*The Village of Sitovka, in the district of Kalouga, a scattered Village of pine-wood huts. In the foreground, L., the hut of KHOR, with a verandah, under which are a rude table and bench—a well, with its cross-pole, R.—logs of pine scattered about. In the distance, R. C., the Village Church.*

As the Curtain rises, IATCHKA, OSIP, and other SERFS are seen grouped, as awaiting the arrival of the Bourmeister or Intendant.

IATCH. (*looking off, R. u. E.*) Praise be to Saint Sergius, here comes the Starost! He knows how to speak to the Bourmeister.

Enter KHOR, R. U. E.—the SERFS surround and welcome him.

Welcome home, father Khor, welcome home !

KHOR. Ah, ha, son Iatchka! good day, gossip Osip! Ha, Annouchka ! Good day, all! Ah, ha ! here's old Khor come back to his children from St. Peter. What's Acoulina about, that she's not here to welcome her old father?

Enter ACOULINA, from Cottage, L. 2 E.

ACOUL. Here I am, father!

KHOR. Bless thee, my child! So; bright as ever, my Acoulina—my lamb—my young birch tree—my wood pigeon ! Here's for thee, from far away, (*puts a coral necklace round her neck*)

ACOUL. Oh, look, Annouchka! look, Marinka, 'tis brighter than yew berries ! But, my brother ! our Ivan ?

KHOR. Ivan is well. He is coming home.

ACOUL. Ivan coming home! (*claps her hands*) Do you hear, girls ! When, father, when?

KHOR. At once; to-day—in an hour, may be.

ACOUL. So soon. I'll run and gather pine twigs to brighten the room, and put fresh oil in the lamp for our saint,  get out the *samovar** for tea, and draw more *quass* †—oh, I have so many things to do! Come and help me, Annouchka, but don't say you did ; Ivan must not think any hand worked at his welcome feast, but Acoulina's. Come, come—oh, I shall go crazy!

Exeunt ACOULINA and ANNOUCHKA. L.—during this, the PEASANTS have been whispering

OSIP. (*to IATCHKA*) You speak.

IATCH. No, you are older.

KHOR. Well, children, what is it; something to ask old Khor? Out with it!

IATCH. The Bourmeister, Starost-----

KHOR. What, Steinhardt? Well-----

IATCH. Since the old Barine died, he has doubled our labour days, and we may not take wood now, nor grass for our horses, and the whip is busy all day long—crack! crack! crack!

* The Russian urn, always kept heated in the humblest cottage.

† A kind of beer, made from rye.

KHOR. Aye, aye, I told you what it would be; after the sun, the frost—after cucumbers, pine bark, and after quass, pond water!

IATCH. Yes—yes!

KHOR. (*sinking his voice*) And I told you, too, you had hatchets that would split skulls as well as pine logs, and scythes that would mow down more than rye stalks, and pine splinters that would light big houses for serfs to warm their hands at. Did I not? Did I not?

IATCH.& SERFS. Yes—yes!

KHOR. Then old Khor has no more to tell you—hush! the Bourmeister.

Enter STEINHARDT, an open letter in his hand, L.

STEINHARDT. So, Starost, back again, eh?

KHOR. (*bowing humbly*) Khor couldn't stay long from your excellency, and the children here.

STEIN. A precious family they are, you old rogue! Lazy, grumbling, drunken knaves, every one, that think only of fattening their idle carcasses out of the plunder of her grace and my lord, her son, who will be here to-day. Hark ye, Osip, see you send your *telega** to-morrow to the forest to fetch wood for the great house.

OSIP. But, my lord, I have given my two days' cart labour this week, and the telega is bringing in my winter wood.

STEIN. *Your* wood, forsooth! And that your wood may be dried, is my lord's chamber to be damp? Your telega I tell you, or-----

OSIP. Oh, your excellency! (*fumbling in his pouch*) But a word apart with you, my lord.

STEIN. Not a word, rogue.

OSIP. (*getting out money*) Yes, my lord, one word. (*aside*) Here's a silver rouble; but let me get in my wood.

STEIN. (*taking money*) There's weight in your reason; well, we'll see. (*looking round*) On second thoughts, Iatchka's telega is bigger than Osip's. Let Iatchka's telega bring the Barine wood to-morrow.

IATCH. Alas! (*wrings his hands*)

* A rude cart.

STEIN. You grumble, sirrah. Have you any reason why your telega should not go?

IATCH. (*aside*) I haven't a kopek, (*aloud*) No, my lord; I am out of reasons.

STEIN. I thought as much, thriftless sinner as thou art. But now, listen, rogues. Times are changed since the old Barine died : he drove with a bull-rush ; the new one drives with a whip! you understand? To-day I'm to look into all your obroks, in work and money, and raise them to the fair level, (*they mutter*) 'Tis my lord's written order, here, (*shews paper—All groan*)

STEIN. The first man or woman I catch at that, has thirty lashes. One would think you were the worst-used serfs in all Kalouga. Where will you find an Intendant so open to reason as I am?

KHOR. Where, indeed! Didn't Osip convince my lord with a word, just now ?

OSIP. (*aside*) Alas!

STEIN. And I've observed your guzzling, and your dancings, and your singings, too. No more of such idle doings, do you hear? or I'll find you music to dance to, you won't like quite so well as Favli's guzla here.

(*kicks the guzla, a sort of rude guitar, which one of the peasants holds, and breaks it*)

PAVLI. Oh ! my poor guzla's broken.

STEIN. Broken, is it? all the better. It distracted you from your work. What business have serfs with music, except the creak of the cart wheel and the crack of the whip ? (*looks at watch*) Ten o'clock ! Hark ye ! my lady the princess, and my lord her son, come here to-day, and guests, too. They must see you all happy and contented, remember; so you'd best look cheerful, or'ware the whip.

Exit STEINHARDT, L.I.E.— The SERFS group and mutter.

KHOR. (*aside, and rubbing his hands*) It goes well, bravely well; rub the dry wood long enough, and look for a blaze—a blaze that will warm my old heart through. Thanks to Ivan, I shall have a soul, now, for this lump of a body—a slave that has had a freeman's teaching. Ah, ha! they have stuck the candle in the powder-flask ; old Khor has but to turn it down, and, whiz! up go the stones, (*to SERFS*) To work, children, to work! My lord must see merry faces.

IATCH. Must we bear this, father Khor ?

KHOR. Must ye ! *(takes IATCHKA'S whip in his hand)*
Hark ye, my son, who makes the whips ?

IATCH. We do, to be sure.

KHOR. And whose backs are they tried on?

IATCH. Ours, worse luck.

KHOR. Ah, ha! let the whipmakers look to it, then.

OSIP. The starost says well.

KHOR. The starost is weary of saying well, and will say no more. Now be off to the gate; and you that have a whole shirt, put it on ; and you that have no shirts, button up your caftans; and hide sour faces, and empty bellies, and sore backs, and let my lord's guests see nothing but content and happiness. Go ! go, my sheep ; go, my oxen ; go, my geese ; go ! hounds ! go !

Exeunt PEASANTS in groups, talking amongst themselves, R.

KHOR. The straw's piled—the fire is not far off. My Mavroushka! Old Khor will avenge thee yet, before he goes to the worms. The old lord was kind: Khor was his dog, till he put out his hand to Khor's kennel, and stole her that was the light of Khor's eyes—the pulse of Khor's heart—and then the dog turned wolf, and the wolf will have blood! *(grinds his teeth)*

Enter ACOULINA from cottage, L.

ACOUL. All is ready, father, against Ivan's coming; the room smells like a garden, and the lamp before our saint burns so brightly, and the samovar sings merrily to bid my brother welcome.

