Pierre well knew this large room divided by columns and an arch, its

walls hung round with Persian carpets. The part of the room behind the

columns, with a high silk-curtained mahogany bedstead on one side and on

the other an immense case containing icons, was brightly illuminated

with red light like a Russian church during evening service. Under the

gleaming icons stood a long invalid chair, and in that chair on snowy-

white smooth pillows, evidently freshly changed, Pierre saw--covered to

the waist by a bright green quilt--the familiar, majestic figure of his

father, Count Bezukhov, with that gray mane of hair above his broad

forehead which reminded one of a lion, and the deep characteristically

noble wrinkles of his handsome, ruddy face. He lay just under the icons;

his large thick hands outside the quilt. Into the right hand, which was

lying palm downwards, a wax taper had been thrust between forefinger and

thumb, and an old servant, bending over from behind the chair, held it

in position. By the chair stood the priests, their long hair falling

over their magnificent glittering vestments, with lighted tapers in

their hands, slowly and solemnly conducting the service. A little behind

them stood the two younger princesses holding handkerchiefs to their

eyes, and just in front of them their eldest sister, Catiche, with a

vicious and determined look steadily fixed on the icons, as though

declaring to all that she could not answer for herself should she glance

round. Anna Mikhaylovna, with a meek, sorrowful, and all-forgiving

expression on her face, stood by the door near the strange lady. Prince

Vasili in front of the door, near the invalid chair, a wax taper in his

left hand, was leaning his left arm on the carved back of a velvet chair

he had turned round for the purpose, and was crossing himself with his

right hand, turning his eyes upward each time he touched his forehead.

His face wore a calm look of piety and resignation to the will of God.

"If you do not understand these sentiments," he seemed to be saying, "so

much the worse for you!"

Behind him stood the aide-de-camp, the doctors, and the menservants; the

men and women had separated as in church. All were silently crossing

themselves, and the reading of the church service, the subdued chanting

of deep bass voices, and in the intervals sighs and the shuffling of

feet were the only sounds that could be heard. Anna Mikhaylovna, with an

air of importance that showed that she felt she quite knew what she was

about, went across the room to where Pierre was standing and gave him a

taper. He lit it and, distracted by observing those around him, began

crossing himself with the hand that held the taper.

Sophie, the rosy, laughter-loving, youngest princess with the mole,

watched him. She smiled, hid her face in her handkerchief, and remained

with it hidden for awhile; then looking up and seeing Pierre she again

began to laugh. She evidently felt unable to look at him without

laughing, but could not resist looking at him: so to be out of

temptation she slipped quietly behind one of the columns. In the midst

of the service the voices of the priests suddenly ceased, they whispered

to one another, and the old servant who was holding the count's hand got

up and said something to the ladies. Anna Mikhaylovna stepped forward

and, stooping over the dying man, beckoned to Lorrain from behind her

back. The French doctor held no taper; he was leaning against one of the

columns in a respectful attitude implying that he, a foreigner, in spite

of all differences of faith, understood the full importance of the rite

now being performed and even approved of it. He now approached the sick

man with the noiseless step of one in full vigor of life, with his

delicate white fingers raised from the green quilt the hand that was

free, and turning sideways felt the pulse and reflected a moment. The

sick man was given something to drink, there was a stir around him, then

the people resumed their places and the service continued. During this

interval Pierre noticed that Prince Vasili left the chair on which he

had been leaning, and--with an air which intimated that he knew what he

was about and if others did not understand him it was so much the worse

for them--did not go up to the dying man, but passed by him, joined the

eldest princess, and moved with her to the side of the room where stood

the high bedstead with its silken hangings. On leaving the bed both

Prince Vasili and the princess passed out by a back door, but returned

to their places one after the other before the service was concluded.

Pierre paid no more attention to this occurrence than to the rest of

what went on, having made up his mind once for all that what he saw

happening around him that evening was in some way essential.

The chanting of the service ceased, and the voice of the priest was

heard respectfully congratulating the dying man on having received the

sacrament. The dying man lay as lifeless and immovable as before. Around

him everyone began to stir: steps were audible and whispers, among which

Anna Mikhaylovna's was the most distinct.

Pierre heard her say:

"Certainly he must be moved onto the bed; here it will be impossible..."

The sick man was so surrounded by doctors, princesses, and servants that

Pierre could no longer see the reddish-yellow face with its gray mane--

which, though he saw other faces as well, he had not lost sight of for a

single moment during the whole service. He judged by the cautious

movements of those who crowded round the invalid chair that they had

lifted the dying man and were moving him.

"Catch hold of my arm or you'll drop him!" he heard one of the servants

say in a frightened whisper. "Catch hold from underneath. Here!"

exclaimed different voices; and the heavy breathing of the bearers and

the shuffling of their feet grew more hurried, as if the weight they

were carrying were too much for them.

As the bearers, among whom was Anna Mikhaylovna, passed the young man he

caught a momentary glimpse between their heads and backs of the dying

man's high, stout, uncovered chest and powerful shoulders, raised by

those who were holding him under the armpits, and of his gray, curly,

leonine head. This head, with its remarkably broad brow and cheekbones,

its handsome, sensual mouth, and its cold, majestic expression, was not

disfigured by the approach of death. It was the same as Pierre

remembered it three months before, when the count had sent him to

Petersburg. But now this head was swaying helplessly with the uneven

movements of the bearers, and the cold listless gaze fixed itself upon

nothing.

