In spite of a violent attack of gout in the night and the nervous exhaustion left by it, Kistunov went in the morning to his office and began punctually seeing the clients of the bank and persons who had come with petitions. He looked languid and exhausted, and spoke in a faint voice hardly above a whisper, as though he were dying.

“What can I do for you?” he asked a lady in an antedulvuian mantle, whose bacl view was extremely suggestive of a huge dung-beetle.

“You see your Excellency,” the petitioner in question began, speaking rapidly. “my husband Shtchukin, a collegiate passessor, was ill for five months, and while he, if you will excuse my saying so, was laid up at home, he went was for no soart of reason dismissed, your Excellency; and when I went for his salary they deducted, if you pelase, you Excellency,