KHOR. *(takes her in his arms and kisses her)* My bird! she has my Mavroushka's eyes!

ACOUL. Our mother! Oh! I wish I had known her. Old Anna says she was so beautiful!

KHOR. She was like thee.

ACOUL. And the old lord was very kind to her?

KHOR. *(bitterly)* Yes, he was kind.

ACOUL. And if his son had lived, the infant she nursed, and that was drowned with her in the great flood, the village would have been happy now. That was a long, long time ago—the year after Ivan was born. Poor mother ! to die so young and leave her children. (KHOR

is *overcome with grief*) Oh, pardon, dear father! I did not think to grieve you.

KHOR. (*in agony*) Oh, Mavroushka! Mavroushka! (*fiercely, and seizing ACOULINA'S arm*) Girl, if you would not drive me mad, never talk of your mother again. Don't tremble, my darling—I would not harm thee for the world's wealth. Go in now.

ACOUL. Oh, yes ! and when the girls gather to receive the Barines, I'll be the finest of all; I'll wear the necklace you bought.

KHOR. No, no, go not with them; hide rather in the thickest wood—the wildest marsh of the domain. He must not see my jewel, or perhaps he, too—To the forest, girl—to the forest !

ACOUL. (*pouting*) Shall I not see the new lord ?

KHOR. (*fiercely*) No! (*then folding her in his arms*) Let them that would touch the wolf's cub, beware the wolf! Don't be afraid, I've neither teeth nor claws for thee.

Music.—Exit, R. 2 E., guarding her fiercely, but fondly.

Enter IVAN, R. U. E.—he carries a knapsack.

IVAN. (*putting knapsack on table under verandah, L.*) The old place at last! The bench where I have so often clambered on my father's knee, a half-naked urchin, The church with its dome and stars—they've re-gilt them, I see. I wonder if old Papa Apollonius is still living. How far off all this seemed an hour ago, and now it is as if I had not been a week away; and yet is it I am changed, or the people ? The peasants I passed are not like the thoughtless, merry vagabonds I remember. Every face I met seemed dark and downcast; not one recognized me. But what wonder ! the slave has grown a man in these eight years of absence. Well, there is one heart here I hope to find as I left it—my little Acoulina's. I could not refrain from giving her a surprise even before going to my lord. Now I am here my courage almost fails me. Why should it? His letter shows me he's not changed. A step !—my sister ! (*he turns away*)

Enter ACOULINA, R.

ACOUL. (R. C.) Father's gone to the field, (*looking*
C

timidly at IVAN) A Barine! Can this be my lord come secretly on us. I must not look at him, though, (*she is going back*)

IVAN. (*L.. disguising his voice*) Here, peasant!

ACOUL. (*with downcast eyes, and confused*) My lord!

IVAN. Is it hereabout one Khor lives?

ACOUL. Yes, my lord; that is his house.

IVAN. Tell him I bring him news from Paris—of his son.

ACOUL. Ivan, my lord? He is coming home, (*still with downcast eyes and half-averted face*)

IVAN. No; he was, but he is detained.

ACOUL. O dear! O dear! (*distressed*)

IVAN. Why, are you interested in him?

ACOUL. O yes.

IVAN. His sweetheart, eh? I admire his taste.

ACOUL. (*curtseying and blushing*) No, my lord, his sister, who loves him as no sweetheart ever could.

IVAN. So she thinks, bless her sisterly little heart! (*he throws his arms round her neck and kisses her*)

ACOUL. (*struggling*) My lord!

IVAN. 'Tis from Ivan, I tell you, you little wood-thrush, and there's another from Ivan, and another, and another! (*kisses her frequently*) Why, Acoulina, (*speaks in natural voice*) don't you know me?

ACOUL. (*looking at him for the first time*) Ivan! brother! oh! (*bursts into tears, and sobs with joy, kissing him wildly*) Dear brother! (*calling*) Father, 'tis Ivan! Oh, how fine you are, brother, and how handsome! He's like a lord! I thought you were a lord. What a fool I am! Oh, I am so happy! All is ready for you—I expected you. Come, father, come! Ivan! Ivan! Ivan! (*calling, and clapping her hands*) Bless you! (*runs back and kisses him*) But you are tired. Ivan, father, Ivan! (*runs about half wild with joy*) Dressed like a Barine, and so handsome! Oh! I must fetch father. *Exit R. 2 E.*

IVAN. Dear sister! the yoke presses lightly on her, but she has never known what it was to be free. Oh, cursed knowledge for those who must return to the chain! But that will not be my fate: I will go to my lord at once, (*going, R. U. E.*) A tarantas stops—the travellers come this way. Prince Khovalenski and two ladies,

veiled. He knows me : he must not see me yet. I will wait in my father's cottage till they pass, and then for freedom. *Exit, L.*

Enter the PRINCESS BARIATINSKI and MADAME DE MAULEON in travelling dress, attended by KHOVALENSKI and MISTIGRIS, R. u. E.

MAD. M. No more apologies, Princess; I delight in adventures, and I never was so near being jolted to death. It will give me something to write about to my uncle at St. Petersburg, he is quite a Russo-maniac since the Emperor bewitched him. I shall shake his faith in your roads, at all events.

KHOV. If faith were the only thing to be shaken in our roads, I should be quite satisfied; but, oh, my ribs and shoulders!

MIST. I had no idea till now, how infinitely more fatiguing riding in a carriage might be than walking.

PRINCESS. I warned you all what would follow, if you insisted on outstripping my son's troika.

MAD. M. I had a motive; I wished to catch your estate in undress—I hate receptions rehearsed before hand. I am determined to use my own eyes and judgment in Russia.

KHOV. (*aside*) Quixotic creature!

PRINCESS. But pray come on to the chateau: there is nothing to detain you here; these are only the serf cabins. You must see our English flower garden, my son has had it laid out expressly for your visit.

MAD. M. Oh, no, I prefer zoology to botany, infinitely. Let me study your peasants first, your flowers afterwards.

PRINCESS. Is it possible, Countess, you can confess to such a want of taste !

MAD. M. You see the flowers have no souls, the serfs have—you look doubtful—at least, allow me to remain under that delusion till I've cured myself of it by experience.

PRINCESS. As you please—I can't take the interest in the serfs that you do. Monsieur Mistigris will escort you, and the Prince will go on with me to the chateau,

and see all ready for your reception. *Au revoir, ma toute belle!* Your arm, Prince.

Exeunt PRINCE and PRINCESS, L. U. E.

MIST. Charmingly arranged, madam ! It's a shame to hoodwink such eyes as yours, and, as painter to the Embassy, I ought to have the opportunity of painting things in their true colours.

MAD. M. Leaving *couleur de rose* to my uncle's despatches, (*looking about her*) So these are the serfs' cottages—the lairs of the two legged beasts of burden, whom their owners may maim or brand, flog or famish at will! And yet, there are souls in these bodies, Monsieur Mistigris, whatever the princess may think ; great souls, I dare say sometimes ; with large capacities for love and hate, hope and despair ; and all dependent on an absolute will! It is an awful thought! How thankful I am I have no slaves.

MIST. No slaves! And what is Count Karateff ? Prince Khovalenski ? What am I ?

MAD. M. Oh, there's no weight in fetters of people's own forging; besides, you must own I'm not a harsh mistress.

MIST. One whom it is a privilege to serve—a pleasure to obey.

MAD. M. Then obey me now by sitting down instantly and making me a sketch of these cabins.

MIST. (*aside*) A little cold for out-of-door sketching. (*to MADAME DE MAULEON*) With pleasure; it is a charming subject, even if you had not chosen it. Look how well the church dome comes in with these pine huts and the clump of birches, (*takes out sketch book*)

MAD. M. Let me see; you must take it more from the left, or you lose that foreground of rough logs.