After a few minutes' bustle beside the high bedstead, those who had

carried the sick man dispersed. Anna Mikhaylovna touched Pierre's hand

and said, "Come." Pierre went with her to the bed on which the sick man

had been laid in a stately pose in keeping with the ceremony just

completed. He lay with his head propped high on the pillows. His hands

were symmetrically placed on the green silk quilt, the palms downward.

When Pierre came up the count was gazing straight at him, but with a

look the significance of which could not be understood by mortal man.

Either this look meant nothing but that as long as one has eyes they

must look somewhere, or it meant too much. Pierre hesitated, not knowing

what to do, and glanced inquiringly at his guide. Anna Mikhaylovna made

a hurried sign with her eyes, glancing at the sick man's hand and moving

her lips as if to send it a kiss. Pierre, carefully stretching his neck

so as not to touch the quilt, followed her suggestion and pressed his

lips to the large boned, fleshy hand. Neither the hand nor a single

muscle of the count's face stirred. Once more Pierre looked

questioningly at Anna Mikhaylovna to see what he was to do next. Anna

Mikhaylovna with her eyes indicated a chair that stood beside the bed.

Pierre obediently sat down, his eyes asking if he were doing right. Anna

Mikhaylovna nodded approvingly. Again Pierre fell into the naively

symmetrical pose of an Egyptian statue, evidently distressed that his

stout and clumsy body took up so much room and doing his utmost to look

as small as possible. He looked at the count, who still gazed at the

spot where Pierre's face had been before he sat down. Anna Mikhaylovna

indicated by her attitude her consciousness of the pathetic importance

of these last moments of meeting between the father and son. This lasted

about two minutes, which to Pierre seemed an hour. Suddenly the broad

muscles and lines of the count's face began to twitch. The twitching

increased, the handsome mouth was drawn to one side (only now did Pierre

realize how near death his father was), and from that distorted mouth

issued an indistinct, hoarse sound. Anna Mikhaylovna looked attentively

at the sick man's eyes, trying to guess what he wanted; she pointed

first to Pierre, then to some drink, then named Prince Vasili in an

inquiring whisper, then pointed to the quilt. The eyes and face of the

sick man showed impatience. He made an effort to look at the servant who

stood constantly at the head of the bed.

"Wants to turn on the other side," whispered the servant, and got up to

turn the count's heavy body toward the wall.

Pierre rose to help him.

While the count was being turned over, one of his arms fell back

helplessly and he made a fruitless effort to pull it forward. Whether he

noticed the look of terror with which Pierre regarded that lifeless arm,

or whether some other thought flitted across his dying brain, at any

rate he glanced at the refractory arm, at Pierre's terror-stricken face,

and again at the arm, and on his face a feeble, piteous smile appeared,

quite out of keeping with his features, that seemed to deride his own

helplessness. At sight of this smile Pierre felt an unexpected quivering

in his breast and a tickling in his nose, and tears dimmed his eyes. The

sick man was turned on to his side with his face to the wall. He sighed.

"He is dozing," said Anna Mikhaylovna, observing that one of the

princesses was coming to take her turn at watching. "Let us go."

Pierre went out.

CHAPTER XXIV

There was now no one in the reception room except Prince Vasili and the

eldest princess, who were sitting under the portrait of Catherine the

Great and talking eagerly. As soon as they saw Pierre and his companion

they became silent, and Pierre thought he saw the princess hide

something as she whispered:

"I can't bear the sight of that woman."

"Catiche has had tea served in the small drawing room," said Prince

Vasili to Anna Mikhaylovna. "Go and take something, my poor Anna

Mikhaylovna, or you will not hold out."

To Pierre he said nothing, merely giving his arm a sympathetic squeeze

below the shoulder. Pierre went with Anna Mikhaylovna into the small

drawing room.

"There is nothing so refreshing after a sleepless night as a cup of this

delicious Russian tea," Lorrain was saying with an air of restrained

animation as he stood sipping tea from a delicate Chinese handleless cup

before a table on which tea and a cold supper were laid in the small

circular room. Around the table all who were at Count Bezukhov's house

that night had gathered to fortify themselves. Pierre well remembered

this small circular drawing room with its mirrors and little tables.

During balls given at the house Pierre, who did not know how to dance,

had liked sitting in this room to watch the ladies who, as they passed

through in their ball dresses with diamonds and pearls on their bare

shoulders, looked at themselves in the brilliantly lighted mirrors which

repeated their reflections several times. Now this same room was dimly

lighted by two candles. On one small table tea things and supper dishes

stood in disorder, and in the middle of the night a motley throng of

people sat there, not merrymaking, but somberly whispering, and

betraying by every word and movement that they none of them forgot what

was happening and what was about to happen in the bedroom. Pierre did

not eat anything though he would very much have liked to. He looked

inquiringly at his monitress and saw that she was again going on tiptoe

to the reception room where they had left Prince Vasili and the eldest

princess. Pierre concluded that this also was essential, and after a

short interval followed her. Anna Mikhaylovna was standing beside the

princess, and they were both speaking in excited whispers.

"Permit me, Princess, to know what is necessary and what is not

necessary," said the younger of the two speakers, evidently in the same

state of excitement as when she had slammed the door of her room.

