From Fyodor Dostoevsky, *Demons,* "Stavrogin's Confession" (the chapter removed from original edition by official censor)

Source: *Stavrogin's Confession and The Plan of The Life of a Great Sinner,*
translated by Samuel Solomonovich Koteliansky Virginia Woolf (1918)

From Stavrogin.

"I, Nikolai Stavrogin, retired officer, lived in the year 186.. in Petersburg, abandoned to vice, in which I found no pleasure. For a 40 certain period at that time I rented three lodgings. In one of them I lived myself and boarded and lodged, and there at that time lived Marya Lebiadkin, now my lawful wife. My other two lodgings I rented by the month for the purpose of an intrigue: in one I received a certain lady who loved me, and in the other her maid, and for a time I was much engrossed with the notion of contriving that both the lady and the maid should meet each other at my lodging.[26] Knowing the characters of both, I anticipated for myself great pleasure from that joke.

"While I was gradually preparing for this meeting, I had to go more often to one of the two lodgings in a large house in Gorokhovaya Street, since that was the place where the maid and I met. I had only one room there, on the fifth floor, which I rented from some Russian working-class people. They themselves fitted themselves into the adjoining room, which was smaller than mine and so much so that the door dividing my room from theirs always stood open, which was what I wanted. The husband, a clerk in some office, used to be out from early morning till night. His wife, a woman of about forty, was occupied in cutting down old clothes 41 and making them up into new, and she also frequently left the house to deliver her work. I remained alone with their daughter,[27] who was quite a child to look at. They called her Matryosha. Her mother loved her, but often beat her, and, as is the custom of these people, shouted at her horribly. This little girl waited on me and tidied up after me behind the screens. I declare I have forgotten the number of the house. Now, upon enquiry, I find that the old house has been demolished, and, where there were then two or three houses, there is now one very large new house. I have also forgotten my landlord's name (or perhaps I never knew it even at the time). I remember that the woman was called Stepanida, I believe, Mikhailovna. Him I do not remember.[28] I suppose that if a search were started and all possible enquiries made by the Petersburg police, they could be traced. The flat was in a courtyard, in the corner. All happened in June. The house was painted a bright sky-blue.

"One day I missed from my table a penknife which I did not need in the least, and which lay 42 there for no particular reason. I told my landlady, without thinking that she would thrash her daughter for it. But the landlady had just been scolding the little girl[29] for the loss of some rag, suspecting that she had stolen it, and had even pulled her hair. When that rag was found under the tablecloth, the little girl did not utter a single word of complaint, and just looked in silence. I noticed that, and then for the first time I observed the face of the little girl, which until then I had hardly noticed properly. She had fair hair, and a freckled ordinary face, but there was much in it that was childish and quiet, extraordinarily quiet. The mother did not like it that the daughter made no complaint for having been beaten for nothing, and she raised her fist, but did not strike; and just at that moment the subject of the penknife came up. Besides the three of us, there was in fact nobody, and only the little girl went behind my screen. The woman flew into a rage at having for the first time punished her unjustly, and she rushed for the broom, tore twigs from it, and thrashed the little girl in my presence until her body was covered with scars, although the child was already in her twelfth year. Matryosha did not cry at 43 the thrashing, probably because I was there, but she gave a strange sob at each blow. And afterwards she sobbed very much for a whole hour.

"But there was just this before that happened: at the very moment when the landlady rushed for the broom to pull out twigs, I found the penknife on my bed, where it had somehow or other fallen from the

table. Instantly it occurred to my mind not to say so, in order that she should be thrashed. I decided on it instantaneously; in such moments my breathing always stops. But I mean to tell the whole thing in the plainest language, so that there can no longer remain anything concealed.