MIST. Madame, you should have been an artist, *parole d'honneur* ; but I must not leave you even for a foreground.

MAD. M. Oh, yes; go, pray; but don't get your fingers frost-bitten. I am curious to penetrate one of the serf's huts. I don't require any escort; a woman is always welcome.

MIST. Especially one so charming as Madame la Comtesse. I'll make a blot flying, and return directly.

MAD. M. You will find me here.

Exit MISTIGRIS, R. 1 E.

How the scene recalls those sketches of Ivan's. Ah, they little know the secret of my interest in all this. I promised to be patient, to have faith—the month is almost expired, and no word from him yet. I cannot believe that ample brow, that noble bearing, masked the heart of a coward; and yet—oh, men, men, *you* are the riddles, not we. Let me drive away the thought of him if I can. Here is a cottage rather better than the rest; I'll begin my investigation with it. (*as she approaches the cottage, L.*)

Enter IVAN, L.

A stranger! (*recognizing him*) Ivan!

IVAN. Marguerite! Madame de Mauleon! You here?

MAD. M. I accompanied my uncle to St. Petersburg. I am the guest of the Princess. I little thought you were a visitor at her house.

IVAN. An unexpected and uninvited one, but I am always sure of a welcome at Sitovka. Its owner has been a second parent to me. That never-failing kindness I am about to put to its last proof.

MAD. M. I need not remind you how we parted?

IVAN. No.

MAD. M. You asked me to suspend my judgment for a month. I said I would wait, and wait hopefully. The month draws to an end; will you not speak out at last? Now?

IVAN. I cannot—yet.

MAD. M. Cannot! Ivan, you press my faith hard. Remember, I have seen you patient under words which a man should have thrust down the throat that uttered them. What mystery—what secret can dishonour like such submission?

IVAN. There is one such mystery. I am here to solve it; you need not doubt of the solution.

MAD. M. Ivan, there is hope in your eyes; your voice sounds bold and confident; you look like the same Ivan I knew in Paris.

IVAN. And when my hope is crowned with success, say I shall find the same Marguerite.

MAD. M. No, Ivan, not the same Marguerite, but one who has learned to know her own heart better in this month of suspense and suffering; who feels that if you are unworthy, life has lost for her its brightest promise ; if you are what she believes you, a man—brave, true, and noble—who will rejoice for your sake to defy the world's sneer in the strength of her own heart and yours.

IVAN. Bless you for these words! When I next appear before you, it will be, I hope, to offer you without disguise a hand you may take without dishonour.

ACOUL. (*without*, R. 2 E.) Ivan!

MAD. M. Hark! You are called. You have friends here ?

IVAN. Yes; very old and dear friends ; (*aside*) but she must not know yet. (*crosses to R.*) Till we meet again-----

MAD. M. Faith, and farewell. *Exit* IVAN, R. 2 E.

Enter MISTIGRIS, R. 1 E.

MIST. Oh, Madame! the picturesquest little peasant! She's frightened of me; though I'm not generally regarded as a scarecrow by the sex. Will you come and coax her to give me a sitting flying?

MAD. M. I am at your service, Monsieur Mistigris.

Exeunt, R. 1 E.

Enter IVAN and ACOULINA, R. 2 E.

IVAN. Afraid of being painted! Oh, we shall soon accustom you to that, (*leads her to hut*) Now for the blessed moment that makes me a free man. (*going U. E. L.*)

ACOUL. Stay, Ivan—our father.

Music.—Enter KHOR, R. 2 E.

IVAN. Father!

KHOR. (*receives him coldly*) Ivan, my son, welcome to Sitovka.

IVAN. So cold and stern ! Why, father, you too seem changed, like all I have seen.

KHOR. New masters make new serfs, Ivan.

IVAN. New masters ! I do not understand you.

KHOR. What! have you not heard?

IVAN. Heard what ?

KHOR. Of the old Barine's death.

IVAN. Dead! our old lord dead!

KHOR. This month. What ails you ?

ACOUL. He is pale—'tis the journey. I'll bring you quass, brother; it must do you good, I made it.

Exit, L. 2 E.

IVAN. (*slowly*) Dead! the old lord dead ! Who is lord now ?

KHOR. I forgot you did not know the Barine had married again since you left, some four years ago ; the Princess Bariatinski—she's mistress here.

IVAN. A woman! Thank heaven ! she must pity me.

KHOR. When I say she is mistress, I mean in the eye of the law ; the real lord is her son.

IVAN. Her son—a boy of four years old-----

KHOR. No; her son by a former marriage, (*shouts, R.U.E.*) Hark ! those shouts. It is he—the young lord ; he comes to-day ; yonder is his *troika** in the avenue. They come this way; I must receive him with the rest.

Exit KHOR, R. U. E.

IVAN. Dead! my benefactor dead ! and his successor—How my heart beats! A moment will decide. Heaven grant he, too, have a heart open to mercy.

Enter ACOULINA with jug, L. 2 E.

ACOUL. Drink, brother; 'twill refresh you.

IVAN. By-and-bye. (*shouts again*) Hark! the shouts come nearer. Acoulina, do you know the new lord?

ACOUL. No, 'tis his first visit to the estate. We shall all know him soon. Look ! he's getting out of his troika. (*shout*) Ah ! he is here ; I must not stay. *Exit, L.*

IVAN. (*looks off, R.*) Great heaven! (*with a despairing cry*) It is Count Karateff! Lost! lost!

Music.—Enter KARATEFF, with STEINHARDT, KHOR, IATCHKA, OSIP, and SERFS.

STEIN. Your grace is welcome to Sitovka.

ALL. Our father is welcome, (*they crowd round about him, and kiss his clothes and feet*)

KARA. There, there, my enthusiastic but odoriferous

* A Russian travelling carriage.

family, enough of your embraces ; stand back, (*to STEINHABDT*) So the ladies have arrived, you say. We shall want some of the girls to wait upon the Countess ; pick out the handsomest.

STEIN. Here, Annouchka, Fedorowna—or, stay! Khor, your Acoulina is worth all put together; where is she ?

KHOR. (*aside*) Curse him! My lord, I know not.

KARA. Who's Acoulina?

KHOR. My daughter, your grace.

STEIN. (*aside*) The prettiest serf on the property, my lord.

KARA. So the old fox hides his jewel—Ivan's sister, too. Let me see the girl.

KHOR. (*aside*) Malediction! I will fetch her to my lord. *Exit, L.*

KARA. (*seeing IVAN*) Ha! the painter! I have him at last.

Re-enter MADAME DE MAULEON, R. 1 E.—sees IVAN'S dejection.

MAD. M. (*aside*) Ivan,—again that awed and abject look. Karateff's quarrel with him—I had forgotten that.

IVAN. (*aside*) She will know all now.

KARA. (*seeing her, eagerly takes her hand and kisses it*) Countess, permit me to offer our Russian salute; it means abject submission. Most welcome to Sitovka! Ah ! who would have thought an acquaintance begun like ours would have ended by my receiving you here as my mother's—as *my* most honoured guest. Look !

Re-enter KHOR, followed by ACOULINA, L.

Sweets to the sweet! Here comes your waiting-maid. So this is Acoulina: pack up your things, girl, ready to go to the house.

KHOR. (*aside, grinding his teeth*) I knew it—I knew it.

IVAN, (*aside*) My sister, too—but what matter now ?

KARA. (*to MADAME*) Khor, her father!—one of our oldest serfs. You have a son, too, starost; how is it he is not at hand to welcome his lord ?

KHOR. He returned but half an hour ago. He knew not of my lord's coming; he is here, (*points to IVAN*)

MAD. M. Ivan—his son! a serf!

