

# Uprooted

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Anton Chekhov



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## *An Incident of My Travels*

I WAS on my way back from evening service. The clock in the belfry of the Svyatogorsky Monastery pealed out its soft melodious chimes by way of prelude and then struck twelve. The great courtyard of the monastery stretched out at the foot of the Holy Mountains on the banks of the Donets, and, enclosed by the high hostel buildings as by a wall, seemed now in the night, when it was lighted up only by dim lanterns, lights in the windows, and the stars, a living hotch-potch full of movement, sound, and the most original confusion. From end to end, so far as the eye could see, it was all choked up with carts, old-fashioned coaches and chaises, vans, tilt-carts, about which stood crowds of horses, dark and white, and horned oxen, while people bustled about, and black long-skirted lay brothers threaded their way in and out in all directions. Shadows and streaks of light cast from the windows moved over the

carts and the heads of men and horses, and in the dense twilight this all assumed the most monstrous capricious shapes: here the tilted shafts stretched upwards to the sky, here eyes of fire appeared in the face of a horse, there a lay brother grew a pair of black wings. . . . There was the noise of talk, the snorting and munching of horses, the creaking of carts, the whimpering of children. Fresh crowds kept walking in at the gate and belated carts drove up.

The pines which were piled up on the overhanging mountain, one above another, and leaned towards the roof of the hostel, gazed into the courtyard as into a deep pit, and listened in wonder; in their dark thicket the cuckoos and nightingales never ceased calling. . . . Looking at the confusion, listening to the uproar, one fancied that in this living hotch-potch no one understood anyone, that everyone was looking for something and would not find it,

and that this multitude of carts, chaises and human beings could not ever succeed in getting off.

More than ten thousand people flocked to the Holy Mountains for the festivals of St. John the Divine and St. Nikolay the wonder-worker. Not only the hostel buildings, but even the bake-house, the tailoring room, the carpenter's shop, the carriage house, were filled to overflowing. . . . Those who had arrived towards night clustered like flies in autumn, by the walls, round the wells in the yard, or in the narrow passages of the hostel, waiting to be shown a resting-place for the night. The lay brothers, young and old, were in an incessant movement, with no rest or hope of being relieved. By day or late at night they produced the same impression of men hastening somewhere and agitated by something, yet, in spite of their extreme exhaustion, their faces remained full of courage and kindly welcome, their voices friendly, their

movements rapid. . . . For everyone who came they had to find a place to sleep, and to provide food and drink; to those who were deaf, slow to understand, or profuse in questions, they had to give long and wearisome explanations, to tell them why there were no empty rooms, at what o'clock the service was to be where holy bread was sold, and so on. They had to run, to carry, to talk incessantly, but more than that, they had to be polite, too, to be tactful, to try to arrange that the Greeks from Mariupol, accustomed to live more comfortably than the Little Russians, should be put with other Greeks, that some shopkeeper from Bahmut or Lisitchansk, dressed like a lady, should not be offended by being put with peasants. There were continual cries of: "Father, kindly give us some kvass! Kindly give us some hay!" or "Father, may I drink water after confession?" And the lay brother would have to give out kvass or hay or to answer: "Address yourself to the priest, my good woman, we have not the authority to give per-

mission." Another question would follow, "Where is the priest then?" and the lay brother would have to explain where was the priest's cell. With all this bustling activity, he yet had to make time to go to service in the church, to serve in the part devoted to the gentry, and to give full answers to the mass of necessary and unnecessary questions which pilgrims of the educated class are fond of showering about them. Watching them during the course of twenty-four hours, I found it hard to imagine when these black moving figures sat down and when they slept.

When, coming back from the evening service, I went to the hostel in which a place had been assigned me, the monk in charge of the sleeping quarters was standing in the doorway, and beside him, on the steps, was a group of several men and women dressed like townsfolk.

"Sir," said the monk, stopping me, "will you be so good as to allow this young man to pass the

night in your room? If you would do us the favour! There are so many people and no place left—it is really dreadful!"

