On the Eve

Ivan Sergeyevich Turgenev

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Introduction

This exquisite novel, first published in 1859, like so many great works of art, holds depths of meaning which at first sight lie veiled under the simplicity and harmony of the technique. To the English reader *On the Eve* is a charmingly drawn picture of a quiet Russian household, with a delicate analysis of a young girl's soul; but to Russians it is also a deep and penetrating diagnosis of the destinies of the Russia of the fifties.

Elena, the Russian girl, is the central figure of the novel. In comparing her with Turgenev's other women, the reader will remark that he is allowed to come into closer spiritual contact with her than even with Lisa. The successful portraits of women drawn by men in fiction are generally figures for the imagination to play on; however much that is told to one about them, the secret springs of their character are left a little obscure, but when Elena stands before us we know all the innermost secrets of her character. Her strength of will, her serious, courageous, proud soul, her capacity for passion, all the play of her delicate idealistic nature troubled by the contradictions, aspirations, and unhappiness that the dawn of love brings to her, all this is conveyed to us by the simplest and the most consummate art. The diary (chapter xvi.) that Elena keeps is in itself a masterly revelation of a young girl's heart; it has never been equalled by any other novelist. How exquisitely Turgenev reveals his characters may be seen by an examination of the parts Shubin the artist, and Bersenyev the student, play towards Elena. Both young men are in love with her, and the description of their after relations as friends, and the feelings of Elena towards them, and her own self-communings are interwoven with unfaltering skill. All the most complex and baffling shades of the mental life, which in the hands of many latter-day novelists build up characters far too thin and too unconvincing, in the hands of Turgenev are used with deftness and certainty to bring to light that great kingdom which is always lying hidden beneath the surface, beneath the common-place of daily life. In the difficult art of literary perspective, in the effective grouping of contrasts in character and the criss-cross of the influence of the different individuals, lies the secret of Turgenev's supremacy. As an example the reader may note how he is made to judge Elena through six pairs of eyes. Her father's contempt for his daughter, her mother's affectionate bewilderment, Shubin's petulant criticism, Bersenyev's half hearted enthralment, Insarov's recognition, and Zoya's indifference, being the facets for converging light on Elena's sincerity and depth of soul. Again one may note Turgenev's method for rehabilitating Shubin in our eyes; Shubin is simply made to criticise Stahov; the thing is done in a few seemingly careless lines, but these lines lay bare Shubin's strength and weakness, the fluidity of his nature. The reader who does

not see the art which underlies almost every line of *On the Eve* is merely paying the highest tribute to that art; as often the clear waters of a pool conceal its surprising depth. Taking Shubin's character as an example of creative skill, we cannot call to mind any instance in the range of European fiction where the typical artist mind, on its lighter sides, has been analysed with such delicacy and truth as here by Turgenev. Hawthorne and others have treated it, but the colour seems to fade from their artist characters when a comparison is made between them and Shubin. And yet Turgenev's is but a sketch of an artist, compared with, let us say, the admirable figure of Roderick Hudson. The irresponsibility, alertness, the whimsicality and mobility of Shubin combine to charm and irritate the reader in the exact proportion that such a character affects him in actual life; there is not the least touch of exaggeration, and all the values are kept to a marvel. Looking at the minor characters, perhaps one may say that the husband, Stahov, will be the most suggestive, and not the least familiar character, to English households. His essentially masculine meanness, his self-complacency, his unconscious indifference to the opinion of others, his absurdity as '*un pere de famille*' is balanced by the foolish affection and jealousy which his wife, Anna Vassilyevna, cannot help feeling towards him. The perfect balance and duality of Turgenev's outlook is here shown by the equal cleverness with which he seizes on and quietly derides the typical masculine and typical feminine attitude in such a married life as the two Stahovs'.

Turning to the figure of the Bulgarian hero, it is interesting to find from the *Souvenirs sur Tourguenev* (published in 1887) that Turgenev's only distinct failure of importance in character drawing, Insarov, was not taken from life, but was the legacy of a friend Karateieff, who implored Turgenev to work out an unfinished conception. Insarov is a figure of wood. He is so cleverly constructed, and the central idea behind him is so strong, that his wooden joints move naturally, and the spectator has only the instinct, not the certainty, of being cheated. The idea he incarnates, that of a man whose soul is aflame with patriotism, is finely suggested, but an idea, even a great one, does not make an individuality. And in fact Insarov is not a man, he is an automaton. To compare Shubin's utterances with his is to perceive that there is no spontaneity, no inevitability in Insarov. He is a patriotic clock wound up to go for the occasion, and in truth he is very useful. Only on his deathbed, when the unexpected happens, and the machinery runs down, do we feel moved. Then, he appears more striking dead than alive—a rather damning testimony to the power Turgenev credits him with. This artistic failure of Turgenev's is, as he no doubt recognised, curiously lessened by the fact that young girls of Elena's lofty idealistic type are particularly impressed by certain stiff types of men of action and great will-power, whose capacity for moving straight towards a certain goal