"But, my dear princess," answered Anna Mikhaylovna blandly but

impressively, blocking the way to the bedroom and preventing the other

from passing, "won't this be too much for poor Uncle at a moment when he

needs repose? Worldly conversation at a moment when his soul is already

prepared..."

Prince Vasili was seated in an easy chair in his familiar attitude, with

one leg crossed high above the other. His cheeks, which were so flabby

that they looked heavier below, were twitching violently; but he wore

the air of a man little concerned in what the two ladies were saying.

"Come, my dear Anna Mikhaylovna, let Catiche do as she pleases. You know

how fond the count is of her."

"I don't even know what is in this paper," said the younger of the two

ladies, addressing Prince Vasili and pointing to an inlaid portfolio she

held in her hand. "All I know is that his real will is in his writing

table, and this is a paper he has forgotten...."

She tried to pass Anna Mikhaylovna, but the latter sprang so as to bar

her path.

"I know, my dear, kind princess," said Anna Mikhaylovna, seizing the

portfolio so firmly that it was plain she would not let go easily. "Dear

princess, I beg and implore you, have some pity on him! Je vous en

conjure..."

The princess did not reply. Their efforts in the struggle for the

portfolio were the only sounds audible, but it was evident that if the

princess did speak, her words would not be flattering to Anna

Mikhaylovna. Though the latter held on tenaciously, her voice lost none

of its honeyed firmness and softness.

"Pierre, my dear, come here. I think he will not be out of place in a

family consultation; is it not so, Prince?"

"Why don't you speak, cousin?" suddenly shrieked the princess so loud

that those in the drawing room heard her and were startled. "Why do you

remain silent when heaven knows who permits herself to interfere, making

a scene on the very threshold of a dying man's room? Intriguer!" she

hissed viciously, and tugged with all her might at the portfolio.

But Anna Mikhaylovna went forward a step or two to keep her hold on the

portfolio, and changed her grip.

Prince Vasili rose. "Oh!" said he with reproach and surprise, "this is

absurd! Come, let go I tell you."

The princess let go.

"And you too!"

But Anna Mikhaylovna did not obey him.

"Let go, I tell you! I will take the responsibility. I myself will go

and ask him, I!... does that satisfy you?"

"But, Prince," said Anna Mikhaylovna, "after such a solemn sacrament,

allow him a moment's peace! Here, Pierre, tell them your opinion," said

she, turning to the young man who, having come quite close, was gazing

with astonishment at the angry face of the princess which had lost all

dignity, and at the twitching cheeks of Prince Vasili.

"Remember that you will answer for the consequences," said Prince Vasili

severely. "You don't know what you are doing."

"Vile woman!" shouted the princess, darting unexpectedly at Anna

Mikhaylovna and snatching the portfolio from her.

Prince Vasili bent his head and spread out his hands.

At this moment that terrible door, which Pierre had watched so long and

which had always opened so quietly, burst noisily open and banged

against the wall, and the second of the three sisters rushed out

wringing her hands.

"What are you doing!" she cried vehemently. "He is dying and you leave

me alone with him!"

Her sister dropped the portfolio. Anna Mikhaylovna, stooping, quickly

caught up the object of contention and ran into the bedroom. The eldest

princess and Prince Vasili, recovering themselves, followed her. A few

minutes later the eldest sister came out with a pale hard face, again

biting her underlip. At sight of Pierre her expression showed an

irrepressible hatred.

"Yes, now you may be glad!" said she; "this is what you have been

waiting for." And bursting into tears she hid her face in her

handkerchief and rushed from the room.

Prince Vasili came next. He staggered to the sofa on which Pierre was

sitting and dropped onto it, covering his face with his hand. Pierre

noticed that he was pale and that his jaw quivered and shook as if in an

ague.

"Ah, my friend!" said he, taking Pierre by the elbow; and there was in

his voice a sincerity and weakness Pierre had never observed in it

before. "How often we sin, how much we deceive, and all for what? I am

near sixty, dear friend... I too... All will end in death, all! Death is

awful..." and he burst into tears.

Anna Mikhaylovna came out last. She approached Pierre with slow, quiet

steps.

"Pierre!" she said.

Pierre gave her an inquiring look. She kissed the young man on his

forehead, wetting him with her tears. Then after a pause she said:

"He is no more...."

Pierre looked at her over his spectacles.

"Come, I will go with you. Try to weep, nothing gives such relief as

tears."

She led him into the dark drawing room and Pierre was glad no one could

see his face. Anna Mikhaylovna left him, and when she returned he was

fast asleep with his head on his arm.

In the morning Anna Mikhaylovna said to Pierre:

"Yes, my dear, this is a great loss for us all, not to speak of you. But

God will support you: you are young, and are now, I hope, in command of

an immense fortune. The will has not yet been opened. I know you well

enough to be sure that this will not turn your head, but it imposes

duties on you, and you must be a man."

Pierre was silent.

"Perhaps later on I may tell you, my dear boy, that if I had not been

there, God only knows what would have happened! You know, Uncle promised

me only the day before yesterday not to forget Boris. But he had no

time. I hope, my dear friend, you will carry out your father's wish?"

Pierre understood nothing of all this and coloring shyly looked in

silence at Princess Anna Mikhaylovna. After her talk with Pierre, Anna

Mikhaylovna returned to the Rostovs' and went to bed. On waking in the

morning she told the Rostovs and all her acquaintances the details of

Count Bezukhov's death. She said the count had died as she would herself

wish to die, that his end was not only touching but edifying. As to the

last meeting between father and son, it was so touching that she could

not think of it without tears, and did not know which had behaved better

during those awful moments--the father who so remembered everything and

everybody at last and had spoken such pathetic words to the son, or

Pierre, whom it had been pitiful to see, so stricken was he with grief,

though he tried hard to hide it in order not to sadden his dying father.