KARA. I forgot you did not know. Ah! Countess,

we shall have the laugh terribly against you. Yes, your Parisian *preux chevalier* turns out to be no other than one of my mother's serfs, whom the old Prince had spoiled by education. He had those whims—Pity ! a fine lusty young fellow lost for eight years to plough and axe.

MAD. M. (*aside*) Ivan a serf, and in this man's power. Oh ! shame—and I have stooped so low.

KARA. But how's this, Steinhardt? Is this a serfs dress—a serfs bearing before his lord ?

STEIN. Your pardon, my lord; he is a boor spoiled by the old Barine ; but we'll soon teach him. Take off your hat, sirrah ! (*he plucks IVAN'S hat rudely off*)

MAD. M. (*involuntarily starting forward*) No—no.

(*IVAN clenches his fists*)

STEIN. How—do you rebel? Kneel, dog, and ask pardon.

MAD. M. (*with forced cheerfulness*) As you say, Count, you have turned the laugh terribly against me ; but as you are strong be merciful. You tell me my words are commands for you.

KARA. Only try me, and see if in Karateff you have not a more submissive slave, even than in him. (*with a look at IVAN*)

MAD. M. Then do not let this man be humiliated further in my presence.

KARA. Oh ! we must teach our serfs their place.

MAD. M. True; but think how the sight of him will remind me how I have forgotten mine. Let him leave Sitovka, at least while I am here.

KARA. At your wish I will renounce even the duty of teaching him who and what he is. Steinhardt, see the serf, Ivan, transferred to the Velidka demesnes. Khor, you will have your son dressed as becomes his station; you have an old caftan in the house, I dare say. Go in, Ivan Khorvich, when next I see you let it be in the dress of a serf, not in the masquerade of a gentleman. You have worn that too long—eh, Countess? (*KHOR touches IVAN on the shoulder---he follows him off, L. 2 E.*)

MAD. M. (*aside*) I must keep down my heart, more even for his sake than my own.

KARA. (*to himself*) This is something like satisfaction ;

What would a bullet through his brain have been to this ?
(aloud) Now, madam, let me present your lady's maid,
 his sister, by the way. Nay, silly child, don't shrink so,
 I will not hurt thee. Steinhardt, see these fellows have
 their bellies full of millet porridge and salted cucumbers
 at the house, and vodka enough to set them all crazy.
 You must see how the serf enjoys himself under our
 paternal government.

MAD. M. I shall profit by the lesson. Count, you will
 grant me one more favour, not to mention to your mother
 my absurd adventure with this man.

KARA. I can refuse you nothing, but at least let me
 hope for a reward in kind.

MAD. M. Hope on, Count, I always hope—*(aside, as
 KARATEFF goes and speaks to STEINHARDT, C.)* even in this
 place, even for him. If woman's wit hold its own, I will
 save him yet.

KARA. *(down, L.)* Come, Countess, own the laugh is
 terribly against you!

MAD. M. *(laughingly, but with an effort)* They laugh
 best, Count, who laugh last, you know. *Exeunt, L. 1 E.*

STEIN. How children, not one shout for your father,
 who gives you the means of making brutes of yourselves
 for nothing!

ALL. *(shouting feebly)* Huzzah ! Long live our father!
 Long live Count Karateff!

STEIN. Is that your style of shouting for a father?
 Louder, you dogs, louder, *(he lashes them right and left
 with his whip, all shout very loud and run off, L.U. E. and
 1 E.)* Ah, that's something like, that's what one might
 call the genuine utterance of filial affection, *(to ACOULINA)*
 Go in and pack up your things.

Exit ACOULINA, L. U. E., STEINHARDT, L. 1 E.

*Music.—Enter IVAN from cottage L. 2 E. in a serfs
 dress, KHOR watches him from the door.—IVAN sits on
 one of the logs, R.*

IVAN. What was I ? What am I ? A short month
 ago, I was a man among equals; the world smiled upon
 me, art wooed me, and she that was more to me than the
 world, or art, she thought no scorn to let the poor painter

love her; and now a slave among slaves, in the power of one whom I have braved, chastised, insulted, and she here—she knows all—the hope of my life is over. Is this a dream? Shall I wake up and find myself in my old painting room? Oh, patience, patience, patience! Or, who knows, with the slave's garb may come the slavish nature. I may soon sink to the level of my fellows, to know no worse suffering than the smart of the lash, no higher joy than the madness of brandy. But why should I learn endurance? Is there not revenge? (KHOR *rubs his hands*) He cannot fight his serf, but his serf may kill him. And what then? They will give me a dog's death here! She will never know Ivan the free man. Oh, bitter, bitter! (*buries his face in his hands—KHOR approaches on his R. with bottle and drinking horn*)

KHOK. Here is comfort, Ivan Khorvitch.

IVAN. Comfort, father! What comfort for me?

KHOR. The serf's comfort, vodka.

IVAN. It is at least forgetfulness: give it me, (KHOR *sits by his side and offers him brandy, IVAN drinks fiercely, pauses, then pushes away the horn*) No—why should I sink myself from slave to brute?

KHOR. Nay for him that's not content to remain slave, there's but that choice or the other.

IVAN. What other?

KHOR. To rise from slave to free man.

IVAN. I can bear no jesting, father.

KHOR. I do not jest, my son. There is a chance for us to rise as well as fall. Listen. The heavings of the world you have lived in these eight years have reached even here. This huge empire of the Czar rests, like his capital, on rotten piles. As the waters of the Neva threaten the one, so does the still slow rise of upward thought sap the other. (IVAN *gives him a look of contemptuous question*) Ay, thought has come down even to us. St. Petersburg is one huge plot; the South is a network of brotherhoods, including all ranks, even ours—the serfs; but all with one aim—liberty! To be sure, the nobles and we understand the word differently—the nobles would be free of the Czar, we would be free of the nobles. There needs but a head to plan and a hand

to guide the great brute force, and within a month there needn't be a lord or a lord's house standing between this and Warsaw. Will *you* be the hand and head in this great work ? I am old and ignorant; you have your youth, your knowledge, and your wrongs.

IVAN. Father, you tempt a miserable man. Were my fate only in the balance I would dare even the desperate game you propose; but I will not involve tens of thousands in worse sufferings than they endure now. The knowledge you give me credit for, has taught me what slaves' risings have been and ever will be—their means, desolation and massacre, their end, heavier chains than before.

KHOR. But you could guide them.

IVAN. Guide ! Old man, have you seen a rock loosened from the brow of a mountain ? Watch it carry destruction into the valley, and bid him, whose touch set it rolling, guide it.

KHOR. I understand not parables. In plain words, you will not help your enslaved brethren to freedom.

IVAN. Father, to make men free it is not enough to strike off their chains; my brethren are slaves at heart. What if they massacre their lords?—they will but set up in their stead appetites more cruel, passions more merciless.

KHOR. Well, well, you are wise, and you speak better than poor old Khor: let us drink.

IVAN. Ay, ay, the brandy ! the brandy ! (*drinks*) Good liquor! As it mounts to my brain I am free again—again in Paris, in the Louvre; around me rises the marble majesty of the elder world, gods and demigods, deifications of man's strength and woman's loveliness. There live upon the walls once more the sainted mothers of Umbria and Sienna, the stern old senators of Venice, the crimson pageantry and luscious life of Antwerp, (*rising in convulsive excitement*) and there, more lovely than those marble forms, more glowing than those sun-steeped canvasses, she moves and smiles, her hand upon my arm, her breath upon my cheek—my love! my pearl! my Marguerite ! (*falls in a heap, near the log*)

KHOR. He who can find all this in a flask of vodka shall be mine yet, for all his book-learning. Brain-sick

boy! Khor has waited a long life for his revenge; he enjoys something of it now, to see you here, and thus, twice a slave; the rest will come in good time. Revenge is like venison—all the higher-flavoured for the keeping.