by no means implies corresponding brain-power. The insight of a Shubin and the moral worth of a Bersenyev are not so valuable to the Elenas of this world, whose ardent desire to be made good use of, and to seek some great end, is best developed by strength of aim in the men they love.

And now to see what the novel before us means to the Russian mind, we must turn to the infinitely suggestive background. Turgenev's genius was of the same force in politics as in art; it was that of seeing aright. He saw his country as it was, with clearer eyes than any man before or since. If Tolstoi is a purer native expression of Russia's force, Turgenev is the personification of Russian aspiration working with the instruments of wide cosmopolitan culture. As a critic of his countrymen nothing escaped Turgenev's eye, as a politician he foretold nearly all that actually came to pass in his life, and as a consummate artist, led first and foremost by his love for his art, his novels are undying historical pictures. It is not that there is anything allegorical in his novels—allegory is at the furthest pole from his method: it is that whenever he created an important figure in fiction, that figure is necessarily a revelation of the secrets of the fatherland, the soil, the race. Turgenev, in short, was a psychologist not merely of men, but of nations; and so the chief figure of *On the Eve*, Elena, foreshadows and stands for the rise of young Russia in the sixties. Elena is young Russia, and to whom does she turn in her prayer for strength? Not to Bersenyev, the philosopher, the dreamer; not to Shubin, the man carried outside himself by every passing distraction; but to the strong man, Insarov. And here the irony of Insarov being made a foreigner, a Bulgarian, is significant of Turgenev's distrust of his country's weakness. The hidden meaning of the novel is a cry to the coming men to unite their strength against the foe without and the foe within the gates; it is an appeal to them not only to hasten the death of the old regime of Nicolas I, but an appeal to them to conquer their sluggishness, their weakness, and their apathy. It is a cry for Men. Turgenev sought in vain in life for a type of man to satisfy Russia, and ended by taking no living model for his hero, but the hearsay Insarov, a foreigner. Russia has not yet produced men of this type. But the artist does not despair of the future. Here we come upon one of the most striking figures of Turgenev—that of Uvar Ivanovitch. He symbolises the ever-predominant type of Russian, the sleepy, slothful Slav of to-day, yesterday, and to-morrow. He is the Slav whose inherent force Europe is as ignorant of as he is himself. Though he speaks only twenty sentences in the book he is a creation of Tolstoian force. His very words are dark and of practically no significance. There lies the irony of the portrait. The last words of the novel, the most biting surely that Turgenev ever wrote, contain the whole essence of *On the Eve*. On the Eve of What? one asks. Time has given contradictory answers to the men of all parties. The Elenas of to-

day need not turn their eyes abroad to find their counterpart in spirit; so far at least the pessimists are refuted: but the note of death that Turgenev strikes in his marvellous chapter on Venice has still for young Russia an ominous echo—so many generations have arisen eager, only to be flung aside helpless, that one asks, what of the generation that fronts Autocracy to-day?

'Do you remember I asked you, "Will there ever be men among us?" and you answered, there will be. O primaeval force! And now from here in "my poetic distance" I will ask you again, "What do you say, Uvar Ivanovitch, will there be?"

'Uvar Ivanovitch flourished his fingers, and fixed his enigmatical stare into the far distance.'