"It is painful, but it does one good. It uplifts the soul to see such

men as the old count and his worthy son," said she. Of the behavior of

the eldest princess and Prince Vasili she spoke disapprovingly, but in

whispers and as a great secret.

CHAPTER XXV

At Bald Hills, Prince Nicholas Andreevich Bolkonski's estate, the

arrival of young Prince Andrew and his wife was daily expected, but this

expectation did not upset the regular routine of life in the old

prince's household. General in Chief Prince Nicholas Andreevich

(nicknamed in society, "the King of Prussia") ever since the Emperor

Paul had exiled him to his country estate had lived there continuously

with his daughter, Princess Mary, and her companion, Mademoiselle

Bourienne. Though in the new reign he was free to return to the

capitals, he still continued to live in the country, remarking that

anyone who wanted to see him could come the hundred miles from Moscow to

Bald Hills, while he himself needed no one and nothing. He used to say

that there are only two sources of human vice--idleness and

superstition, and only two virtues--activity and intelligence. He

himself undertook his daughter's education, and to develop these two

cardinal virtues in her gave her lessons in algebra and geometry till

she was twenty, and arranged her life so that her whole time was

occupied. He was himself always occupied: writing his memoirs, solving

problems in higher mathematics, turning snuffboxes on a lathe, working

in the garden, or superintending the building that was always going on

at his estate. As regularity is a prime condition facilitating activity,

regularity in his household was carried to the highest point of

exactitude. He always came to table under precisely the same conditions,

and not only at the same hour but at the same minute. With those about

him, from his daughter to his serfs, the prince was sharp and invariably

exacting, so that without being a hardhearted man he inspired such fear

and respect as few hardhearted men would have aroused. Although he was

in retirement and had now no influence in political affairs, every high

official appointed to the province in which the prince's estate lay

considered it his duty to visit him and waited in the lofty antechamber

just as the architect, gardener, or Princess Mary did, till the prince

appeared punctually to the appointed hour. Everyone sitting in this

antechamber experienced the same feeling of respect and even fear when

the enormously high study door opened and showed the figure of a rather

small old man, with powdered wig, small withered hands, and bushy gray

eyebrows which, when he frowned, sometimes hid the gleam of his shrewd,

youthfully glittering eyes.

On the morning of the day that the young couple were to arrive, Princess

Mary entered the antechamber as usual at the time appointed for the

morning greeting, crossing herself with trepidation and repeating a

silent prayer. Every morning she came in like that, and every morning

prayed that the daily interview might pass off well.

An old powdered manservant who was sitting in the antechamber rose

quietly and said in a whisper: "Please walk in."

Through the door came the regular hum of a lathe. The princess timidly

opened the door which moved noiselessly and easily. She paused at the

entrance. The prince was working at the lathe and after glancing round

continued his work.

The enormous study was full of things evidently in constant use. The

large table covered with books and plans, the tall glass-fronted

bookcases with keys in the locks, the high desk for writing while

standing up, on which lay an open exercise book, and the lathe with

tools laid ready to hand and shavings scattered around--all indicated

continuous, varied, and orderly activity. The motion of the small foot

shod in a Tartar boot embroidered with silver, and the firm pressure of

the lean sinewy hand, showed that the prince still possessed the

tenacious endurance and vigor of hardy old age. After a few more turns

of the lathe he removed his foot from the pedal, wiped his chisel,

dropped it into a leather pouch attached to the lathe, and, approaching

the table, summoned his daughter. He never gave his children a blessing,

so he simply held out his bristly cheek (as yet unshaven) and, regarding

her tenderly and attentively, said severely:

"Quite well? All right then, sit down." He took the exercise book

containing lessons in geometry written by himself and drew up a chair

with his foot.

"For tomorrow!" said he, quickly finding the page and making a scratch

from one paragraph to another with his hard nail.

The princess bent over the exercise book on the table.

"Wait a bit, here's a letter for you," said the old man suddenly, taking

a letter addressed in a woman's hand from a bag hanging above the table,

onto which he threw it.

At the sight of the letter red patches showed themselves on the

princess' face. She took it quickly and bent her head over it.

"From Heloise?" asked the prince with a cold smile that showed his still

sound, yellowish teeth.

"Yes, it's from Julie," replied the princess with a timid glance and a

timid smile.

"I'll let two more letters pass, but the third I'll read," said the

prince sternly; "I'm afraid you write much nonsense. I'll read the

third!"

"Read this if you like, Father," said the princess, blushing still more

and holding out the letter.

"The third, I said the third!" cried the prince abruptly, pushing the

letter away, and leaning his elbows on the table he drew toward him the

exercise book containing geometrical figures.

"Well, madam," he began, stooping over the book close to his daughter

and placing an arm on the back of the chair on which she sat, so that

she felt herself surrounded on all sides by the acrid scent of old age

and tobacco, which she had known so long. "Now, madam, these triangles

are equal; please note that the angle ABC..."

