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Leo Tolstoy's "A History of Yesterday"

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Leo Tolstoy's "A History of Yesterday"

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN

By GEORGE L. KLINE

Translator's Note: "A History of Yesterday" (*Istoriyya vcherashnego dnya*) was written in 1851, set aside by Tolstoy while he worked on "Childhood," and never taken up again. It was not published until after his death, and was never translated into English. The text which I used for the present translation is that of the authoritative Jubilee Edition (vol. I, Moscow, 1935), edited by Chertkov. Professor Simmons writes of the work as follows: "It is a considerable fragment of what was intended to be a long work under the title of *A History of Yesterday*. In its present form the fragment embraces a detailed description of an actual evening he spent in the home of Prince and Princess Volkonski (Tolstoy was much attracted to the wife, Princess L. Volkonski, who served as the model for the "Little Princess," wife of Andrei Bolkonski, in *War and Peace*), which he eventually intended to subordinate to a larger design. This fragment is a unique performance for a beginner. In its infinite detail, concerned largely with a minute analysis of his conscious and subconscious thoughts and feelings reacting to particular situations, the work has the distinct flavor of Proust and Joyce. The immediate model, however, was Sterne, whose influence is clear in the frequent digressions, in the mixture of trivial observation with commonplace aphorisms, and in the transformation of all the unexpected and confused associations of thought that enter the hero's head as he falls asleep. The young Tolstoy reveled in his newly discovered powers of analysis, but this exuberant abandon never again appeared in his fiction." (*Leo Tolstoy*, p. 72.)

I AM writing a history of yesterday not because yesterday was extraordinary in any way, for it might rather be called ordinary, but because I have long wished to trace the intimate side of life through an entire day. Only God knows how many diverse and diverting impressions, together with the thoughts awakened by them, occur in a single day. Obscure and confused they may be, but they are nevertheless comprehensible to our minds. If it were possible for me to recount them all so that I myself could read the tale with ease and so that others might read it as I do, a most instructive and amusing book would result; nor would there be ink enough in the world to write it, or typesetters to put it in print. But to get on with the story.

I arose late yesterday—at a quarter to ten—because I had retired

after twelve. (I have long since made a rule never to retire after twelve, yet this happens to me at least three times a week.) But there are circumstances in which I consider this rather a fault than a crime. These circumstances are of various kinds; yesterday they were as follows:

Here I must apologize for going back to the day before yesterday. But then, novelists write whole stories about their heroes' forebears.

I was playing cards; not at all from a passion for the game, as it might seem; no more, indeed, from a passion for the game than one who dances the polka does so from a passion for promenading. Rousseau among other things which he proposed and no one has accepted, suggested the playing of cup-and-ball in society in order to keep the hands occupied. But that is scarcely enough; in society the head too should be occupied, or at the very least should be so employed as to allow silence equally with conversation. Such an employment has been invented: cards. People of the older generation complain that "nowadays there is no conversation." I do not know how people were in the old days (it seems to me that people have always been the same), but conversation there can never be. As an employment conversation is the stupidest of inventions.—It is not from a deficiency of intelligence but from egotism that conversation fails. Everyone wishes to talk about himself or about that which interests him; however, if one speaks and another listens, the result is not a conversation but a lecture. And if two people come together who are interested in the same thing, then a third person is enough to spoil the whole business: he interferes, you must try to give him a share too—and your conversation has gone to the devil.

There are also conversations between people who are interested in the same thing, and where no one disturbs them, but such cases are even worse. Each speaks of the same thing from his own viewpoint, transposing everything to his own key, and measuring everything with his own yardstick. The longer the conversation continues, the farther apart they draw, until at last each one sees that he is no longer conversing, but is preaching with a freedom which he permits only to himself; that he is making a spectacle of himself, and that the other is not listening to him, but is doing the same thing. Have you ever rolled eggs during Holy Week? You start off two identical eggs with the same stick, but with their little ends on opposite sides. At first they roll in the same direction, but then each one begins to roll away in the direction of its little end. In conversation as in egg-rolling, there are little sloops that roll along noisily

and not very far; there are sharp-ended ones that wander off heaven knows where. But, with the exception of the little sloops, there are no two eggs that would roll in the same direction. Each has its little end.