This creation of an universal national type, out of the flesh and blood of a fat taciturn country gentleman, brings us to see that Turgenev was not merely an artist, but that he was a poet using fiction as his medium. To this end it is instructive to compare Jane Austen, perhaps the greatest English exponent of the domestic novel, with the Russian master, and to note that, while as a novelist she emerges favourably from the comparison, she is absolutely wanting in his poetic insight. How petty and parochial appears her outlook in *Emma*, compared to the wide and unflinching gaze of Turgenev. She painted most admirably the English types she knew, and how well she knew them! but she failed to correlate them with the national life; and yet, while her men and women were acting and thinking, Trafalgar and Waterloo were being fought and won. But each of Turgenev's novels in some subtle way suggests that the people he introduces are playing their little part in a great national drama everywhere around us, invisible, yet audible through the clamour of voices near us. And so *On the Eve*, the work of a poet, has certain deep notes, which break through the harmonious tenor of the whole, and strangely and swiftly transfigure the quiet story, troubling us with a dawning consciousness of the march of mighty events. Suddenly a strange sense steals upon the reader that he is living in a perilous atmosphere, filling his heart with foreboding, and enveloping at length the characters themselves, all unconsciously awaiting disaster in the sunny woods and gardens of Kuntsovo. But not till the last chapters are reached does the English reader perceive that in recreating for him the mental atmosphere of a single educated Russian household, Turgenev has been casting before his eyes the faint shadow of the national drama which was indeed played, though left unfinished, on the Balkan battlefields of 1876-7. Briefly, Turgenev, in sketching the dawn of love in a young girl's soul, has managed faintly, but unmistakably, to make spring and flourish in our minds the ineradicable, though hidden, idea at the back of Slav thought—the unification of the Slav races. How doubly welcome that art should be which can lead us, the foreigners, thus straight to the heart of the national secrets of a great people,

secrets which our own critics and diplomatists must necessarily misrepresent. Each of Turgenev's novels may be said to contain a light-bringing rejoinder to the old-fashioned criticism of the Muscovite, current up to the rise of the Russian novel, and still, unfortunately, lingering among us; but *On the Eve*, of all the novels, contains perhaps the most instructive political lesson England can learn. Europe has always had, and most assuredly England has been over-rich in those alarm-monger critics, watchdogs for ever baying at Slav cupidity, treachery, intrigue, and so on and so on. It is useful to have these well-meaning animals on the political premises, giving noisy tongue whenever the Slav stretches out his long arm and opens his drowsy eyes, but how rare it is to find a man who can teach us to interpret a nation's aspirations, to gauge its inner force, its aim, its inevitability. Turgenev gives us such clues. In the respectful, if slightly forced, silence that has been imposed by certain recent political events on the tribe of faithful watchdogs, it may be permitted to one to say, that whatever England's interest may be in relation to Russia's development, it is better for us to understand the force of Russian aims, before we measure our strength against it And a novel, such as On the Eve, though now nearly forty years old, and to the short-sighted out of date, reveals in a flash the attitude of the Slav towards his political destiny. His aspirations may have to slumber through policy or necessity; they may be distorted or misrepresented, or led astray by official action, but we confess that for us, *On the Eve* suggests the existence of a mighty lake, whose waters, dammed back for a while, are rising slowly, but are still some way from the brim. How long will it take to the overflow? Nobody knows; but when the long winter of Russia's dark internal policy shall be broken up, will the snows, melting on the mountains, stream south-west, inundating the Valley of the Danube? Or, as the national poet, Pushkin, has sung, will there be a pouring of many Slavonian rivulets into the Russian sea, a powerful attraction of the Slav races towards a common centre to create an era of peace and development within, whereby Russia may rise free and rejoicing to face her great destinies? Hard and bitter is the shaping of nations. Uvar Ivanovitch still fixes his enigmatical stare into the far distance.

EDWARD GARNETT

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Chapter 1

1 On one of the hottest days of the summer of 1853, in the shade of a tall lime-tree on the bank of the river Moskva, not far from Kuntsovo, two young men were lying on the grass. One, who looked about twenty-three, tall and swarthy, with a sharp and rather crooked nose, a high forehead, and a restrained smile on his wide mouth, was lying on his back and gazing meditatively into the distance, his small grey eyes half closed. The other was lying on his chest, his curly, fair head propped on his two hands; he, too, was looking away into the distance. He was three years older than his companion, but seemed much younger. His moustache was only just growing, and his chin was covered with a light curly down. There was something childishly pretty, something attractively delicate, in the small features of his fresh round face, in his soft brown eyes, lovely pouting lips, and little white hands. Everything about him was suggestive of the happy light-heartedness of perfect health and youth—the carelessness, conceit, self-indulgence, and charm of youth. He used his eyes, and smiled and leaned his head as boys do who know that people look at them admiringly. He wore a loose white coat, made like a blouse, a blue kerchief wrapped his slender throat, and a battered straw hat had been flung on the grass beside him.