And he indicated a short figure in a light overcoat and a straw hat. I consented, and my chance companion followed me. Unlocking the little padlock on my door, I was always, whether I wanted to or not, obliged to look at the picture that hung on the doorpost on a level with my face. This picture with the title, "A Meditation on Death," depicted a monk on his knees, gazing at a coffin and at a skeleton laying in it. Behind the man's back stood another skeleton, somewhat more solid and carrying a scythe.

"There are no bones like that," said my companion, pointing to the place in the skeleton where there ought to have been a pelvis. "Speaking generally, you know, the spiritual fare provided for the people is not of the first quality," he added, and heaved through his nose a long and very melancholy sigh, meant to show me



that I had to do with a man who really knew something about spiritual fare.

While I was looking for the matches to light a candle he sighed once more and said:

"When I was in Harkov I went several times to the anatomy theatre and saw the bones there; I have even been in the mortuary. Am I not in your way?"

My room was small and poky, with neither table nor chairs in it, but quite filled up with a chest of drawers by the window, the stove and two little wooden sofas which stood against the walls, facing one another, leaving a narrow space to walk between them. Thin rusty-looking little mattresses lay on the little sofas, as well as my belongings. There were two sofas, so this room was evidently intended for two, and I pointed out the fact to my companion.

"They will soon be ringing for mass, though," he said, "and I shan't have to be in your way very long."

Still under the impression that he was in my way and feeling awkward, he moved with a guilty step to his little sofa, sighed guiltily and sat down. When the tallow candle with its dim, dilatory flame had left off flickering and burned up sufficiently to make us both visible, I could make out what he was like. He was a young man of two-and-twenty, with a round and pleasing face, dark childlike eyes, dressed like a townsman in grey cheap clothes, and as one could judge from his complexion and narrow shoulders, not used to manual labour. He was of a very indefinite type; one could take him neither for a student nor for a man in trade, still less for a workman. But looking at his attractive face and childlike friendly eyes, I was unwilling to believe he was one of those vagabond impostors with whom every conven-

tual establishment where they give food and lodging is flooded, and who give themselves out as divinity students, expelled for standing up for justice, or for church singers who have lost their voice. . . . There was something characteristic, typical, very familiar in his face, but what exactly, I could not remember nor make out.

For a long time he sat silent, pondering. Probably because I had not shown appreciation of his remarks about bones and the mortuary, he thought that I was ill-humoured and displeased at his presence. Pulling a sausage out of his pocket, he turned it about before his eyes and said irresolutely:

"Excuse my troubling you, . . . have you a knife?"

I gave him a knife.

"The sausage is disgusting," he said, frowning and cutting himself off a little bit. "In the shop here they sell you rubbish and fleece you horribly. . . . I would offer you a piece, but you would scarcely care to consume it. Will you have some?"

In his language, too, there was something typical that had a very great deal in common with what was characteristic in his face, but what it was exactly I still could not decide. To inspire confidence and to show that I was not ill-humoured, I took some of the proffered sausage. It certainly was horrible; one needed the teeth of a good house-dog to deal with it. As we worked our jaws we got into conversation; we began complaining to each other of the lengthiness of the service.

"The rule here approaches that of Mount Athos," I said; "but at Athos the night services last ten hours, and on great feast-days — fourteen! You should go there for prayers!"

"Yes," answered my companion, and he wagged his head, "I have been here for three weeks. And you know, every day services, every day services. On ordinary days at midnight they ring for matins, at five o'clock for early mass, at nine o'clock for late mass. Sleep is utterly out of the question. In the daytime there are hymns of praise, special prayers, vespers. . . . And when I was preparing for the sacrament I was simply dropping from exhaustion." He sighed and went on: "And it's awkward not to go to church. . . . The monks give one a room, feed one, and, you know, one is ashamed not to go. One wouldn't mind standing it for a day or two, perhaps, but three weeks is too much—much too much I Are you here for long?"

"I am going to-morrow evening."

"But I am staying another fortnight."