"Every unusually disgraceful, utterly degrading, dastardly, and, above all, ridiculous situation, in which I ever happened to be in my life, always roused in me, side by side with extreme anger, an incredible delight. I felt exactly this in moments of committing crimes and in moments when life was in danger. If I stole, I would feel, while committing the theft, a rapture from the consciousness of the depth of my vileness. It was not the vileness that I loved (here my mind was perfectly sound), but I enjoyed rapture from the tormenting consciousness of the baseness. In the same way each time when, standing 44 at the barrier, I waited for my opponent to fire, I experienced just the same disgraceful and wild sensation; and once I did so with extraordinary vividness. I confess that I often myself looked out for it, because it is to me the strongest of sensations of the kind. When I received a slap in the face (and I received two in my life), it was there too, in spite of my terrible anger. But if the anger is checked by it, then the delight surpasses anything that can be imagined. I never spoke of this to any one, even by a hint, and I concealed it as a shame and disgrace. But when I was once soundly beaten in a public-house in Petersburg and was dragged by the hair, I did not experience that sensation, but only an incredible anger, not being intoxicated, and I put up a fight. But had I been seized by my hair and forced down by the French Viscount abroad who slapped me on the cheek and whose lower jaw I shot away for it, I should have felt a rapture and, perhaps, should not have felt anger. So it seemed to me then.

"I tell all this in order that every one may know that the feeling never absorbed the whole of me absolutely, but there always remained the most perfect consciousness (on that consciousness indeed it was all based). And although it would take hold of me to the pitch of madness, or, so to say, 45 obstinacy, it would never reach the point of making me forget myself. It reached in me the point of a perfect fire, but I could at the same time overcome it completely, even stop it at its climax; only I never wished to stop it. I am convinced that I could live all my life as a monk, in spite of the brutal voluptuousness with which I am gifted and which I always called forth.[30] I am always master of myself when I want to be. And so let it be understood that I do not claim irresponsibility for my crimes, either on account of environment or of disease.

"The thrashing over, I put the penknife in my waistcoat pocket and, without saying a single word, left the house and threw it away in the street, a long distance from the house, so that nobody should ever discover it. Then I waited two days. The little girl, after she had cried, became even more silent; against me, I am convinced, she had no spite. Though she was, certainly, ashamed that she had been punished in that way in my presence.[31] But for the shame 46 she, like the child she was, assuredly blamed no one but herself.[32]

"It was precisely during those two days that I once put to myself the question, could I go away and give up the plan I had invented, and I immediately felt that I could, that I could at any moment and at once. About that time I wished to kill myself from the disease of indifference; or rather I don't know the reason, but during those two or three days (for it was necessary to wait till the little girl forgot it all) I, probably in order to divert myself from the idea which obsessed me, or for fun, committed a theft in the rooms. This was the only theft of my life.

"There were many people crowded in those rooms. Amongst others there lived there a minor official with his family in two rooms; he was about forty, not altogether a fool, and had a decent appearance, but was poor. I did not make friends with him, and he was afraid of the company that surrounded me there. He had only just received his salary—thirty-five roubles. What chiefly influenced me was that I at that moment needed money (although four days later I received money by post), so that I stole, as though out of 47 want, and not for fun. It was done impudently and obviously: I simply entered his room, when he, his wife, and children were dining in the other little room. There on the chair by the door lay his folded uniform. The idea suddenly occurred to me when I was in the corridor. I put my hand into the pocket and took the purse. But the official heard a movement and looked out of his room. He, it seems, actually saw, at any rate,

something, but as he did not see it all, he, of course, did not believe his eyes. I said that, as I was passing down the corridor, I had come in to see the time by his clock. 'It has stopped,' he said, and I went out.

"At that time I drank a great deal, and in my rooms was a whole crowd, Lebiadkin amongst them. I threw away the purse and the small coins, but kept the notes. There were thirty-two roubles, three red notes and two yellow. I immediately changed one red note and sent for champagne; then I sent the second red note, and the third. About four hours later towards evening the official was waiting for me in the corridor.

"'Nikolai Vsevolodovich, when you came in just now, did you by any chance let my uniform fall off the chair ... it was by the door?'

"'No, I don't remember; was your uniform there?'

48 "'Yes, it was.'

"'On the floor?'

"'First on the chair, and then on the floor.'

"'Did you pick it up?'

"'I did.'

"'Well, what more do you want?'

"'In that case, it's all right....'