Exit, L.

Enter IATCHKA, R. 2 E.

IATCH. (*calling*) Bourmeister! bourmeister !

Enter STEINHARDT, L. 1 E.

STEIN. Well, well, what's to do ?

IATCH. Here's the telega, with the Barine's servants and the luggage, stuck in the marsh beyond the birch-wood; the causeway's broken through, and one of the horses drowned: they can't stir an inch.

STEIN. Here, Osip, Pavli, Boris, a dozen of you!

Enter SERFS, L. 1 E. and KHOR, with ACOULINA, L. 2 E.

Run down with ropes to the marsh, yoke the rogues to the telega, and see that they draw it clear of the slough, though they tug the breath out of their lazy bodies. You go with them, starost. Take your knout.

IVAN. (*springing up*) No ! Stir not, father, on such an errand. Who are you that sets men's bodies to brutes' work thus ?

STEIN. (*in amazement*) Who am I? I'll soon show you. Seize this rascal, some of you.

IVAN. Not while I have life.

STEIN. Seize him, I say.

ACOUL. (*throwing herself at his feet*) Oh spare him !

STEIN. Hold your whine.

ACOUL. Ah ! the Barina ! (*runs off, L. U. E.*)

STEIN. Cowards, you are ten to one. (*they rush on IVAN, who seizes an axe from one of their girdles and threatens them*)

IVAN. Stand off! Slaves as you are, you have lives to lose.

Enter MADAME DE MAULEON and ACOULINA, L. U. E.

MAD. M. Ivan ! What is this ?

IVAN. (*hearing her voice*) Marguerite! (*drops the axe—the SERFS rush on and overpower him*)

STEIN. Tie him up!

MAD. M. Back, dogs!

SERFS, (*angrily*) Dogs?

MAD. M. Aye, dogs! Would men obey such an order ?
(*imperiously*) Release him I say.

STEIN. Madame, they do my bidding.

MAD. M. I countermand it.

STEIN. Who shall answer to her grace for this?

MAD. M. I will. This man is under my protection.
Touch him who dare.

STEIN. I can take no orders but from my mistress.
Tie him up.

MAD. M. Oh God, must I see this! (*falls on her knees,
and buries her face in her hands*)*

* SERFS.	ACOLINA.	SERFS.
IVAN.	STEINHARDT.	MADAME DE MAULEON.
R.		KHORVITCH.
		L.

END OF THE SECOND ACT.

ACT III.

SCENE.—A Campanile attached to the Chateau of Sitovka, ornamented with fresco paintings, arcades round the sides, and barred windows, c, R. and L., overlooking the gardens. A rope hangs communicating with the belfry overhead; two statues, life size, R. and L. ; sconces with wax candles, R. and L. ; a door, R. C, opens on to a terrace, which, by a stair from the ground, gives access to the Campanile ; a winding stair, practicable L. U. E., gives access to the belfry above; a table and seats in white and gold, L., near the bottom of the staircase.

Enter MISTIGRIS, R. C, with a three-cornered note in his hand.

MIST. Let me be sure I am not dreaming, (*reads*)
" Meet me in the Belvidere at six, alone." There's no deception—her handwriting, her coronet at the top, her initials at the bottom. A rendezvous with a real countess !

If it wasn't for poor Ivan, I should say the site of the seventh heaven was in South Russia. First, that delicious little Acoulina to initiate into the graces of *pose* and the mysteries of passion; and now (*sniffing it*) an odoriferous little cocked hat from a live countess. Saprستي! It's running the whole gamut of the sex, from idyllic simplicity to fashionable fascination. Well, it is the proper tribute to the painter, (*bows to himself*) Honour to art—homage to Mistigris.

Enter MADAME DE MAULEON, R. C.

Here she is.

MAD. M. Monsieur Mistigris—not a moment is to be lost.

MIST. I quite agree with you, Madame le Comtesse; let us not lose a moment.

MAD. M. I am here for a purpose that lies very near my heart.

MIST. (*aside*) High-bred straightforwardness !—and mine, too, madam.

MAD. M. Oh! you have guessed the object?

MIST. Guessed? Oh, madam! there are feelings-----"

MAD. M. True, I know your strong regard for him.

MIST. Him! Who?

MAD. M. Your friend Ivan.

MIST. (*disappointed*) Ivan!

MAD. M. Yes; he has been to blame, deeply to blame for keeping the truth from his friends—from me, who was once his friend—but in his humiliation I forget my own—this place, this country, have grown hateful to me. I must return at once to St. Petersburg, to France ; but I cannot bear to leave him in this man's power ; I want your help to compass his escape. Stay ! (*goes towards door to see that no one overhears*)

MIST. The mirage has cleared off, and Mistigris is himself again. (*MADAME DE MAULEON comes down*) Command me, madam ; my arm and my purse are my friend's : the former may be relied on; the latter is a little light, but such as it is----- "

MAD. M. Money I can provide: what I cannot give him are the essentials for escape—a passport and a

disguise ; you must find him both. Your connection with the embassy will save you from all embarrassment about papers. You have your passport here.

MIST. I make it a rule to keep it about me. The gendarmes here are so apt to confound artist and vagabond. *(takes passport from case, and gives it her)*

MAD. M. *(reading)* Ah! the height's about the same; the description, too, will serve.

MIST. Yes, it is vague, and not flattering:— *(reading over her shoulder)* Forehead, ordinary; nose, ditto ; mouth, ditto—in fact, an ordinary *tout ensemble*.

MAD. M. The police are such bad painters, Monsieur Mistigris. *(returns passport)* Put this and your wardrobe at his disposal, *(gives purse)* Give him this as *your* gift; do not say it comes from me. Tell him he will find relays ordered on the road to the frontier.

MIST. All by you ? And he is not to know.

MAD. M. Why should he ? We can never meet again ; but he will be saved from despair; he will have a career before him still. If ever you mention my name to him, let it be to urge him to banish it from his thought, as that of one who is dead to him henceforth, *(turning away)* But do not wound him, do not let him think that I was indifferent to his sufferings. But I shall be missed; I must rejoin the Princess: *au revoir*, Monsieur Mistigris ; remember, I trust you implicitly.

MIST. Madame la Comtesse, I will save him if man can.

Exit MADAME DE MAULEON, R. C.

MIST. It was a flattering dream, but it's over, and Mistigris is once more the soldier of duty. Let's see, I must get Ivan alone; that's not so easy, this Karateff has him closely watched. Ha! here he is, coming up the stairs. But there's that flinty-faced intendant behind him.

Music —Enter STEINHARDT and IVAN, R. C.—MISTIGRIS puts his finger on his lip significantly to IVAN.

MIST. Oh, intendant! this room will do capitally for a studio. The Princess says there should be an easel here ; have it set for me while I find my sitter. Now to leave a suit of my clothes at his father's hut.

Exit, R. c, with a look at IVAN.

STEIN. (*out of breath, and seating himself at the table*)
Ouf! what could possess a man as corpulent as the old lord to build this ridiculous Belvidere, as he called it, forty feet from the ground. I'm out of breath. Look about, sirrah! These painting-tools ought to be here. I see nothing. Eh ?—stop! (*rising, and filling his pipe*)
I remember there was a lot of rubbish poked up into the belfry overhead when the old man died; you go up and bring down all you can find; and while he's about it I'll enjoy a pipe and a glass of tea with Madame Tatiane.

Exit, R. c.—Music.