"But I thought it was not the rule to stay for so long here?" I said.

"Yes, that's true: if anyone stays too long, sponging on the monks, he is asked to go. Judge for yourself, if the proletariat were allowed to stay on here as long as they liked there would never be a room vacant, and they would eat up the whole monastery. That's true. But the monks make an exception for me, and I hope they won't turn me out for some time. You know I am a convert."

"You mean?"

"I am a Jew baptized. . . . Only lately I have embraced orthodoxy."

Now I understood what I had before been utterly unable to understand from his face: his thick lips, and his way of twitching up the right corner of his mouth and his right eyebrow, when he was talking, and that peculiar oily

brilliance of his eyes which is only found in Jews. I understood, too, his phraseology. . . . From further conversation I learned that his name was Alexandr Ivanitch, and had in the past been Isaac, that he was a native of the Mogilev province, and that he had come to the Holy Mountains from Novotcherkassk, where he had adopted the orthodox faith.

Having finished his sausage, Alexandr Ivanitch got up, and, raising his right eyebrow, said his prayer before the ikon. The eyebrow remained up when he sat down again on the little sofa and began giving me a brief account of his long biography.

"From early childhood I cherished a love for learning," he began in a tone which suggested he was not speaking of himself, but of some great man of the past. "My parents were poor Hebrews; they exist by buying and selling in a small way; they live like beggars, you know, in filth. In fact, all the people there are poor and

superstitious; they don't like education, because education, very naturally, turns a man away from religion. . . . They are fearful fanatics. . . . Nothing would induce my parents to let me be educated, and they wanted me to take to trade, too, and to know nothing but the Talmud. . . . But you will agree, it is not everyone who can spend his whole life struggling for a crust of bread, wallowing in filth, and mumbling the Talmud. At times officers and country gentlemen would put up at papa's inn, and they used to talk a great deal of things which in those days I had never dreamed of; and, of course, it was alluring and moved me to envy. I used to cry and entreat them to send me to school, but they taught me to read Hebrew and nothing more. Once I found a Russian newspaper, and took it home with me to make a kite of it. I was beaten for it, though I couldn't read Russian. Of course, fanaticism is inevitable, for every people instinctively strives to preserve its national-



ity, but I did not know that then and was very indignant. . . ."

Having made such an intellectual observation, Isaac, as he had been, raised his right eyebrow higher than ever in his satisfaction and looked at me, as it were, sideways, like a cock at a grain of corn, with an air as though he would say: "Now at last you see for certain that I am an intellectual man, don't you?" After saying something more about fanaticism and his irresistible yearning for enlightenment, he went on:

"What could I do? I ran away to Smolensk. And there I had a cousin who relined saucepans and made tins. Of course, I was glad to work under him, as I had nothing to live upon; I was bare-foot and in rags. . . . I thought I could work by day and study at night and on Saturdays. And so I did, but the police found out I had no passport and sent me back by stages to my father. . . ."

Alexandr Ivanitch shrugged one shoulder and sighed.

"What was one to do?" he went on, and the more vividly the past rose up before his mind, the more marked his Jewish accent became. "My parents punished me and handed me over to my grandfather, a fanatical old Jew, to be reformed. But I went off at night to Shklov. And when my uncle tried to catch me in Shklov, I went off to Mogilev; there I stayed two days and then I went off to Starodub with a comrade."

Later on he mentioned in his story Gonel, Kiev, Byelaya, Tserkov, Uman, Balt, Bendery and at last reached Odessa.

"In Odessa I wandered about for a whole week, out of work and hungry, till I was taken in by some Jews who went about the town buying second-hand clothes. I knew how to read and

write by then, and had done arithmetic up to fractions, and I wanted to go to study somewhere, but I had not the means. What was I to do? For six months I went about Odessa buying old clothes, but the Jews paid me no wages, the rascals. I resented it and left them. Then I went by steamer to Perekop."

"What for?"