"He dared not finish, nor did he dare tell anybody in the rooms—so timid are those people. In the lodgings every one was extremely afraid of me and respected me. After that I liked to catch his eye a couple of times in the corridor. Soon I got bored with it.

"After three days[33] I returned to Gorokhovaya Street. The mother was just going out with a bundle; the man, of course, was not at home; Matryosha and myself were left alone. The windows were open. The house was all inhabited by artisans, and all day long from every floor was heard the knocking of hammers or of singing. About an hour passed. Matryosha sat in her room, on a bench, with her back to me, and occupied with her needle. At last, she suddenly began to sing softly, very softly, as was sometimes her way. I took out my watch and looked at the time; it was two o'clock. My 49 heart began beating.[34] I got up and began approaching her stealthily. On their window-sill stood pots of geranium, and the sun shone very brightly. I quietly sat down near her on the floor. She started, and at first was terribly frightened and jumped up. I took her hand and kissed it quietly, sat her down again on the little bench, and began looking into her eyes. My kissing her hand made her suddenly laugh like a baby, but only for one second, because she impetuously jumped up for the second time and was in such a fright that a spasm passed across her face. She looked at me with eyes motionless with terror, and her lips began to twitch as if she were about to cry, but she did not cry. I kissed her hand again, and took her on my knee.[35] Then she suddenly pulled herself away and smiled as if ashamed, with a wry smile. All her face flushed with shame. I was whispering to her all the time, as though drunk. At last, all of a sudden, such a strange thing happened, which I shall never forget and which bewildered me: the little girl flung her arms round my neck and suddenly began to kiss me passionately. Her face expressed 50 perfect ecstasy. I almost got up to go away—so unpleasant was this to me in the little creature from the sense of pity that I suddenly felt.[36]...

"When all was over, she was confused. I did not try to reassure her and no longer fondled her. She looked at me, smiling timidly. Her face suddenly appeared to me stupid. The confusion rapidly with each minute took an increasing hold over her. At last she covered her face with her hands and stood in the corner with her face to the wall motionless. I was afraid that she might be frightened again, as she had been just before, and silently I left the house.

“I think that all that happened must have seemed to her, in the end, infinitely horrible, a deadly horror. Notwithstanding the Russian swear words and all sorts of queer conversations that she must have heard from her very cradle, I am completely convinced that she did not yet know anything. For indeed it appeared to her in the end that she had committed an immense crime, and was guilty of a mortal sin. ‘She had killed God.’

“That night I had the row in the bar which I 51 mentioned in passing. But I woke up in my rooms in the morning; Lebiadkin took me home. My first thought when I awoke was whether she had told or not. It was a minute of real fear, although as yet not very intense. I was very gay that morning and extremely good-natured with every one, and the whole company was very pleased with me. But I left them all and went to Gorokhovaya Street. I met her downstairs in the passage. She was coming in from the grocer’s shop where she had been sent for chicory. On seeing me she dashed off in a terrible fright upstairs. When I entered, her mother had just given her a cuff[37] for bursting in ‘like a maniac,’ and thus the real reason of her fright was concealed. So far then all was safe. She hid in a corner and did not come out while I was there. I stayed about an hour and then went away.

“Towards evening I again felt the fear, but incomparably more intense. Of course I could deny all knowledge, but might be given the lie. Penal servitude glimmered for me in the distance. I had never felt fear, and all my life, except in this one case, I never before nor after was afraid of anything—particularly of Siberia, although I might have been deported there more than once. 52 But this time I was frightened and really felt fear, I don’t know why, for the first time in my life—a very tormenting sensation. Besides, that evening in my rooms, I got to hate her to such an extent that I decided to kill her. My chief hatred was at the recollection of her smile. I began to feel contempt and immense loathing for her having, after the whole thing was over, rushed off to the corner and covered her face with her hands; an inexplicable rage seized me, and then cold shivering, and, when towards the morning I began to feel feverish, I was again seized with fear, but such an intense fear that I never knew any torment more violent. Yet I no longer hated the little girl—at any rate it did not reach such a paroxysm as on the previous evening. I realized that intense fear completely drives away hatred and the feeling of revenge.