The princess looked in a scared way at her father's eyes glittering

close to her; the red patches on her face came and went, and it was

plain that she understood nothing and was so frightened that her fear

would prevent her understanding any of her father's further

explanations, however clear they might be. Whether it was the teacher's

fault or the pupil's, this same thing happened every day: the princess'

eyes grew dim, she could not see and could not hear anything, but was

only conscious of her stern father's withered face close to her, of his

breath and the smell of him, and could think only of how to get away

quickly to her own room to make out the problem in peace. The old man

was beside himself: moved the chair on which he was sitting noisily

backward and forward, made efforts to control himself and not become

vehement, but almost always did become vehement, scolded, and sometimes

flung the exercise book away.

The princess gave a wrong answer.

"Well now, isn't she a fool!" shouted the prince, pushing the book aside

and turning sharply away; but rising immediately, he paced up and down,

lightly touched his daughter's hair and sat down again.

He drew up his chair, and continued to explain.

"This won't do, Princess; it won't do," said he, when Princess Mary,

having taken and closed the exercise book with the next day's lesson,

was about to leave: "Mathematics are most important, madam! I don't want

to have you like our silly ladies. Get used to it and you'll like it,"

and he patted her cheek. "It will drive all the nonsense out of your

head."

She turned to go, but he stopped her with a gesture and took an uncut

book from the high desk.

"Here is some sort of Key to the Mysteries that your Heloise has sent

you. Religious! I don't interfere with anyone's belief... I have looked

at it. Take it. Well, now go. Go."

He patted her on the shoulder and himself closed the door after her.

Princess Mary went back to her room with the sad, scared expression that

rarely left her and which made her plain, sickly face yet plainer. She

sat down at her writing table, on which stood miniature portraits and

which was littered with books and papers. The princess was as untidy as

her father was tidy. She put down the geometry book and eagerly broke

the seal of her letter. It was from her most intimate friend from

childhood; that same Julie Karagina who had been at the Rostovs' name-

day party.

Julie wrote in French:

Dear and precious Friend, How terrible and frightful a thing is

separation! Though I tell myself that half my life and half my happiness

are wrapped up in you, and that in spite of the distance separating us

our hearts are united by indissoluble bonds, my heart rebels against

fate and in spite of the pleasures and distractions around me I cannot

overcome a certain secret sorrow that has been in my heart ever since we

parted. Why are we not together as we were last summer, in your big

study, on the blue sofa, the confidential sofa? Why cannot I now, as

three months ago, draw fresh moral strength from your look, so gentle,

calm, and penetrating, a look I loved so well and seem to see before me

as I write?

Having read thus far, Princess Mary sighed and glanced into the mirror

which stood on her right. It reflected a weak, ungraceful figure and

thin face. Her eyes, always sad, now looked with particular hopelessness

at her reflection in the glass. "She flatters me," thought the princess,

turning away and continuing to read. But Julie did not flatter her

friend, the princess' eyes--large, deep and luminous (it seemed as if at

times there radiated from them shafts of warm light)--were so beautiful

that very often in spite of the plainness of her face they gave her an

attraction more powerful than that of beauty. But the princess never saw

the beautiful expression of her own eyes--the look they had when she was

not thinking of herself. As with everyone, her face assumed a forced

unnatural expression as soon as she looked in a glass. She went on

reading:

All Moscow talks of nothing but war. One of my two brothers is already

abroad, the other is with the Guards, who are starting on their march to

the frontier. Our dear Emperor has left Petersburg and it is thought

intends to expose his precious person to the chances of war. God grant

that the Corsican monster who is destroying the peace of Europe may be

overthrown by the angel whom it has pleased the Almighty, in His

goodness, to give us as sovereign! To say nothing of my brothers, this

war has deprived me of one of the associations nearest my heart. I mean

young Nicholas Rostov, who with his enthusiasm could not bear to remain

inactive and has left the university to join the army. I will confess to

you, dear Mary, that in spite of his extreme youth his departure for the

army was a great grief to me. This young man, of whom I spoke to you

last summer, is so noble-minded and full of that real youthfulness which

one seldom finds nowadays among our old men of twenty and, particularly,

he is so frank and has so much heart. He is so pure and poetic that my

relations with him, transient as they were, have been one of the

sweetest comforts to my poor heart, which has already suffered so much.

Someday I will tell you about our parting and all that was said then.

That is still too fresh. Ah, dear friend, you are happy not to know

these poignant joys and sorrows. You are fortunate, for the latter are

generally the stronger! I know very well that Count Nicholas is too

young ever to be more to me than a friend, but this sweet friendship,

this poetic and pure intimacy, were what my heart needed. But enough of

this! The chief news, about which all Moscow gossips, is the death of

old Count Bezukhov, and his inheritance. Fancy! The three princesses

have received very little, Prince Vasili nothing, and it is Monsieur

Pierre who has inherited all the property and has besides been

recognized as legitimate; so that he is now Count Bezukhov and possessor

of the finest fortune in Russia. It is rumored that Prince Vasili played

a very despicable part in this affair and that he returned to Petersburg

quite crestfallen.