His companion seemed elderly in comparison with him; and no one would have supposed, from his angular figure, that he too was happy and enjoying himself. He lay in an awkward attitude; his large head—wide at the crown and narrower at the base—hung awkwardly on his long neck; awkwardness was expressed in the very pose of his hands, of his body, tightly clothed in a short black coat, and of his long legs with their knees raised, like the hind-legs of a grasshopper. For all that, it was impossible not to recognise that he was a man of good education; the whole of his clumsy person bore the stamp of good-breeding; and his face, plain and even a little ridiculous as it was, showed a kindly nature and a thoughtful habit. His name was Andrei Petrovitch Bersenyev; his companion, the fair-haired young man, was called Pavel Yakovlitch Shubin.

'Why don't you lie on your face, like me?' began Shubin. 'It's ever so much nicer so; especially when you kick up your heels and clap them together—like this. You have the grass under your nose; when you're sick of staring at the landscape you can watch a fat beetle crawling on a blade of grass, or an ant fussing about. It's really much nicer. But you've taken up a pseudo-classical pose, for all the world like a ballet-dancer, when she reclines upon a rock of paste-board. You should remember

you have a perfect right to take a rest now. It's no joking matter to come out third! Take your ease, sir; give up all exertion, and rest your weary limbs!'

Shubin delivered this speech through his nose in a half-lazy, half-joking voice (spoilt children speak so to friends of the house who bring them sweetmeats), and without waiting for an answer he went on:

'What strikes me most forcibly in the ants and beetles and other worthy insects is their astounding seriousness. They run to and fro with such a solemn air, as though their life were something of such importance! A man the lord of creation, the highest being, stares at them, if you please, and they pay no attention to him. Why, a gnat will even settle on the lord of creation's nose, and make use of him for food. It's most offensive. And, on the other hand, how is their life inferior to ours? And why shouldn't they take themselves seriously, if we are to be allowed to take ourselves seriously? There now, philosopher, solve that problem for me! Why don't you speak? Eh?'

'What?' said Bersenyev, starting.

'What!' repeated Shubin. 'Your friend lays his deepest thoughts before you, and you don't listen to him.'

'I was admiring the view. Look how hot and bright those fields are in the sun.' Bersenyev spoke with a slight lisp.

'There's some fine colour laid on there,' observed Shubin. 'Nature's a good hand at it, that's the fact!'

Bersenyev shook his head.

'You ought to be even more ecstatic over it than I. It's in your line: you're an artist.'

'No; it's not in my line,' rejoined Shubin, putting his hat on the back of his head. 'Flesh is my line; my work's with flesh—modelling flesh, shoulders, legs, and arms, and here there's no form, no finish; it's all over the place... . Catch it if you can.'

'But there is beauty here, too,' remarked Bersenyev.—'By the way, have you finished your bas-relief?'

'Which one?'

'The boy with the goat.'

'Hang it! Hang it! Hang it!' cried Shubin, drawling—'I looked at the genuine old things, the antiques, and I smashed my rubbish to pieces. You point to nature, and say "there's beauty here, too." Of course, there's beauty in everything, even in your nose there's beauty; but you can't try after all kinds of beauty. The ancients, they didn't try after it; beauty came down of itself upon their creations from somewhere or other—from heaven, I suppose. The whole world belonged to them; it's not for us to be so large in our reach; our arms are short. We drop our hook into one little pool, and keep watch over it. If we get a bite, so much the better, if not——'

Shubin put out his tongue.

'Stop, stop,' said Bensenyev, 'that's a paradox. If you have no sympathy for beauty, if you do not love beauty wherever you meet it, it will not come to you even in your art. If a beautiful view, if beautiful music does not touch your heart; I mean, if you are not sympathetic——'

'Ah, you are a confirmed sympathetic!' broke in Shubin, laughing at the new title he had coined, while Bersenyev sank into thought.

'No, my dear fellow,' Shubin went on, 'you're a clever person, a philosopher, third graduate of the Moscow University; it's dreadful arguing with you, especially for an ignoramus like me, but I tell you what; besides my art, the only beauty I love is in women ... in girls, and even that's recently.'

He turned over on to his back and clasped his hands behind his head.

A few instants passed by in silence. The hush of the noonday heat lay upon the drowsy, blazing fields.

'Speaking of women,' Shubin began again, 'how is it no one looks after Stahov? Did you see him in Moscow?'

'No.'