"Oh, nothing. A Greek promised me a job there. In short, till I was sixteen I wandered about like that with no definite work and no roots till I got to Poltava. There a student, a Jew, found out that I wanted to study, and gave me a letter to the Harkov students. Of course, I went to Harkov. The students consulted together and began to prepare me for the technical school. And, you know, I must say the students that I met there were such that I shall never forget them to the day of my death. To say nothing of their giving me food and lodging, they set me on the right path, they made me think, showed

me the object of life. Among them were intellectual remarkable people who by now are celebrated. For instance, you have heard of Grumaher, haven't you?"

"No, I haven't."

"You haven't! He wrote very clever articles in the *Harkov Gazette*, and was preparing to be a professor. Well, I read a great deal and attended the student's societies, where you hear nothing that is commonplace. I was working up for six months, but as one has to have been through the whole high-school course of mathematics to enter the technical school, Grumaher advised me to try for the veterinary institute, where they admit high-school boys from the sixth form. Of course, I began working for it. I did not want to be a veterinary surgeon but they told me that after finishing the course at the veterinary institute I should be admitted to the faculty of medicine without examination. I learnt all Kühner; I could read Cornelius Ne-

pos, *à livre ouvert*; and in Greek I read through almost all Curtius. But, you know, one thing and another, . . . the students leaving and the uncertainty of my position, and then I heard that my mamma had come and was looking for me all over Harkov. Then I went away. What was I to do? But luckily I learned that there was a school of mines here on the Donets line. Why should I not enter that? You know the school of mines qualifies one as a mining foreman—a splendid berth. I know of mines where the foremen get a salary of fifteen hundred a year. Capital. . . . I entered it. . . ."

With an expression of reverent awe on his face Alexandr Ivanitch enumerated some two dozen abstruse sciences in which instruction was given at the school of mines; he described the school itself, the construction of the shafts, and the condition of the miners. . . . Then he told me a terrible story which sounded like an invention, though I could not help believing it, for

his tone in telling it was too genuine and the expression of horror on his Semitic face was too evidently sincere.

"While I was doing the practical work, I had such an accident one day!" he said, raising both eyebrows. "I was at a mine here in the Donets district. You have seen, I dare say, how people are let down into the mine. You remember when they start the horse and set the gates moving one bucket on the pulley goes down into the mine, while the other comes up; when the first begins to come up, then the second goes down—exactly like a well with two pails. Well, one day I got into the bucket, began going down, and can you fancy, all at once I heard, Trrr! The chain had broken and I flew to the devil together with the bucket and the broken bit of chain. . . . I fell from a height of twenty feet, flat on my chest and stomach, while the bucket, being heavier, reached the bottom before me, and I hit this shoulder here against its

edge. I lay, you know, stunned. I thought I was killed, and all at once I saw a fresh calamity: the other bucket, which was going up, having lost the counter-balancing weight, was coming down with a crash straight upon me. . . . What was I to do? Seeing the position, I squeezed closer to the wall, crouching and waiting for the bucket to come full crush next minute on my head. I thought of papa and mamma and Mogilev and Grumaher. . . . I prayed. . . . But happily . . . it frightens me even to think of it. . . ."

Alexandr Ivanitch gave a constrained smile and rubbed his forehead with his hand.

"But happily it fell beside me and only caught this side a little. . . . It tore off coat, shirt and skin, you know, from this side. . . . The force of it was terrific. I was unconscious after it. They got me out and sent me to the hospital. I was there four months, and the doctors there said I should go into consumption. I always have a

cough now and a pain in my chest. And my psychic condition is terrible. . . . When I am alone in a room I feel overcome with terror. Of course, with my health in that state, to be a mining foreman is out of the question. I had to give up the school of mines. . . ."

"And what are you doing now?" I asked.

"I have passed my examination as a village schoolmaster. Now I belong to the orthodox church, and I have a right to be a teacher. In Novotcherkassk, where I was baptized, they took a great interest in me and promised me a place in a church parish school. I am going there in a fortnight, and shall ask again."