“I woke about mid-day, feeling well and surprised even at the force of yesterday’s sensations. Yet I was in a bad humour and was again compelled to go to Gorokhovaya Street, in spite of all my aversion. I remember that I wished intensely at that minute to pick a quarrel on the way with any one, so long as it was a violent quarrel. But when I reached Gorokhovaya Street, I suddenly found Nina Savelevna, the maid, in my room, where she had been waiting for an hour already. 53 I did not like the girl altogether, so that she had come half afraid that I should be angry with her for coming unasked. But I suddenly felt very glad to see her. She was not bad-looking, but unassuming, with those manners of which common people are very fond, so that my landlady had for long sung her praises to me. I found them both drinking coffee together, and the landlady highly pleased with the polite conversation. In the corner of their room I saw Matryosha. She stood looking at her mother and at the visitor without stirring. When I came in she did not hide as before and did not run away. It only appeared to me that she had grown very thin and was in a fever. I was cordial to Nina, and locked my door against the landlady, which I had not done for a long time, so that Nina left perfectly delighted. We left together and for two days I did not return to Gorokhovaya Street. I was already bored with it. I resolved to put an end to it all, to give up my rooms and leave Petersburg.

“But when I came to give notice to my landlady, I found her much worried and distressed: Matryosha had been ill for three days, had a high temperature, and was delirious every night. Of course I asked what she said in her delirium (we spoke in whispers in my room); she whispered 54 back that she raved of ‘horrors’: ‘“I killed God,” she says.’ I offered to have a doctor at my own expense, but she did not wish it. ‘By God’s will it will pass without doctors; she is not in bed all the time; during the day she gets up; she has just run round to the grocer’s shop.’ I determined to see Matryosha alone, and, as the landlady let out that she had to go to the Petersburg Road about five o’clock, I decided to come back in the evening.

"I had a meal in a public-house. Exactly at a quarter past five I returned. I always let myself in with my key. There was no one there but Matryosha. She lay on her mother's bed behind a screen, and I saw her peep out; but I pretended not to have seen her. All the windows were open. The air outside was warm, and even hot. I walked up and down and then sat down on the sofa. I remember everything up to the last moment. It decidedly gave me pleasure not to speak to Matryosha, but to keep her in suspense; I don't know why. I waited a whole hour, when suddenly she sprang from her bed behind the screen. I heard both her feet thud upon the floor and then fairly quick steps, and she stood on the threshold of my room. She stood and looked silently. I was so mean that my heart thrilled with joy that 55 I had kept up my character and waited for her to come first. During these days, when I had not once seen her close, she had grown very thin. Her face had shrunk, and her head, I was sure, was hot.

"Her eyes had grown large and gazed at me without moving, with a dull curiosity, as I thought at first. I sat still and looked and did not move. And then suddenly I felt hatred for her again. But I very soon noticed that she was not in the least afraid of me, but was perhaps rather delirious. But she was not delirious either. She suddenly began shaking her head repeatedly at me, as simple uneducated people without manners do when they find fault with you. And suddenly she raised her tiny fist and began threatening from where she stood. The first moment her gesture seemed to me ridiculous, but then I could stand it no longer.[38] On her face was such despair as was unendurable to see on a child's face. She shook her tiny fist at me all the while threateningly, and nodded her head reproachfully. I rose and moved towards her in fear, and warily began saying something softly and kindly, but I saw that she would not understand. Then suddenly she 56 covered her face impulsively with both hands, as she had done before, and moved off and stood by the window with her back to me. I returned to my room and sat by the window. I cannot possibly make out why I did not leave then, but remained as though waiting for something. Soon I again heard her quick steps; she came out of the door on to the wooden landing which led to the stairs. I hastily ran to my door, opened it, and had just time to see that Matryosha went into the tiny box-room, which was like a hen-roost and was next door to the water-closet. A very curious idea shot through my mind. To this day I can't make out why all of a sudden this idea came into my head—everything turned upon it. I half closed the door and sat down again by the window. Of course, it was still impossible to believe in this sudden idea:—'but after all....' (I remember everything, and my heart beat violently).

