

## CHAPTER XIX

There was nothing in Pierre's soul now at all like what had troubled it during his courtship of Hélène.

He did not repeat to himself with a sickening feeling of shame the words he had spoken, or say: "Oh, why did I not say that?" and, "Whatever made me say 'Je vous aime'?" On the contrary, he now repeated in imagination every word that he or Natásha had spoken and pictured every detail of her face and smile, and did not wish to diminish or add anything, but only to repeat it again and again. There was now not a shadow of doubt in his mind as to whether what he had undertaken was right or wrong. Only one terrible doubt sometimes crossed his mind: "Wasn't it all a dream? Isn't Princess Mary mistaken? Am I not too conceited and self-confident? I believe all this—and suddenly Princess Mary will tell her, and she will be sure to smile and say: 'How strange! He must be deluding himself. Doesn't he know that he is a man, just a man, while I...? I am something altogether different and higher.'"

That was the only doubt often troubling Pierre. He did not now make any plans. The happiness before him appeared so inconceivable that if only he could attain it, it would be the end of all things. Everything ended with that.

A joyful, unexpected frenzy, of which he had thought himself incapable, possessed him. The whole meaning of life—not for him alone but for the whole world—seemed to him centered in his love and the possibility of being loved by her. At times everybody seemed to him to be occupied with one thing only—his future happiness. Sometimes it seemed to him that other people were all as pleased as he was himself and merely tried to hide that pleasure by pretending to be busy with other interests. In every word and gesture he saw allusions to his happiness. He often surprised those he met by his significantly happy looks and smiles which seemed to express a secret understanding between him and them. And when he realized that people might not be aware of his happiness, he pitied them with his whole heart and felt a desire somehow to explain to them that all that occupied them was a mere frivolous trifle unworthy of attention.

When it was suggested to him that he should enter the civil service, or when the war or any general political affairs were discussed on the assumption that everybody's welfare depended on this or that issue of events, he would listen with a mild and pitying smile and surprise people by his strange comments. But at this time he saw everybody—both those who, as he imagined, understood the real meaning of life (that is, what he was feeling) and those unfortunates who evidently did not understand it—in the bright light of the emotion that shone within himself, and at once without any effort saw in everyone he met everything that was good and worthy of being loved.

When dealing with the affairs and papers of his dead wife, her memory aroused in him no feeling but pity that she had not known the bliss he now knew. Prince Vasíli, who having obtained a new post and some

fresh decorations was particularly proud at this time, seemed to him a pathetic, kindly old man much to be pitied.

Often in afterlife Pierre recalled this period of blissful insanity. All the views he formed of men and circumstances at this time remained true for him always. He not only did not renounce them subsequently, but when he was in doubt or inwardly at variance, he referred to the views he had held at this time of his madness and they always proved correct.

“I may have appeared strange and queer then,” he thought, “but I was not so mad as I seemed. On the contrary I was then wiser and had more insight than at any other time, and understood all that is worth understanding in life, because... because I was happy.”

Pierre’s insanity consisted in not waiting, as he used to do, to discover personal attributes which he termed “good qualities” in people before loving them; his heart was now overflowing with love, and by loving people without cause he discovered indubitable causes for loving them.