Alexandr Ivanitch took off his overcoat and remained in a shirt with an embroidered Russian collar and a worsted belt.

"It is time for bed," he said, folding his overcoat for a pillow, and yawning. "Till lately, you



know, I had no knowledge of God at all. I was an atheist. When I was lying in the hospital I thought of religion, and began reflecting on that subject. In my opinion, there is only one religion possible for a thinking man, and that is the Christian religion. If you don't believe in Christ, then there is nothing else to believe in, . . . is there? Judaism has outlived its day, and is preserved only owing to the peculiarities of the Jewish race. When civilization reaches the Jews there will not be a trace of Judaism left. All young Jews are atheists now, observe. The New Testament is the natural continuation of the Old, isn't it?"

I began trying to find out the reasons which had led him to take so grave and bold a step as the change of religion, but he kept repeating the same, "The New Testament is the natural continuation of the Old"—a formula obviously not his own, but acquired—which did not explain the question in the least. In spite of my

efforts and artifices, the reasons remained obscure. If one could believe that he had embraced Orthodoxy from conviction, as he said he had done, what was the nature and foundation of this conviction it was impossible to grasp from his words. It was equally impossible to assume that he had changed his religion from interested motives: his cheap shabby clothes, his going on living at the expense of the convent, and the uncertainty of his future, did not look like interested motives. There was nothing for it but to accept the idea that my companion had been impelled to change his religion by the same restless spirit which had flung him like a chip of wood from town to town, and which he, using the generally accepted formula, called the craving for enlightenment.

Before going to bed I went into the corridor to get a drink of water. When I came back my companion was standing in the middle of the

room, and he looked at me with a scared expression. His face looked a greyish white, and there were drops of perspiration on his forehead.

"My nerves are in an awful state," he muttered with a sickly smile, "awful I It's acute psychological disturbance. But that's of no consequence."

And he began reasoning again that the New Testament was a natural continuation of the Old, that Judaism has outlived its day. . . . Picking out his phrases, he seemed to be trying to put together the forces of his conviction and to smother with them the uneasiness of his soul, and to prove to himself that in giving up the religion of his fathers he had done nothing dreadful or peculiar, but had acted as a thinking man free from prejudice, and that therefore he could boldly remain in a room all alone with his conscience. He was trying to convince himself, and with his eyes besought my assistance.

Meanwhile a big clumsy wick had burned up on our tallow candle. It was by now getting light. At the gloomy little window, which was turning blue, we could distinctly see both banks of the Donets River and the oak copse beyond the river. It was time to sleep.

"It will be very interesting here to-morrow," said my companion when I put out the candle and went to bed. "After early mass, the procession will go in boats from the Monastery to the Hermitage."

Raising his right eyebrow and putting his head on one side, he prayed before the ikons, and, without undressing, lay down on his little sofa.

"Yes," he said, turning over on the other side.

"Why yes?" I asked.

"When I accepted orthodoxy in Novotcherkassk my mother was looking for me in Rostov. She

felt that I meant to change my religion," he sighed, and went on: "It is six years since I was there in the province of Mogilev. My sister must be married by now."

After a short silence, seeing that I was still awake, he began talking quietly of how they soon, thank God, would give him a job, and that at last he would have a home of his own, a settled position, his daily bread secure. . . . And I was thinking that this man would never have a home of his own, nor a settled position, nor his daily bread secure. He dreamed aloud of a village school as of the Promised Land; like the majority of people, he had a prejudice against a wandering life, and regarded it as something exceptional, abnormal and accidental, like an illness, and was looking for salvation in ordinary workaday life. The tone of his voice betrayed that he was conscious of his abnormal position and regretted it. He seemed as it were apologizing and justifying himself.