"After a minute I looked at my watch and noted the time with perfect accuracy. Why I should need to know the time so precisely I don't know, but I was able to do it, and altogether at that moment I wanted to notice everything. So that I remember now what I noticed and see it as if it were before me. The evening drew on. A fly buzzed about my head and settled 57 continually on my face. I caught it, held it in my fingers, and put it out of the window. Very loudly a van entered the courtyard below. Very loudly (and for some time before) a tailor, sitting at his window in the corner of the courtyard, sang a song. He sat at his work, and I could see him there. It struck me that, as nobody had met me when I passed through the gate and came upstairs, it was also, of course, not necessary that I should be seen now when I should be going downstairs; and I moved my chair from the window purposely so that I could not be seen by the lodgers. I took a book, but threw it away, and began looking at a tiny reddish spider on the leaf of a geranium, and I fell into a trance. I remember everything up to the last moment.

"Suddenly I took out my watch. Twenty minutes had passed since she went out of the room. The conjecture was assuming the shape of a probability. But I determined to wait precisely fifteen minutes more. It also crossed my mind that perhaps she had come back, and that I perhaps had not heard her. But that was impossible: there was a dead silence, and I could hear the hum of every small fly. Suddenly my heart began bounding again. I looked at my watch: it was three minutes short of the 58 quarter. I sat them out, though my heart beat so as to hurt me. Then I got up, put on my hat, buttoned my overcoat, and looked round the room[39]—had I left any traces of my visit? I moved the chair closer to the window just as it had been before. At last I gently opened the door, locked it with my key, and went to the little box-room. It was closed, but not locked; I knew that it did not lock, but I did not want to open it, and I stood on tiptoe and began looking

through the chink. At that moment, standing on tiptoe, I remembered that, when I sat by the window and looked at the little red spider and fell into a trance, I had been thinking of how I should stand on tiptoe and peer through this very chink. I mention this detail because I wish to prove fully to what an extent I was obviously in possession of my mental faculties and I hold myself responsible for everything. For a long time I peered through the chink, but it was dark there, but not absolutely, so that at last I saw what I wanted....[40]

"At last I decided to leave.[41] I met no one 59 on the stairs. Three hours later we were all drinking tea in our shirt-sleeves in our rooms and playing with a pack of old cards; Lebiadkin recited poetry. Many stories were told, and, as if on purpose, they were good and amusing, and not as foolish as usual. Kirillov too was there. No one drank, although there was a bottle of rum, but only Lebiadkin took a pull at it now and then.

"Prokhor Malov once said that 'when Nikolai Vsevolodovich is pleased to be cheerful and does not sulk, the whole lot of us are happy and talk cleverly.' I remembered this at that time; consequently I was merry, cheerful, and not sulky. This was how it looked. But I remember being conscious that I was simply a low and despicable coward for my joy at having escaped and that I should never be an honest man.

"About eleven o'clock the doorkeeper's little daughter came from the landlady at Gorokhovaya Street, with a message to me that Matryosha had hanged herself. I went with the little girl and saw that the landlady herself did not know why she had sent for me. She wailed aloud and beat her head[42]; there was a crowd and 60 policemen. I stood about for a time[43] and went away.

"I was scarcely disturbed all that time, yet I was asked the usual questions. But all I said was that the girl had been ill and delirious, so that I had offered to call a doctor at my own expense. They also questioned me about the penknife, and I said that the landlady had thrashed her, but that there was nothing in that. Nobody knew about my having been there that evening.[44]

"For about a week I did not call there. I went at last[45] to give notice about the room. The landlady was still crying, although she was already messing about with her rags and sewing as usual. 'It was for your penknife that I wronged her,' she said to me, but without much reproach. I settled my account with her, and gave as an excuse for going that I could not remain in a house like that to receive Nina Savelevna. At parting, she again praised Nina Savelevna to me. When I left, I gave her five roubles over and above what was due for the room.

"In the main I was sick of life, to the verge 61 of madness. The incident in Gorokhovaya Street, after the danger was over, I would have completely forgotten, just as I forgot all the other events of that time, had I not for a certain time remembered with anger what a coward I had been.