IVAN. (*at c. window*) The sun draws to his rest, flushing the snowy steppe and dark green pine-woods. I hear the merry bells and the still merrier laughter of the sledging-parties. Hark! music!—airs I have danced to in Paris, with my arm encircling her waist, her hair brushing my cheek, her full heart beating against mine, and now yonder she moves, queen of the festival, and here I stand, spurned by her, outcast, slave ! Ha! she is there, almost within earshot—Karateff takes his place at her side. Oh, for an hour of freedom, face to face with him upon the steppe ! He speaks ! he smiles ! he takes her hand !—I'll look no more.

*Music—he turns away and leans against the window—
one of the statues turns slowly on its pedestal, and
discovers a trap-door, from which KHOR ascends.*

KHOR. (*putting his hand on IVAN'S arm*) My son!

IVAN. Father! (*starts*) How came you here ?

KHOR. Do the rats ask leave to enter? Old Khor is a rat. Old Khor has secrets—that hide freedom— (*IVAN turns away impatiently*) that hide revenge.

IVAN. Ha!

KHOR. You kindle to that! What if, by one motion of this old hand, ere you could wink, I were to destroy this house, and all within it!

IVAN. You !

KHOR. Yes, I!—poor, ragged, weak old Khor! Listen— (*they sit on the lower step of the stairs*) When Buonaparte invaded our country, you know how our old Prince received him. After the day of Smolensk our scouts brought news that Buonaparte with his staff would make

his head quarters of this house. Defence would have been madness, but destruction was easy. The powder that the Prince meant for the regiment he was raising he stowed in the vaults below, (*points down*) I was the only man he entrusted with the secret. The powder is there still. Why should it be wasted? There needs but a slow match to send all their excellencies yonder on the road we meant to send the Frenchman.

IVAN. And this secret is confined to you ?

KHOR. The heads of our serf brotherhood know it.

IVAN. And can they decide on this fearful act against your will ?

KHOR. They have eleven votes to one.

IVAN. Where are they?

KHOR. (*pointing down*) Where the earthquakes are—under our feet. The deed was fixed for this festival, the signal is to be three strokes of that bell—three strokes, ten seconds between each; the rope hangs yonder, within easy reach.

IVAN. (*agitated*) But the strangers !—the Countess !

KHOR. They will travel with the rest, (*points up*)

IVAN. No! no !

KHOR. They'll be in good company.

IVAN. Father, this must not be. I tell you this shall not be. Among these strangers is one whose life is dearer to me than my own. Remember, I have your secret.

KHOR. So, betray your father; and for one you love, save all you hate, (*looks out*) Save her, aye do, that she may spurn you once more ; that Karateff may smile, and press her hand as he is doing now. Look !

IVAN. Curse him!

KHOR. Aye, but save him.

IVAN. No ! save her, only her—for the rest, for him, myself—death, the speedier the better.

KHOR. We want you to head the rising, of which this night's brave firework will be the signal; I'm sent here to make the offer.

IVAN. Ha! I consent—but on one condition, that this deed is deferred till the Countess leaves this place.

KHOR. I will take your offer to our brethren.

IVAN. More, you will make them accept it! You smile, look to it! If they refuse, I denounce them and you.

KHOR. Meanwhile suppose they fire the train.

IVAN. I am in your power.

KHOR. Ha, ha, ha ! But fear not for your Countess ; your life is more to us than her death. As the sun dips below the edge of the steppe, I will be here again. (*touches a spring in the statue, it moves, and shows trap*) Look, the rat's hole ! (*he descends, the statue returns to its place*)

IVAN. Gone ! Thank God I have saved her! Now let annihilation come—to myself—to all. (*looking out, c. window*) Move on, gay revel—laugh—dance, be merry. The volcano sleeps under your feet, and the hands that can unlock its fires are fettered hands, free only to destroy! But I forget my errand: I must seek the old easel and dusty canvasses. I may find some of my own boyish attempts among them. How little I dreamed then of the triumphs the future had in store for me, how little of the misery, (*he ascends the stairs, and exit by the door at the top leading to belfry*)

Enter ACOULINA, R. C.

ACOUL. They've sent me here to be painted. I wonder if it's true, as old Anna says, that it takes the life out of one to be painted? I don't think, if it did, Monsieur Mistigris would paint me. He looks and speaks so gently to me, and yesterday he kissed my hand, and—and then he talks so kindly of poor Ivan. The Countess is kind, too, but she never speaks to me of Ivan, though Monsieur Mistigris says she knew him in Paris. Some one coming—oh ! I hope it's Monsieur Mistigris.

Enter COUNT KARATEFF, R. C., flushed with wine.

KARA. So the sitting is not begun yet; I'm in luck.

ACOUL. The Barine! (*shrinks from him*)

KARA. What are you trembling at, little one ? (*aside*) She's delicious! Don't you know it's your duty to be very glad to see your lord, and to kiss his hand, and call him father?

ACOUL. (*frightened*) Yes—yes, father.

KARA. That part of the ceremony you may omit, and instead of your kissing my hand, suppose I kiss your lips, my rosebud? (*approaching*)

ACOUL. (*shrinking*) Oh, no, my lord! no!

KARA. Oh, yes, my serf, I say, yes! Understand me : I admire your sex in general, and I adore you in particular, hut I hate prudishness. (*she tries to avoid him—he follows her*) Stand still, will you?

ACOUL. Oh, my lord! my lord! my father would kill me if he knew this.

KARA. Hang your father! I'll engage to quiet him. Come here, I tell you! What! you've no respect, for the rights of lord over serf? (*Music*) Then I'll show you those of man over woman, (*seizes her—she screams and struggles*) Be quiet, you little fool! (*she screams again*) Nay, then, quiet or----- (*he struggles fiercely to kiss her—IVAN suddenly appears at the belfry door with the canvasses, drops them, swings down by the rope, and tears ACOULINA from KARATEFF*)

IVAN. Stand off, ruffian!

KARA. (*infuriated*) Out of my way, dog ! or-----

IVAN. Dog! cur! coward ! Ha ! we are man to man at last, (*he seizes KARATEFF—a fierce struggle*)

ACOUL. (*calling*) My lord! Brother! Help ! help !

MADAME DE MAULEON *enters, R. C., followed by* MISTIGRIS, *who runs and parts the strugglers.*

MAD. M. Ivan ! Count! He is murdering him !

MIST. Acoulina in tears ! (*crossing to her*)

KARA. (*re-arranging his cravat*) Your pardon, Countess; but one must defend oneself even when a dog flies at one's throat.

IVAN. (*to KARATEFF*) Thank this lady for your life. You look amazed, madam! You did not think the serf could turn against his lord, even to defend his sister's honour—ay, a sister, whom this man would have outraged had not I been at hand—his serf, but her brother. (*crosses to ACOULINA*)

KARA. Monsieur Mistigris, while I protect the Countess from this madman, will you be good enough to go for the intendant and a couple of my fellows with their knouts ?

MAD. M. Stay, Monsieur Mistigris. Count Karateff, I am so new to Russia that I cannot yet reconcile myself to its usages ; above all, to the manners of its gentlemen. (KARATEFF *is going to speak*) I know she is but a serf—your chattel, and should, no doubt, feel honoured by even such preference as you vouchsafe her. But I am of a country where, in the eyes of a gentleman, woman's best protection is her helplessness. Where that is no defence, I cannot feel that even my station makes me secure. Much has passed since my arrival (*she glances at IVAN, her voice trembling*) to make my visit even thus far a painful one. But after what has occurred now, it is impossible for me to stay here longer. I wish to leave your house—to-night—at once.

KARA. I never fetter my guests' movements.

Enter STEINHARDT, R. C.