I confess I understand very little about all these matters of wills and

inheritance; but I do know that since this young man, whom we all used

to know as plain Monsieur Pierre, has become Count Bezukhov and the

owner of one of the largest fortunes in Russia, I am much amused to

watch the change in the tone and manners of the mammas burdened by

marriageable daughters, and of the young ladies themselves, toward him,

though, between you and me, he always seemed to me a poor sort of

fellow. As for the past two years people have amused themselves by

finding husbands for me (most of whom I don't even know), the

matchmaking chronicles of Moscow now speak of me as the future Countess

Bezukhova. But you will understand that I have no desire for the post. A

propos of marriages: do you know that a while ago that universal auntie

Anna Mikhaylovna told me, under the seal of strict secrecy, of a plan of

marriage for you. It is neither more nor less than with Prince Vasili's

son Anatole, whom they wish to reform by marrying him to someone rich

and distinguee, and it is on you that his relations' choice has fallen.

I don't know what you will think of it, but I consider it my duty to let

you know of it. He is said to be very handsome and a terrible

scapegrace. That is all I have been able to find out about him.

But enough of gossip. I am at the end of my second sheet of paper, and

Mamma has sent for me to go and dine at the Apraksins'. Read the

mystical book I am sending you; it has an enormous success here. Though

there are things in it difficult for the feeble human mind to grasp, it

is an admirable book which calms and elevates the soul. Adieu! Give my

respects to monsieur your father and my compliments to Mademoiselle

Bourienne. I embrace you as I love you.

JULIE

P.S. Let me have news of your brother and his charming little wife.

The princess pondered awhile with a thoughtful smile and her luminous

eyes lit up so that her face was entirely transformed. Then she suddenly

rose and with her heavy tread went up to the table. She took a sheet of

paper and her hand moved rapidly over it. This is the reply she wrote,

also in French:

Dear and precious Friend, Your letter of the 13th has given me great

delight. So you still love me, my romantic Julie? Separation, of which

you say so much that is bad, does not seem to have had its usual effect

on you. You complain of our separation. What then should I say, if I

dared complain, I who am deprived of all who are dear to me? Ah, if we

had not religion to console us life would be very sad. Why do you

suppose that I should look severely on your affection for that young

man? On such matters I am only severe with myself. I understand such

feelings in others, and if never having felt them I cannot approve of

them, neither do I condemn them. Only it seems to me that Christian

love, love of one's neighbor, love of one's enemy, is worthier, sweeter,

and better than the feelings which the beautiful eyes of a young man can

inspire in a romantic and loving young girl like yourself.

The news of Count Bezukhov's death reached us before your letter and my

father was much affected by it. He says the count was the last

representative but one of the great century, and that it is his own turn

now, but that he will do all he can to let his turn come as late as

possible. God preserve us from that terrible misfortune!

I cannot agree with you about Pierre, whom I knew as a child. He always

seemed to me to have an excellent heart, and that is the quality I value

most in people. As to his inheritance and the part played by Prince

Vasili, it is very sad for both. Ah, my dear friend, our divine

Saviour's words, that it is easier for a camel to go through the eye of

a needle than for a rich man to enter the Kingdom of God, are terribly

true. I pity Prince Vasili but am still more sorry for Pierre. So young,

and burdened with such riches--to what temptations he will be exposed!

If I were asked what I desire most on earth, it would be to be poorer

than the poorest beggar. A thousand thanks, dear friend, for the volume

you have sent me and which has such success in Moscow. Yet since you

tell me that among some good things it contains others which our weak

human understanding cannot grasp, it seems to me rather useless to spend

time in reading what is unintelligible and can therefore bear no fruit.

I never could understand the fondness some people have for confusing

their minds by dwelling on mystical books that merely awaken their

doubts and excite their imagination, giving them a bent for exaggeration

quite contrary to Christian simplicity. Let us rather read the Epistles

and Gospels. Let us not seek to penetrate what mysteries they contain;

for how can we, miserable sinners that we are, know the terrible and

holy secrets of Providence while we remain in this flesh which forms an

impenetrable veil between us and the Eternal? Let us rather confine

ourselves to studying those sublime rules which our divine Saviour has

left for our guidance here below. Let us try to conform to them and

follow them, and let us be persuaded that the less we let our feeble

human minds roam, the better we shall please God, who rejects all

knowledge that does not come from Him; and the less we seek to fathom

what He has been pleased to conceal from us, the sooner will He

vouchsafe its revelation to us through His divine Spirit.

My father has not spoken to me of a suitor, but has only told me that he

has received a letter and is expecting a visit from Prince Vasili. In

regard to this project of marriage for me, I will tell you, dear sweet

friend, that I look on marriage as a divine institution to which we must

conform. However painful it may be to me, should the Almighty lay the

duties of wife and mother upon me I shall try to perform them as

faithfully as I can, without disquieting myself by examining my feelings

toward him whom He may give me for husband.

I have had a letter from my brother, who announces his speedy arrival at

Bald Hills with his wife. This pleasure will be but a brief one,

however, for he will leave us again to take part in this unhappy war

into which we have been drawn, God knows how or why. Not only where you

are--at the heart of affairs and of the world--is the talk all of war,

even here amid fieldwork and the calm of nature--which townsfolk

consider characteristic of the country--rumors of war are heard and

painfully felt. My father talks of nothing but marches and

countermarches, things of which I understand nothing; and the day before

yesterday during my daily walk through the village I witnessed a

heartrending scene.... It was a convoy of conscripts enrolled from our

people and starting to join the army. You should have seen the state of

the mothers, wives, and children of the men who were going and should

have heard the sobs. It seems as though mankind has forgotten the laws

of its divine Saviour, Who preached love and forgiveness of injuries--

and that men attribute the greatest merit to skill in killing one

another.