"I vented my anger on any one I could find. About that time, altogether for no definite reason, I took it into my head to cripple my life, but only in as disgusting a way as possible. Already for about a year I had been thinking of shooting myself; but something better presented itself.

"One day, as I looked at the lame Marya Timofeevna Lebiadkin, the woman who in a sense tidied up the rooms, and at that time was not yet mad, but simply an exalted idiot, in secret madly in love with me (which my friends had discovered), I suddenly determined to marry her. The idea of the marriage of Stavrogin with that lowest of creatures excited my nerves. Anything more monstrous it was impossible to imagine.[46] At any rate I married her, not simply because of 'a bet made after dinner in one's cups.' The witnesses were Kirillov and Peter Verkhovensky, who happened to be in Petersburg; 62 and lastly, Lebiadkin himself and Prokhor Malov (who is now dead). No one else ever knew of it, and those who did swore to keep silence. That silence always seemed to me a kind of meanness, but it has not been broken up till now, although I intended to make it public; now I make it public as well as the rest.

“The wedding over, I went to the country to stay with my mother. I went to distract myself.[47] In our town I had left behind me the idea that I was mad—which idea still persists even now and undoubtedly does me harm, as I shall explain later. After that I went abroad and remained there four years.

“I was in the East in the monastery on Mount Athos and attended religious services which lasted eight hours; I was in Egypt, lived in Switzerland, travelled even in Iceland; spent a whole year at Göttingen University. During the last year I became very friendly with a distinguished Russian family in Paris, and with two Russian girls in Switzerland. About two years ago, in Frankfort, passing a stationer’s shop, I noticed amongst the photographs for sale a portrait of a little girl, dressed in an elegant childish dress, but very much like Matryosha.

63 I bought the portrait at once, and when I returned to my hotel I put it on the mantelpiece of my room. There it lay for a week untouched, and I did not once look at it; and when I left Frankfort I forgot to take it with me.

“I mention this fact only to prove to what an extent I could master my memories and had become indifferent to them. I dismissed the whole lot of them at one go *en masse*, and the whole mass obediently disappeared, each time, directly I wished it to disappear. To recall the past always bored me, and I never could talk about the past, as nearly all people do, the more so that it was, like everything else concerning me, hateful to me. As for Matryosha, I even forgot to take her picture from the mantelpiece. About a year ago, in the spring, travelling through Germany, I forgot absentmindedly to get out at the station where I had to change, and so went on the wrong line. At the next station I had to get out; it was past two o’clock in the afternoon and a fine bright day. It was a tiny German town. I was shown to a hotel. I had to wait, for the next train did not arrive until eleven o’clock at night. I was even pleased with my adventure, as I was in no hurry to get anywhere. The hotel turned out a wretched little place, but it was all wooded and surrounded with flower-beds. I 64 was given a very small room. I made a large meal, and, as I had been travelling all night, I fell sound asleep after lunch at about four o’clock in the afternoon.

“In my sleep I had a dream which was completely new to me, for I had never had one like it. In the Dresden gallery there is a picture by Claude Lorraine, called in the catalogue, I think, ‘Acis and Galatea,’ but I always called it ‘The Golden Age,’ I don’t know why. I had seen it before, but about three days ago, as I passed through Dresden, I saw it again. I even went on purpose to have a look at it, and possibly for this alone I stopped at Dresden. It was that picture I dreamt of, but not as of a picture, but as of a reality.