'The old fellow's gone clean off his head. He sits for whole days together at his Augustina Christianovna's, he's bored to death, but still he sits there. They gaze at one another so stupidly... . It's positively disgusting to see them. Man's a strange animal. A man with such a home; but no, he must have his Augustina Christianovna! I don't know anything more repulsive than her face, just like a duck's! The other day I modelled a caricature of her in the style of Dantan. It wasn't half bad. I will show it you.'

'And Elena Nikolaevna's bust?' inquired Bersenyev, 'is it getting on?'

'No, my dear boy, it's not getting on. That face is enough to drive one to despair. The lines are pure, severe, correct; one would think there would be no difficulty in catching a likeness. It's not as easy as one would think though. It's like a treasure in a fairy-tale—you can't get hold of it. Have you ever noticed how she listens? There's not a single feature different, but the whole expression of the eyes is constantly changing, and with that the whole face changes. What is a sculptor—and a poor one too—to do with such a face? She's a wonderful creature—a strange creature,' he added after a brief pause.

'Yes; she is a wonderful girl,' Bersenyev repeated after him.

'And she the daughter of Nikolai Artemyevitch Stahov! And after that people talk about blood, about stock! The amusing part of it is that she really is his daughter, like him, as well as like her mother, Anna Vassilyevna. I respect Anna Vassilyevna from the depths of my heart, she's been awfully good to me; but she's no better than a hen. Where did Elena get that soul of hers? Who kindled that fire in her? There's another problem for you, philosopher!'

But as before, the 'philosopher' made no reply. Bersenyev did not in general err on the side of talkativeness, and when he did speak, he

expressed himself awkwardly, with hesitation, and unnecessary gesticulation. And at this time a kind of special stillness had fallen on his soul, a stillness akin to lassitude and melancholy. He had not long come from town after prolonged hard work, which had absorbed him for many hours every day. The inactivity, the softness and purity of the air, the consciousness of having attained his object, the whimsical and careless talk of his friend, and the image—so suddenly called up—of one dear to him, all these impressions different—yet at the same time in a way akin—were mingled in him into a single vague emotion, which at once soothed and excited him, and robbed him of his power. He was a very highly strung young man.

It was cool and peaceful under the lime-tree; the flies and bees seemed to hum more softly as they flitted within its circle of shade. The fresh fine grass, of purest emerald green, without a tinge of gold, did not quiver, the tall flower stalks stood motionless, as though enchanted. On the lower twigs of the lime-tree the little bunches of yellow flowers hung still as death. At every breath a sweet fragrance made its way to the very depths of the lungs, and eagerly the lungs inhaled it. Beyond the river in the distance, right up to the horizon, all was bright and glowing. At times a slight breeze passed over, breaking up the landscape and intensifying the brightness; a sunlit vapour hung over the fields. No sound came from the birds; they do not sing in the heat of noonday; but the grasshoppers were chirping everywhere, and it was pleasant as they sat in the cool and quietness, to hear that hot, eager sound of life; it disposed to slumber and inclined the heart to reveries.

'Have you noticed,' began Bersenyev, eking out his words with gesticulations, 'what a strange feeling nature produces in us? Everything in nature is so complete, so defined, I mean to say, so content with itself, and we understand that and admire it, and at the same time, in me at least, it always excites a kind of restlessness, a kind of uneasiness, even melancholy. What is the meaning of it? Is it that in the face of nature we are more vividly conscious of all our incompleteness, our indefiniteness, or have we little of that content with which nature is satisfied, but something else—I mean to say, what we need, nature has not?'

'H'm,' replied Shubin, 'I'll tell you, Andrei Petrovitch, what all that comes from. You describe the sensations of a solitary man, who is not living but only looking on in ecstasy. Why look on? Live, yourself, and you will be all right. However much you knock at nature's door, she will never answer you in comprehensible words, because she is dumb. She will utter a musical sound, or a moan, like a harp string, but don't expect a song from her. A living heart, now—that will give you your answer—especially a woman's heart. So, my dear fellow, I advise you to get yourself some one to share your heart, and all your distressing sensations will vanish at once. "That's what we need," as you say. This agitation, and melancholy, all that, you know, is simply a hunger of a

kind. Give the stomach some real food, and everything will be right directly. Take your place in the landscape, live in the body, my dear boy. And after all, what is nature? what's the use of it? Only hear the word, love—what an intense, glowing sound it has! Nature—what a cold, pedantic expression. And so' (Shubin began humming), 'my greetings to Marya Petrovna! or rather,' he added, 'not Marya Petrovna, but it's all the same! *Voo me compreny*.'