Adieu, dear and kind friend; may our divine Saviour and His most Holy

Mother keep you in their holy and all-powerful care!

MARY

"Ah, you are sending off a letter, Princess? I have already dispatched

mine. I have written to my poor mother," said the smiling Mademoiselle

Bourienne rapidly, in her pleasant mellow tones and with guttural r's.

She brought into Princess Mary's strenuous, mournful, and gloomy world a

quite different atmosphere, careless, lighthearted, and self-satisfied.

"Princess, I must warn you," she added, lowering her voice and evidently

listening to herself with pleasure, and speaking with exaggerated

grasseyement, "the prince has been scolding Michael Ivanovich. He is in

a very bad humor, very morose. Be prepared."

"Ah, dear friend," replied Princess Mary, "I have asked you never to

warn me of the humor my father is in. I do not allow myself to judge him

and would not have others do so."

The princess glanced at her watch and, seeing that she was five minutes

late in starting her practice on the clavichord, went into the sitting

room with a look of alarm. Between twelve and two o'clock, as the day

was mapped out, the prince rested and the princess played the

clavichord.

CHAPTER XXVI

The gray-haired valet was sitting drowsily listening to the snoring of

the prince, who was in his large study. From the far side of the house

through the closed doors came the sound of difficult passages--twenty

times repeated--of a sonata by Dussek.

Just then a closed carriage and another with a hood drove up to the

porch. Prince Andrew got out of the carriage, helped his little wife to

alight, and let her pass into the house before him. Old Tikhon, wearing

a wig, put his head out of the door of the antechamber, reported in a

whisper that the prince was sleeping, and hastily closed the door.

Tikhon knew that neither the son's arrival nor any other unusual event

must be allowed to disturb the appointed order of the day. Prince Andrew

apparently knew this as well as Tikhon; he looked at his watch as if to

ascertain whether his father's habits had changed since he was at home

last, and, having assured himself that they had not, he turned to his

wife.

"He will get up in twenty minutes. Let us go across to Mary's room," he

said.

The little princess had grown stouter during this time, but her eyes and

her short, downy, smiling lip lifted when she began to speak just as

merrily and prettily as ever.

"Why, this is a palace!" she said to her husband, looking around with

the expression with which people compliment their host at a ball. "Let's

come, quick, quick!" And with a glance round, she smiled at Tikhon, at

her husband, and at the footman who accompanied them.

"Is that Mary practicing? Let's go quietly and take her by surprise."

Prince Andrew followed her with a courteous but sad expression.

"You've grown older, Tikhon," he said in passing to the old man, who

kissed his hand.

Before they reached the room from which the sounds of the clavichord

came, the pretty, fair haired Frenchwoman, Mademoiselle Bourienne,

rushed out apparently beside herself with delight.

"Ah! what joy for the princess!" exclaimed she: "At last! I must let her

know."

"No, no, please not... You are Mademoiselle Bourienne," said the little

princess, kissing her. "I know you already through my sister-in-law's

friendship for you. She was not expecting us?"

They went up to the door of the sitting room from which came the sound

of the oft-repeated passage of the sonata. Prince Andrew stopped and

made a grimace, as if expecting something unpleasant.

The little princess entered the room. The passage broke off in the

middle, a cry was heard, then Princess Mary's heavy tread and the sound

of kissing. When Prince Andrew went in the two princesses, who had only

met once before for a short time at his wedding, were in each other's

arms warmly pressing their lips to whatever place they happened to

touch. Mademoiselle Bourienne stood near them pressing her hand to her

heart, with a beatific smile and obviously equally ready to cry or to

laugh. Prince Andrew shrugged his shoulders and frowned, as lovers of

music do when they hear a false note. The two women let go of one

another, and then, as if afraid of being too late, seized each other's

hands, kissing them and pulling them away, and again began kissing each

other on the face, and then to Prince Andrew's surprise both began to

cry and kissed again. Mademoiselle Bourienne also began to cry. Prince

Andrew evidently felt ill at ease, but to the two women it seemed quite

natural that they should cry, and apparently it never entered their

heads that it could have been otherwise at this meeting.

"Ah! my dear!... Ah! Mary!" they suddenly exclaimed, and then laughed.

"I dreamed last night..."--"You were not expecting us?..." "Ah! Mary,

you have got thinner?..." "And you have grown stouter!..."

"I knew the princess at once," put in Mademoiselle Bourienne.

"And I had no idea!..." exclaimed Princess Mary. "Ah, Andrew, I did not

see you."

Prince Andrew and his sister, hand in hand, kissed one another, and he

told her she was still the same crybaby as ever. Princess Mary had

turned toward her brother, and through her tears the loving, warm,

gentle look of her large luminous eyes, very beautiful at that moment,

rested on Prince Andrew's face.

The little princess talked incessantly, her short, downy upper lip

continually and rapidly touching her rosy nether lip when necessary and

drawing up again next moment when her face broke into a smile of

glittering teeth and sparkling eyes. She told of an accident they had

had on the Spasski Hill which might have been serious for her in her

condition, and immediately after that informed them that she had left

all her clothes in Petersburg and that heaven knew what she would have

to dress in here; and that Andrew had quite changed, and that Kitty

Odyntsova had married an old man, and that there was a suitor for Mary,

a real one, but that they would talk of that later. Princess Mary was

still looking silently at her brother and her beautiful eyes were full

of love and sadness. It was plain that she was following a train of

thought independent of her sister-in-law's words. In the midst of a

description of the last Petersburg fete she addressed her brother:

"So you are really going to the war, Andrew?" she said sighing.