Not more than a yard from me lay a homeless wanderer; in the rooms of the hostels and by the carts in the courtyard among the pilgrims some hundreds of such homeless wanderers were waiting for the morning, and further away, if one could picture to oneself the whole of Russia, a vast multitude of such uprooted creatures was pacing at that moment along highroads and side-tracks, seeking something better, or were waiting for the dawn, asleep in wayside inns and little taverns, or on the grass under the open sky. . . . As I fell asleep I imagined how amazed and perhaps even overjoyed all these people would have been if reasoning and words could be found to prove to them that their life was as little in need of justification as any other. In my sleep I heard a bell ring outside as plaintively as though shedding bitter tears, and the lay brother calling out several times:

"Lord Jesus Christ, Son of God, have mercy upon us! Come to mass!"

When I woke up my companion was not in the room. It was sunny and there was a murmur of the crowds through the window. Going out, I learned that mass was over and that the procession had set off for the Hermitage some time before. The people were wandering in crowds upon the river bank and, feeling at liberty, did not know what to do with themselves: they could not eat or drink, as the late mass was not yet over at the Hermitage; the Monastery shops where pilgrims are so fond of crowding and asking prices were still shut. In spite of their exhaustion, many of them from sheer boredom were trudging to the Hermitage. The path from the Monastery to the Hermitage, towards which I directed my steps, twined like a snake along the high steep bank, going up and down and threading in and out among the oaks and pines. Below, the Donets gleamed, reflecting

the sun; above, the rugged chalk cliff stood up white with bright green on the top from the young foliage of oaks and pines, which, hanging one above another, managed somehow to grow on the vertical cliff without falling. The pilgrims trailed along the path in single file, one behind another. The majority of them were Little Russians from the neighbouring districts, but there were many from a distance, too, who had come on foot from the provinces of Kursk and Orel; in the long string of varied colours there were Greek settlers, too, from Mariupol, strongly built, sedate and friendly people, utterly unlike their weakly and degenerate compatriots who fill our southern seaside towns. There were men from the Donets, too, with red stripes on their breeches, and emigrants from the Tavritchesky province. There were a good many pilgrims of a nondescript class, like my Alexandr Ivanitch; what sort of people they were and where they came from it was impossible to tell from their faces, from their clothes,



or from their speech. The path ended at the little landing-stage, from which a narrow road went to the left to the Hermitage, cutting its way through the mountain. At the landing-stage stood two heavy big boats of a forbidding aspect, like the New Zealand pirogues which one may see in the works of Jules Verne. One boat with rugs on the seats was destined for the clergy and the singers, the other without rugs for the public. When the procession was returning I found myself among the elect who had succeeded in squeezing themselves into the second. There were so many of the elect that the boat scarcely moved, and one had to stand all the way without stirring and to be careful that one's hat was not crushed. The route was lovely. Both banks—one high, steep and white, with overhanging pines and oaks, with the crowds hurrying back along the path, and the other shelving, with green meadows and an oak copse bathed in sunshine—looked as happy and rapturous as though the May morn-

ing owed its charm only to them. The reflection of the sun in the rapidly flowing Donets quivered and raced away in all directions, and its long rays played on the chasubles, on the banners and on the drops splashed up by the oars. The singing of the Easter hymns, the ringing of the bells, the splash of the oars in the water, the calls of the birds, all mingled in the air into something tender and harmonious. The boat with the priests and the banners led the way; at its helm the black figure of a lay brother stood motionless as a statue.

When the procession was getting near the Monastery, I noticed Alexandr Ivanitch among the elect. He was standing in front of them all, and, his mouth wide open with pleasure and his right eyebrow cocked up, was gazing at the procession. His face was beaming; probably at such moments, when there were so many people round him and it was so bright, he was sat-

isfied with himself, his new religion, and his conscience.

When a little later we were sitting in our room, drinking tea, he still beamed with satisfaction; his face showed that he was satisfied both with the tea and with me, that he fully appreciated my being an intellectual, but that he would know how to play his part with credit if any intellectual topic turned up. . . .

"Tell me, what psychology ought I to read?" he began an intellectual conversation, wrinkling up his nose.

"Why, what do you want it for?"

"One cannot be a teacher without a knowledge of psychology. Before teaching a boy I ought to understand his soul."