I am not speaking now of those conversations which are carried on simply because it would be improper not to say something, just as it would be improper to appear without a necktie. One person thinks, "You know quite well that I have no real interest in what I am saying, but it is necessary"; and the other, "Talk away, talk away, poor soul—I know it is necessary." This is not conversation, but the same thing as a swallowtail coat, a calling card, and gloves—a matter of decorum.

And that is why I say that cards are an excellent invention. In the course of the game one may chat, gratify one's ego, and make witty remarks; furthermore, one is not obliged to keep to the same subject, as one is in that society where there is only conversation.

One must reserve the last intellectual cartridge for the final round, when one is taking his leave: then is the time to explode your whole supply, like a race horse approaching the finish line. Otherwise one appears pale and insipid; and I have noticed that people who are not only clever but capable of sparkling in society have lost out in the end because they lacked this sense of timing. If you have spoken heatedly and then, because of weariness and boredom, you cannot muster a reply, the last impression lingers and people say, "How dull he is. . . ." But when people play cards this does not happen. One may remain silent without incurring censure.

Besides, women—young ones—play cards, and what could be better than to sit beside a young lady for two or three hours? And if it is *the* young lady, nothing more can be desired.

And so I played cards. We took seats on the right, on the left, opposite—and everything was cozy.

This diversion continued until a quarter to twelve. We finished three rubbers. Why does this woman love (how I should like to finish this sentence here with "me"!) to embarrass me?—For even if she didn't I would not be myself in her presence. It seems to me either that my hands are very dirty, or that I am sitting awkwardly, or else a pimple on my cheek—the one facing her—torments me. Yet she is in no way to blame for this: I am always ill at ease with people whom I either do not like or like very much. Why is this? Because I wish to convey to the former that I do not like them, and to the latter that I do, and to convey what you wish is very difficult.

With me it always works out in reverse. I wish to be cool, but then this coolness seems overdone and I become too affable. With people whom you love honorably, the thought that they may think you love them dishonorably unnerves you and you become short and brusque.

She is the woman for me because she has all those endearing qualities which compel one to love them, or rather, to love her—for I do love her. But not in order to possess her. That thought never entered my head.

She has the bad habit of billing and cooing with her husband in front of others, but this does not bother me; it would mean no more to me if she should kiss the stove or the table. She plays with her husband as a swallow plays with a blossom, because she is warm-hearted and this makes her happy.

She is a coquette; no, not a coquette, but she loves to please, even to turn heads. I won't say coquette, because either the word or the idea associated with it is bad. To call showing the naked body and deceiving in love coquetry!—That is not coquetry but brazen impudence and baseness. But to wish to please and to turn heads is fine and does no one any harm, since there are no Werthers, and it provides innocent pleasure for oneself and others. Thus, for example, I am quite content that she should please me; I desire nothing more. Furthermore, there is clever coquetry and stupid coquetry: clever coquetry is inconspicuous and you do not catch the culprit in the act; stupid coquetry, on the contrary, hides nothing. It speaks thus: "I am not so good-looking, but what legs I have! Look! Do you see? What do you say? Nice?"—Perhaps your legs are nice, but I did not notice, because you showed them.—Clever coquetry says: "It is all the same to me whether you look or not. I was hot, so I took off my hat." I saw everything. "And what does it matter to me?" *Her* coquetry is both innocent and clever.

I looked at my watch and got up. It is astonishing: except when I am speaking to her, I never see her looking at me, and yet she sees all my movements.—"Oh, what a pink watch he has!" I am very much offended when people find my Bréguet watch pink; it would be equally offensive if they told me that my vest is pink. I suppose I was visibly embarrassed, because when I said that on the contrary it was an excellent watch, she became embarrassed in her turn. I dare say she was sorry that she had said something which put me in an awkward position. We both sensed the humor of the situation, and smiled. Being embarrassed together and smiling together

was very pleasant to me. A silly thing, to be sure, but together.—I love these secret, inexplicable relationships, expressed by an imperceptible smile or by the eyes. It is not that one person understands the other, but that each understands that the other understands that he understands him, etc.