Lise sighed too.

"Yes, and even tomorrow," replied her brother.

"He is leaving me here, God knows why, when he might have had

promotion..."

Princess Mary did not listen to the end, but continuing her train of

thought turned to her sister-in-law with a tender glance at her figure.

"Is it certain?" she said.

The face of the little princess changed. She sighed and said: "Yes,

quite certain. Ah! it is very dreadful..."

Her lip descended. She brought her face close to her sister-in-law's and

unexpectedly again began to cry.

"She needs rest," said Prince Andrew with a frown. "Don't you, Lise?

Take her to your room and I'll go to Father. How is he? Just the same?"

"Yes, just the same. Though I don't know what your opinion will be,"

answered the princess joyfully.

"And are the hours the same? And the walks in the avenues? And the

lathe?" asked Prince Andrew with a scarcely perceptible smile which

showed that, in spite of all his love and respect for his father, he was

aware of his weaknesses.

"The hours are the same, and the lathe, and also the mathematics and my

geometry lessons," said Princess Mary gleefully, as if her lessons in

geometry were among the greatest delights of her life.

When the twenty minutes had elapsed and the time had come for the old

prince to get up, Tikhon came to call the young prince to his father.

The old man made a departure from his usual routine in honor of his

son's arrival: he gave orders to admit him to his apartments while he

dressed for dinner. The old prince always dressed in old-fashioned

style, wearing an antique coat and powdered hair; and when Prince Andrew

entered his father's dressing room (not with the contemptuous look and

manner he wore in drawing rooms, but with the animated face with which

he talked to Pierre), the old man was sitting on a large leather-covered

chair, wrapped in a powdering mantle, entrusting his head to Tikhon.

"Ah! here's the warrior! Wants to vanquish Buonaparte?" said the old

man, shaking his powdered head as much as the tail, which Tikhon was

holding fast to plait, would allow.

"You at least must tackle him properly, or else if he goes on like this

he'll soon have us, too, for his subjects! How are you?" And he held out

his cheek.

The old man was in a good temper after his nap before dinner. (He used

to say that a nap "after dinner was silver--before dinner, golden.") He

cast happy, sidelong glances at his son from under his thick, bushy

eyebrows. Prince Andrew went up and kissed his father on the spot

indicated to him. He made no reply on his father's favorite topic--

making fun of the military men of the day, and more particularly of

Bonaparte.

"Yes, Father, I have come to you and brought my wife who is pregnant,"

said Prince Andrew, following every movement of his father's face with

an eager and respectful look. "How is your health?"

"Only fools and rakes fall ill, my boy. You know me: I am busy from

morning till night and abstemious, so of course I am well."

"Thank God," said his son smiling.

"God has nothing to do with it! Well, go on," he continued, returning to

his hobby; "tell me how the Germans have taught you to fight Bonaparte

by this new science you call 'strategy.'"

Prince Andrew smiled.

"Give me time to collect my wits, Father," said he, with a smile that

showed that his father's foibles did not prevent his son from loving and

honoring him. "Why, I have not yet had time to settle down!"

"Nonsense, nonsense!" cried the old man, shaking his pigtail to see

whether it was firmly plaited, and grasping his by the hand. "The house

for your wife is ready. Princess Mary will take her there and show her

over, and they'll talk nineteen to the dozen. That's their woman's way!

I am glad to have her. Sit down and talk. About Mikhelson's army I

understand--Tolstoy's too... a simultaneous expedition.... But what's

the southern army to do? Prussia is neutral... I know that. What about

Austria?" said he, rising from his chair and pacing up and down the room

followed by Tikhon, who ran after him, handing him different articles of

clothing. "What of Sweden? How will they cross Pomerania?"

Prince Andrew, seeing that his father insisted, began--at first

reluctantly, but gradually with more and more animation, and from habit

changing unconsciously from Russian to French as he went on--to explain

the plan of operation for the coming campaign. He explained how an army,

ninety thousand strong, was to threaten Prussia so as to bring her out

of her neutrality and draw her into the war; how part of that army was

to join some Swedish forces at Stralsund; how two hundred and twenty

thousand Austrians, with a hundred thousand Russians, were to operate in

Italy and on the Rhine; how fifty thousand Russians and as many English

were to land at Naples, and how a total force of five hundred thousand

men was to attack the French from different sides. The old prince did

not evince the least interest during this explanation, but as if he were

not listening to it continued to dress while walking about, and three

times unexpectedly interrupted. Once he stopped it by shouting: "The

white one, the white one!"

This meant that Tikhon was not handing him the waistcoat he wanted.

Another time he interrupted, saying:

"And will she soon be confined?" and shaking his head reproachfully

said: "That's bad! Go on, go on."

The third interruption came when Prince Andrew was finishing his

description. The old man began to sing, in the cracked voice of old age:

"Malbrook s'en va-t-en guerre. Dieu sait quand reviendra." \*

\* "Marlborough is going to the wars; God knows when he'll return."

His son only smiled.

"I don't say it's a plan I approve of," said the son; "I am only telling

you what it is. Napoleon has also formed his plan by now, not worse than

this one."

"Well, you've told me nothing new," and the old man repeated,

meditatively and rapidly:

"Dieu sait quand reviendra. Go to the dining room."