STEIN. (*speaking as he enters*) Now, sirrah! where are those painting-tools ? Pardon, my lord—Madame la Countesse.

KARA. See horses put to the *tarantas** at once. It is at the orders of Madame de Mauleon.

STEIN. It shall be ready in five minutes, my lord.

KARA. (*aside to STEINHARDT, as he passes on his way to the door*) Have the axle sawed three parts through.

Exit STEINHARDT, R. C.

MAD. M. I will myself excuse my hasty departure to the Princess; (KARATEFF *looks confused*) she will know nothing of what has passed here. I would not make a mother blush for her son. When I am gone I know what may be in store for these unhappy ones; but remember, before you give the reins to your passion, that I am niece to the ambassador of France. I will take care that what happens here is known at St. Petersburg. Your Czar is severe where his nobles discredit their order—before foreigners. *Exit, R. c.*

KARA. (*aside*) Curse her ! Baffled, and bound, too !

IVAN. (*aside*) She is gone without a word.

KARA. (to MISTIGRIS) You accompany the Countess?

MIST. I must first ask a moment's conversation with my old fellow student and friend Ivan

* A kind of travelling carriage.

KARA. As you please, (*goes to window, L.*)

MIST. My poor fellow, fear not for Acoulina; I will watch over her: for you, you must protect yourself—you are a man.

IVAN. I am; a moment later and you would have found him dead under my hands. I will take her to my father's cabin. God bless you for your offer of escape. I cannot accept it, my game is played out. Promise me one thing, old friend.

MIST. Anything.

IVAN. When I return here, go you to my father's, and stay there to-night.

MIST. But there's a ball, and my patron is St. Deux-temps.

IVAN. Stay at my father's: would you refuse a last request?

MIST. Well, I promise ; (*aside*) no harm in promising.

IVAN. Come, Acoulina. Tremble not, dear sister.

KARA. Ay, go now; our reckoning is to come.

IVAN. I can face it, come when it will. May you be as ready to meet yours. *Exit* IVAN, *leading* ACOULINA, R, C.

MIST. I itch to fight him, but for Ivan's sake I will try one appeal to his better feelings, if he has any.

KARA. (*at window, c.*) The Countess has lost no time—see, the tarantas has started. You must be my guest still.

MIST. On one condition—that you overlook this outbreak of Ivan's.

KARA. He is my serf; he must be taught to remember it.

MIST. But now the heat of quarrel has passed, surely you will not punish him in cold blood.

KARA. My dear Monsieur Mistigris, I have one of those constitutions that enjoy punishing in cold blood.

MIST. Count, I want a model for Mephistopheles—will you stand to me ?

KARA. Is this an atelier pleasantry, sir?

MIST. I am quite serious.

KARA. So you would play the Valentine to this Gretchen: you remember his fate ?

MIST. Perfectly: Mephistopheles kills him with a foul thrust. The man who can outrage a helpless woman,

and in cold blood punish a brother who defends her, is capable of such things. Count Karateff, you are a coward.

KARA. Ha! I see the pretty Acoulina has found a Paladin. This is a challenge.

MIST. Unless you prefer Ivan's plan: the window is about the height of the grand tier of the opera.

KARA. Spare your wit, sir: I'll meet you; when?

MIST. After supper.

KARA. Where?

MIST. Why not here? There is plenty of room for very pretty pistol practice. We can lock the door, and keep out intruders till the ball is over.

KARA. Your plan is perfect. In an hour?

MIST. Punctually. Our watches? (*takes out his watch, KARATEFF does the same—they compare them*) They are together, I see.

KARA. I must return to my guests. You will forgive my leaving you so abruptly.

MIST. Do not mention it, I beg.

KARATEFF *bows, and exit, R. c.*

MIST. Vive la France ! A bas les Russes ! The confidant of a Countess and the antagonist of a Count! Oh ! how I shall hold up my head amongst the fellows of Ingre's *atelier* when I get back to Paris. Yes, I'll see Khovalensk! at once. But I must provide against interruption. Let's see : I'll lock the door and take the key in my pocket, (*goes to door, c.*) No key ! there's a lock, though ; I'll find out the old housekeeper, she's sure to have the key amongst that antediluvian bunch she goes jingling about with, like an elderly sledge-horse. Then I'll slip up here, lock the door from the outside, to keep the place empty, return to the ball just for two rounds of a *deux temps*, and then one, two, three! (*imitates the action of firing in a duel*) Scene of my first encounter, I salute your venerable walls, (*takes off his cap, and bows*)

Re-enter IVAN, C. R.

Well, my poor Ivan, you've thought better of my offer.

IVAN. I have found a still better means of escape than yours.

MIST. You have ! What?

IVAN. Death!

MIST. That's out of the frying pan into the fire.

IVAN. You did not think I would survive this degradation. Why, man, she has seen me tied up for the lash—like a hound—she—Oh God! what have I to live for?

MIST. For your sister—for your friend, There's a future before you—only take my offer, fly—forget her—they're all alike, cold heartless creatures.

IVAN. Forget her—I—Is she gone ?

MIST. Yes, drove off at full speed a quarter of an hour ago.

IVAN. (*aside*) Thank God ! now let the end come. Old friend, true comrade, brother in that glorious art I shall never practice more—farewell! (*they shake hands*)

MIST. (*aside*) I shall snivel if I stay, and the Count must see no weakness about Mistigris. I'll go and wheedle the key out of that voluminous old housekeeper. (*going*) Stay—you must take my purse and passport.

IVAN. Nay, you will want both. Remember you have bound yourself to pass to night under my father's roof.

MIST. Oh yes, I have promised, and I'll do it again if you like—(*aside*) as I said before, there's no harm in promising. *Exit, R. c.*

IVAN. Marguerite gone, my sister protected, my friend safe—what need for me more—my part is played. Ha ! the sun's rim dips below the horizon.

(*the Statue, R., moves as before and KHOR appears*)

KHOR. And here is Khor with the consent of our brethren, (*at the window*) Look, how the sledges swarm round the portico. They are lighting up the ball room. The birds are flocking to the trap.

IVAN. Horrible! Father, I have consented to know of this design, but I cannot bear to talk of it. Pity sleeps now in my heart, deadened by intolerable suffering, but should she wake-----

KHOR. All is prepared against her waking, (*bringing him to window*) Look, you see those men ; they know your misgiving; every man has a hatchet at his belt; before you could give an alarm, you would be hacked limb from limb.

IVAN. A prisoner!

KHOR. No ; only under observation. Pshaw! never tremble. You have not suffered so long as I have. In my heart all feelings have been choked by one—the thirst for vengeance. I'll see all prepared—the match—the train—the means of escape! then return to ring the merry peal on our friend yonder, (*points to belfry—he descends—the stage has become quite dark*)

IVAN. Their death-knell and mine ! So many sent thus suddenly to their account—so many, and so laden with sin—sin that is more others than their own; and I watched here—unable to warn them. Pity! if aught wake henceforth in my heart it will be remorse; but at least I take no part in this bloody deed, and I will not survive it. My Marguerite, I have saved her. She will soon have forgotten me.

Music—Enter the COUNTESS, equipped for a journey, carrying a small travelling bag—she gropes her way in.

MAD. M. Monsieur Mistigris !

IVAN. The Countess ! Here still!

MAD. M. It is so dark I could hardly find my way up to you. The axle of the tarantas has broken. I have been forced to return till another carriage can be found. But what are you doing here still in the dark ?

IVAN. You are mistaken, madam, he is not here.

MAD. M. Ivan ! Can he have refused Monsieur Mistigris's offer ?

(a pause—at this moment MISTIGRIS appears outside door, R. c.)