Bersenyev got up and stood with his chin leaning on his clasped hands. 'What is there to laugh at?' he said, without looking at his companion, 'why should you scoff? Yes, you are right: love is a grand word, a grand feeling... . But what sort of love do you mean?'

Shubin too, got up. 'What sort? What you like, so long as it's there. I will confess to you that I don't believe in the existence of different kinds of love. If you are in love——'

'With your whole heart,' put in Bersenyev.

'Well, of course, that's an understood thing; the heart's not an apple; you can't divide it. If you're in love, you're justified. And I wasn't thinking of scoffing. My heart's as soft at this moment as if it had been melted... . I only wanted to explain why nature has the effect on us you spoke of. It's because she arouses in us a need for love, and is not capable of satisfying it. Nature is gently driving us to other living embraces, but we don't understand, and expect something from nature herself. Ah, Andrei, Andrei, this sun, this sky is beautiful, everything around us is beautiful, still you are sad; but if, at this instant, you were holding the hand of a woman you loved, if that hand and the whole woman were yours, if you were even seeing with her eyes, feeling not your own isolated emotion, but her emotion—nature would not make you melancholy or restless then, and you would not be observing nature's beauty; nature herself would be full of joy and praise; she would be re-echoing your hymn, because then you would have given her—dumb nature—speech!'

Shubin leaped on to his feet and walked twice up and down, but Bersenyev bent his head, and his face was overcast by a faint flush.

'I don't altogether agree with you,' he began: 'nature does not always urge us ... towards love.' (He could not at once pronounce the word.) 'Nature threatens us, too; she reminds us of dreadful ... yes, insoluble mysteries. Is she not destined to swallow us up, is she not swallowing us up unceasingly? She holds life and death as well; and death speaks in her as loudly as life.'

'In love, too, there is both life and death,' interposed Shubin.

'And then,' Bersenyev went on: 'when I, for example, stand in the spring in the forest, in a green glade, when I can fancy the romantic notes of Oberon's fairy horn' (Bersenyev was a little ashamed when he had spoken these words)—'is that, too——'

'The thirst for love, the thirst for happiness, nothing more!' broke in Shubin. 'I, too, know those notes, I know the languor and the expectation which come upon the soul in the forest's shade, in its deep recesses, or at evening in the open fields when the sun sets and the river mist rises behind the bushes. But forest, and river, and fields, and sky, every cloud and every blade of grass sets me expecting, hoping for happiness, I feel the approach, I hear the voice of happiness calling in everything. "God of my worship, bright and gay!" That was how I tried to begin my sole poem; you must own it's a splendid first line, but I could never produce a second. Happiness! happiness! as long as life is not over, as long as we have the use of all our limbs, as long as we are going up, not down, hill! Damn it all!' pursued Shubin with sudden vehemence, 'we are young, and neither fools nor monsters; we will conquer happiness for ourselves!'

He shook his curls, and turned a confident almost challenging glance upwards to the sky. Bersenyev raised his eyes and looked at him.

'Is there nothing higher than happiness?' he commented softly.

'And what, for instance?' asked Shubin, stopping short.

'Why, for instance, you and I are, as you say, young; we are good men, let us suppose; each of us desires happiness for himself... . But is that word, happiness, one that could unite us, set us both on fire, and make us clasp each other's hands? Isn't that word an egoistic one; I mean, isn't it a source of disunion?'

'Do you know words, then, that unite men?'

'Yes; and they are not few in number; and you know them, too.'

'Eh? What words?'

'Well, even Art—since you are an artist—Country, Science, Freedom, Justice.'

'And what of love?' asked Shubin.

'Love, too, is a word that unites; but not the love you are eager for now; the love which is not enjoyment, the love which is self-sacrifice.'

Shubin frowned.

'That's all very well for Germans; I want to love for myself; I want to be first.'

'To be first,' repeated Bersenyev. 'But it seems to me that to put one's-self in the second place is the whole significance of our life.'

'If all men were to act as you advise,' commented Shubin with a plaintive expression, 'none on earth would eat pine-apples; every one would be offering them to other people.'

'That's as much as to say, pine-apples are not necessary; but you need not be alarmed; there will always be plenty of people who like them enough to take the bread out of other men's mouths to get them.'

Both friends were silent a little.

'I met Insarov again the other day,' began Bersenyev. 'I invited him to stay with me; I really must introduce him to you—and to the Stahovs.'