

## CHAPTER XIV

The pilgrim woman was appeased and, being encouraged to talk, gave a long account of Father Amphilochus, who led so holy a life that his hands smelled of incense, and how on her last visit to Kiev some monks she knew let her have the keys of the catacombs, and how she, taking some dried bread with her, had spent two days in the catacombs with the saints. "I'd pray awhile to one, ponder awhile, then go on to another. I'd sleep a bit and then again go and kiss the relics, and there was such peace all around, such blessedness, that one don't want to come out, even into the light of heaven again."

Pierre listened to her attentively and seriously. Prince Andrew went out of the room, and then, leaving "God's folk" to finish their tea, Princess Mary took Pierre into the drawing room.

"You are very kind," she said to him.

"Oh, I really did not mean to hurt her feelings. I understand them so well and have the greatest respect for them."

Princess Mary looked at him silently and smiled affectionately.

"I have known you a long time, you see, and am as fond of you as of a brother," she said. "How do you find Andrew?" she added hurriedly, not giving him time to reply to her affectionate words. "I am very anxious about him. His health was better in the winter, but last spring his wound reopened and the doctor said he ought to go away for a cure. And I am also very much afraid for him spiritually. He has not a character like us women who, when we suffer, can weep away our sorrows. He keeps it all within him. Today he is cheerful and in good spirits, but that is the effect of your visit—he is not often like that. If you could persuade him to go abroad. He needs activity, and this quiet regular life is very bad for him. Others don't notice it, but I see it."

Toward ten o'clock the men servants rushed to the front door, hearing the bells of the old prince's carriage approaching. Prince Andrew and Pierre also went out into the porch.

"Who's that?" asked the old prince, noticing Pierre as he got out of the carriage.

"Ah! Very glad! Kiss me," he said, having learned who the young stranger was.

The old prince was in a good temper and very gracious to Pierre.

Before supper, Prince Andrew, coming back to his father's study, found him disputing hotly with his visitor. Pierre was maintaining that a time would come when there would be no more wars. The old prince disputed it chaffingly, but without getting angry.

“Drain the blood from men’s veins and put in water instead, then there will be no more war! Old women’s nonsense—old women’s nonsense!” he repeated, but still he patted Pierre affectionately on the shoulder, and then went up to the table where Prince Andrew, evidently not wishing to join in the conversation, was looking over the papers his father had brought from town. The old prince went up to him and began to talk business.

“The marshal, a Count Rostóv, hasn’t sent half his contingent. He came to town and wanted to invite me to dinner—I gave him a pretty dinner!... And there, look at this.... Well, my boy,” the old prince went on, addressing his son and patting Pierre on the shoulder. “A fine fellow—your friend—I like him! He stirs me up. Another says clever things and one doesn’t care to listen, but this one talks rubbish yet stirs an old fellow up. Well, go! Get along! Perhaps I’ll come and sit with you at supper. We’ll have another dispute. Make friends with my little fool, Princess Mary,” he shouted after Pierre, through the door.

Only now, on his visit to Bald Hills, did Pierre fully realize the strength and charm of his friendship with Prince Andrew. That charm was not expressed so much in his relations with him as with all his family and with the household. With the stern old prince and the gentle, timid Princess Mary, though he had scarcely known them, Pierre at once felt like an old friend. They were all fond of him already. Not only Princess Mary, who had been won by his gentleness with the pilgrims, gave him her most radiant looks, but even the one-year-old “Prince Nicholas” (as his grandfather called him) smiled at Pierre and let himself be taken in his arms, and Michael Ivánovich and Mademoiselle Bourienne looked at him with pleasant smiles when he talked to the old prince.

The old prince came in to supper; this was evidently on Pierre’s account. And during the two days of the young man’s visit he was extremely kind to him and told him to visit them again.

When Pierre had gone and the members of the household met together, they began to express their opinions of him as people always do after a new acquaintance has left, but as seldom happens, no one said anything but what was good of him.