MIST. I've got the key at last; this will secure the room against intruders, (*he closes the door softly and locks it on the outside, unheard by IVAN and MADAME DE MAULEON*)

MAD. M. I do not wish to be seen by any one belonging to the house. Will you send Monsieur Mistigris to me?

IVAN. (*aside*) I must command myself. Oh, madam ! why—why have you come back ? I implore you leave this place instantly.

MAD. M. That I am here, sir, pains me as much as it must pain you. I will not stay one instant longer than is necessary to procure another carriage.

IVAN. Then come, madam! Follow me—silently and quickly. Those armed serfs below ! (*pauses*) No ! Not all the arms in Russia shall stop me when her safety is at stake. Mark me, your life depends on your leaving this place.

MAD. M. My life!

IVAN. I'll lead you to my father's cottage.

MAD. M. (*aside*) Ha, should this be a snare !

IVAN. You pause : time was you would not have doubted my word.

MAD. M. It is but his fortunes that have altered, he is the same Ivan still. I will follow you.

IVAN. (*groping to door*) Here is the door, (*shaking it*) What's this? Locked outside ! we are prisoners.

MAD. M. Prisoners! (*aside*) Oh! I would fain trust him, but he has suffered sorely; I have been the involuntary cause of his suffering—he may think he has wrongs to wreak on me. (*to him*) Ivan! Ivan! is this contrived ?

IVAN. Contrived ! I contrive your destruction !

MAD. M. Destruction! What do you mean?

IVAN. (*aside*) Oh fool that I was to alarm her now, when coolness alone can save her. Oh for a light! a light!

MAD. M. I have matches in my travelling bag.

IVAN. Give them me quick—there are wax lights in the sconces, (*lights candles—lights up*) By that rope I can lower you from the window—Ha ! barred—all barred. (*runs to, C. window, and heaves at bars with superhuman efforts*) I cannot stir them.

MAD. M. Ivan, I implore you, what does this mean?

IVAN. It means that we are shut up here with death under our feet—death sudden and terrible—death which a moment may let loose.

MAD. M. (*at window, c.*) Help ! help! help!

IVAN. (*at window, c.*) The wind sets dead the other way, there is no hope.

MAD. M. No hope, Ivan ! Oh, yes, where you are there is hope—you will not let them harm me—you will not, Ivan!

IVAN. The old tone—Oh, God! do not speak so, or you will unnerve me. If my life could save you, you should be saved, but it cannot.

MAD. M. What mysterious danger is this you fear for me?

IVAN. There is a mine beneath this place, which desperate men are leagued to fire—now—Ha ! that stair case, could I reach the vault—tell my father she has returned. *(he goes to statute, R., and tries to move it)* I cannot stir nor break it. There is a secret spring—Despair, madam—give up hope—I can do no more, *(sinks into a seat)*

MAD. M. To die so young—so unprepared—Heaven help us both. I would not part in bitterness from you. Forgive me ; we must have lived strangers, but we may die friends, may we not ? *(offers her hand timidly)*

IVAN. *(takes her hand)* I never thought to hold your hand again. How could I bless the death that bring us together thus, so I could die for both ! Marguerite—Oh, let me call you by that name once more.

MAD. M. Yes, we stand on the brink of the grave, wherein we know that lord and serf are equal. It is that makes me so bold, to hold your hand thus—to clasp it—to press it to my lips. Oh, could I in the few moments yet before us, tell all I have suffered since I have been here ; how my heart has bled for you; how I have stifled its voice for your sake—thinking by feigned indifference for you to blunt the edge of Karateff's hate, and so take from the bitterness of your misery. You have not misjudged me—say you have not?

IVAN. I thought you despised me! I despised my self. To have hid from you the miserable truth—to have exposed you to humiliation—to their sarcasms. Oh, say you forgive me.

MAD. M. Forgive you, my poor Ivan! It is I who should ask to be forgiven. I have been untrue to love—I tried to shut my heart against you—I could not do that—love was too strong—but pride was stronger: for awhile it wrestled down the love that bade me fall upon your neck, and kiss and comfort you as I do now! *(throws herself passionately into his arms)*

Enter KHOR, from the trap, R.—he stands amazed at sight of lights, then at IVAN, and MADAME DE MAULEON.

KHOR. *(aside)* Lights! that woman here! but it's too late—the signal, *(runs up the stairs to bell-rope, IVAN sees, follows, and grapples with him)*

IVAN. My condition, father, she is here!

KHOR. She was gone—she has returned—let her take the consequences.

IVAN. Back, I tell you! You shall not give the signal.

KHOR. *(who has got the rope)* Let me go! *(bell sounds)*

IVAN. Not with life!

KHOR. Without it then, *(bell sounds a second time—*

IVAN drags KHOR from bell rope; KHOR draws his knife and is about to stab IVAN, who catches his arm, and they struggle down the stairs and fall on the stage, IVAN undermost)

MAD. M. *(screams)* Help! Help!

(the door, R. C. is heard to unlock and is thrown open, from without—MISTIGRIS appears with pistol)

MIST. Stand back, madam, for your life! *(he fires—a pause, KHOR slowly rolls off IVAN)* Who's hit?

KHOR. *(painfully)* I am!

(IVAN rises and rushes to MADAME DE MAULEON, R.)

MAD D. Ivan—dear Ivan, you are safe!

IVAN. This is terrible—Thank heaven, 'twas not my hand did this—Father!

KHOR. My child, bring me my child!

IVAN. I am here, father!

KHOR. You! I said my child—my Acoulina—*(MISTIGRIS goes off, R. C. on a sign from IVAN)* My own flesh and blood!

ACOULINA runs on with MISTIGRIS followed by KARATEFF, and SERFS, R. C.

ACOUL. Father! dear father! *(kneels by KHOR)*

KHOR. My Acoulina—I cannot die easy with my sin unspoken—come near—Acoulina, do not curse me, I murdered her—my Mavroushka!

KARA. Murdered her! don't we all know she was drowned in the flood with the infant prince her nurseling.

KHOR. No, the flood spared her; I was more cruel. I killed them I tell you, her and her son!

IVAN. Her son? He lives, father, he is here! *(tries to take his hand)*

KHOR. Stand off! Khor's hand must not be grasped by a Bariatinski. The innocent boy I murdered had the

blood, but not the name, (*to IVAN*) Son of Prince Bariatinski, I saved you and reared you as a serf to avenge my order, and destroy your own.

KARA. The old man wanders, or it is a lie to foist a serf into my place.

KHOR. Your place ? His—(*pointing to IVAN*) I am dying—what use in lying now. Apollonius has my confession : you get it, madam, they cannot silence you.

KARA. Will no one stop his ravings ? (*SERFS advance*)

IVAN. (*waving them off*) Back, before the truth of dying words !

KARA. Serfs, will you see your lord insulted ?

KHOR. (*struggling to his feet by an effort of dying energy*) There stands your lord ! (*points to IVAN*)

ALL. Long live Prince Bariatinski!

KHOR. Ha! well shouted, children! (*to IVAN*) Prince, you will shew pity to the serf, for you have learnt how he suffers; thank old Khor for the lesson. Your hand, my own Acoulina—Mavrouschka, I am coming! (*falls and dies*)

ACOUL. Father! Father ! (*MISTIGRIS raises her from the body*)

IVAN. Marguerite!

MAD. M. My own at last, (*they embrace*) Acoulina, sister, Here, to my heart! There let the hot tears fall.

(*turning, with a tender look to IVAN*)

Till she too learn, like us, LOVE LEVELS ALL.

SERFS.

KARATEFF.

IVAN. MADAME Da MAULEON. ACOULINA. KHOR. MISTIGRIS.

R.

L.

Curtain.