I told him that psychology alone would not be enough to make one understand a boy's soul,

and moreover psychology for a teacher who had not yet mastered the technical methods of instruction in reading, writing, and arithmetic would be a luxury as superfluous as the higher mathematics. He readily agreed with me, and began describing how hard and responsible was the task of a teacher, how hard it was to eradicate in the boy the habitual tendency to evil and superstition, to make him think honestly and independently, to instil into him true religion, the ideas of personal dignity, of freedom, and so on. In answer to this I said something to him. He agreed again. He agreed very readily, in fact. Obviously his brain had not a very firm grasp of all these "intellectual subjects."

Up to the time of my departure we strolled together about the Monastery, whiling away the long hot day. He never left my side a minute; whether he had taken a fancy to me or was afraid of solitude, God only knows! I remember

we sat together under a clump of yellow acacia in one of the little gardens that are scattered on the mountain side.

"I am leaving here in a fortnight," he said; "it is high time."

"Are you going on foot?"

"From here to Slavyansk I shall walk, then by railway to Nikitovka; from Nikitovka the Donets line branches off, and along that branch line I shall walk as far as Hatsepetovka, and there a railway guard, I know, will help me on my way."

I thought of the bare, deserted steppe between Nikitovka and Hatsepetovka, and pictured to myself Alexandr Ivanitch striding along it, with his doubts, his homesickness, and his fear of solitude . . . . He read boredom in my face, and sighed.

"And my sister must be married by now," he said, thinking aloud, and at once, to shake off melancholy thoughts, pointed to the top of the rock and said:

"From that mountain one can see Izyum."

As we were walking up the mountain he had a little misfortune. I suppose he stumbled, for he slit his cotton trousers and tore the sole of his shoe.

"Tss!" he said, frowning as he took off a shoe and exposed a bare foot without a stocking. "How unpleasant! . . . That's a complication, you know, which . . . Yes!"

Turning the shoe over and over before his eyes, as though unable to believe that the sole was ruined for ever, he spent a long time frowning, sighing, and clicking with his tongue.

I had in my trunk a pair of boots, old but fashionable, with pointed toes and laces. I had brought them with me in case of need, and only wore them in wet weather. When we got back to our room I made up a phrase as diplomatic as I could and offered him these boots. He accepted them and said with dignity:

"I should thank you, but I know that you consider thanks a convention."

He was pleased as a child with the pointed toes and the laces, and even changed his plans.

"Now I shall go to Novotcherkassk in a week, and not in a fortnight," he said, thinking aloud. "In shoes like these I shall not be ashamed to show myself to my godfather. I was not going away from here just because I hadn't any decent clothes. . . ."

When the coachman was carrying out my trunk, a lay brother with a good ironical face

came in to sweep out the room. Alexandr Ivanitch seemed flustered and embarrassed and asked him timidly:

"Am I to stay here or go somewhere else?"

He could not make up his mind to occupy a whole room to himself, and evidently by now was feeling ashamed of living at the expense of the Monastery. He was very reluctant to part from me; to put off being lonely as long as possible, he asked leave to see me on my way.

The road from the Monastery, which had been excavated at the cost of no little labour in the chalk mountain, moved upwards, going almost like a spiral round the mountain, over roots and under sullen overhanging pines. . . .

The Donets was the first to vanish from our sight, after it the Monastery yard with its thousands of people, and then the green roofs. . . . Since I was mounting upwards everything see-



med vanishing into a pit. The cross on the church, burnished by the rays of the setting sun, gleamed brightly in the abyss and vanished. Nothing was left but the oaks, the pines, and the white road. But then our carriage came out on a level country, and that was all left below and behind us. Alexandr Ivanitch jumped out and, smiling mournfully, glanced at me for the last time with his childish eyes, and vanished from me for ever. . . .

The impressions of the Holy Mountains had already become memories, and I saw something new: the level plain, the whitish-brown distance, the way side copse, and beyond it a windmill which stood with out moving, and seemed bored at not being allowed to wave its sails because it was a holiday.