“A corner of the Greek Archipelago; blue caressing waves, islands and rocks; fertile shore, a magic vista on the horizon, the appeal of the setting sun—no words could describe it. Here was the cradle of European man, here were the first scenes of the mythological world, here its green paradise.... Here had once lived a beautiful race. They rose and went to sleep happy and innocent; they filled the woods with their joyful songs; the great abundance of their virgin powers went out into love and into simple happiness. The sun bathed these islands and 65 sea in its beams, rejoicing in its beautiful children. Wonderful dream, splendid illusion! A dream the most incredible of all that had ever been dreamt, but upon it the whole of mankind has lavished all its powers throughout history; for this it has made every sacrifice, for this men have died on the cross and their prophets have been killed; without this, nations will not live and are unable even to die. I lived through all these feelings in my dream; I do not know what exactly I dreamt about, but the rocks, the sea, and the slanting rays of the setting sun—all these seemed to be still visible to me, when I woke and opened my eyes and, for the first time in my life, found them full of tears. A feeling of happiness, until then unfamiliar to me, went through my whole heart, even painfully. It was now evening; through the window of my tiny room, through the green leaves of the flowers standing on the sill, poured a shaft of bright slanting rays from the setting sun, and bathed me in their light. I quickly shut my eyes again, as if longing to bring back the vanished dream, but suddenly, in the middle of the bright, bright light, I saw a tiny point. The point began suddenly to take a definite form, and all of a sudden I distinctly pictured to myself a tiny reddish spider. At once I remembered it on the leaf of the geranium, 66 upon which, too, had poured the

rays of the setting sun. It was as though something were plunged through me; I raised myself and sat on my bed.

"(That's all how it happened then!)

"I saw before me! (Oh, not in the flesh! Would that the vision had been true!) I saw before me Matryosha, emaciated, with feverish eyes, in every point exactly as she was when she stood on the threshold of my room and, shaking her head at me, threatened me with her tiny fist. Nothing has ever been so agonizing to me! The pitiable despair of a helpless creature[48] with an unformed mind, threatening me (with what? what could she do to me, O Lord?), but blaming, of course, herself alone! Nothing like that has ever happened to me. I sat, till night came, without moving, having lost count of time. Is this what they call remorse or repentance? I do not know, and even now cannot say.[49] But it was intolerable to me, that image of her standing on the threshold with her raised and threatening little fist, merely that vision of her then, that moment 'then,' that shaking of her head. It is 67 precisely that which I cannot endure, because since then it has come to me almost every day. Not that it comes itself, but that I bring it before myself and cannot help bringing it, although I can't live with it. Oh, if I could ever see her in the flesh, even though it were an hallucination![50]

"Why, then, do no other of the memories of my life rouse in me anything like this?—and I had indeed many memories, perhaps much worse in the judgment of men. They rouse merely hatred in me, and that only because they are stimulated by my present state; but formerly I forgot them callously and dismissed them from my mind.

"I wandered after that for nearly the whole of the following year, and tried to find some occupation. I know I can dismiss the thought of Matryosha even now whenever I want to. I am as completely master of my will as ever. But the whole point is that I never wanted to do it; I myself do not want to, and never shall.[51] So it will go on until I go mad.

68 "In Switzerland two months later I was seized with a fit of the same passion and one of the same furious impulses which I used to have before.[52] I felt a terrible temptation to commit a new crime, namely, to commit bigamy (for I was already married). But I fled on the advice of another girl to whom I had confided almost everything, even that I had no love for her whom I desired so much, and that I could never love any one. Moreover, the fresh crime would not in any way rid me of Matryosha.

"Thus I decided to have these little sheets printed and three hundred copies sent to Russia. When the time comes, I shall send some of them to the police and to the local authorities; simultaneously I shall send them to the editors of all newspapers with a request that they shall be published; I shall also send them to a number of people in Petersburg and in Russia who know me. They will also come out in a translation abroad. I know that I shall, perhaps, not be worried by the law, at any rate not to any considerable extent. It is I who am informing against myself and I have no accuser; besides, the evidence is extraordinarily slight or non-existent. 69 Finally, the rooted idea that I am mentally unbalanced and, certainly, the efforts of my family, who will make use of that idea, will quash any legal prosecution that might threaten me. By the way, I make this statement in order to prove that I am now of sound mind and understand my situation. But there will remain those who will know everything and will look at me, and I at them.[53] I want every one to look at me. Will it relieve me? I don't know. I come to this as to my last resource.

"Once more: if a good search be made by the Petersburg police, perhaps something might be discovered. The landlady and her husband might be living even now in Petersburg. The house, of course, must be remembered. It was painted a bright sky-blue. For myself, I shall not go anywhere, and for a certain length of time (a year or two) I shall always be found at Skvoreshniki, my mother's estate. If required, I will appear anywhere.

"NIKOLAI STAVROGIN."