Whether she wished to end this conversation which I found so sweet, or to see how I would refuse, or if I would refuse, or whether she simply wished to continue playing, she looked at the figures which were written on the table, drew the chalk over the table—making a figure that could be classified neither as mathematical nor pictorial—looked at her husband, then between him and me, and said: “Let’s play three more rubbers.” I was so absorbed in the contemplation not of her movements alone, but of everything that is called *charme*—which it is impossible to describe—that my imagination was very far away, and I did not have time to clothe my words in a felicitous form. I simply said: “No, I can’t.”

Before I had finished saying this I began to regret it,—that is, not all of me, but one part of me. There is no action which is not condemned by some part of the mind. On the other hand, there is a part that speaks in behalf of any action: what is so bad about going to bed after twelve, and when do you suppose you will spend another such delightful evening?—I dare say this part spoke very eloquently and persuasively (although I cannot convey what it said), for I became alarmed and began to cast about for arguments.—In the first place, I said to myself, there is no great pleasure in it, you do not like her at all, and you’re in an awkward position; besides, you’ve already said that you can’t stay, and you would fall in her estimation. . . .

“Comme il est aimable, ce jeune homme.”

This sentence, which followed immediately after mine, interrupted my reflections.—I began to make excuses, to say I couldn’t stay, but since one does not have to think to make excuses, I continued reasoning with myself.

. . . How I love to have her speak of me in the third person. In German this is rude, but I would love it even in German. Why doesn’t she find a decent name for me? It is clearly awkward for her to call me either by my given name or by my surname and title. Can this be because I . . .

“Stay for supper,” said her husband.—As I was busy with my reflections on the formula of the third person, I did not notice that my body, while very properly making its excuses that it could not

stay, was putting down its hat again and sitting down quite coolly in an easy chair. It was clear that my mind was taking no part in this absurdity. I became highly vexed and was about to begin roundly reproaching myself, when a pleasant circumstance diverted me. She very carefully drew something which I could not see, lifted the chalk a little higher than was necessary, and placed it on the table. Then she put her hands on the divan on which she was sitting and, wiggling from side to side, pushed herself to the back of it and raised her head—her little head, with the fine rounded contours of her face, the dark, half-closed, but energetic eyes, the narrow, sharp little nose and the mouth that was one with the eyes and always expressed something new. At this moment who could say what it expressed? There was pensiveness and mockery, and pain, and a desire to keep from laughing, dignity, and capriciousness, and intelligence, and stupidity, and passion, and apathy, and much more. After waiting for a moment, her husband went out—I suppose to order the supper.

To be left alone with her is always frightening and oppressive to me. As I follow with my eyes whoever is leaving, it is as painful to me as the fifth figure of the quadrille: I see my partner going over to the other side and I must remain alone. I am sure it was not so painful for Napoleon to see the Saxons crossing over to the enemy at Waterloo as it was for me in my early youth to watch this cruel maneuver. The stratagem that I employ in the quadrille I employed also in this case: I acted as though I did not notice that I was alone. And now even the conversation which had begun before his exit came to an end; I repeated the last words that I had said, adding only, "And that's how it is." She repeated hers, adding, "Yes." But at the same time another, inaudible, conversation began.

She: "I know why you repeat what you have already said. It is awkward for you to be alone and you see that it is awkward for me,—so in order to seem occupied you begin to talk. I thank you very much for this attention, but perhaps one could say something a little bit more intelligent."

I: "That is true, your observation is correct, but I don't know why *you* feel awkward. Is it possible that you think that when you are alone I will begin to say things that will be distasteful to you? To prove that I am ready to sacrifice my own pleasures for your sake, however agreeable our present conversation is to me, I am going to speak aloud. Or else you begin."

She: "Well, go on!"

I was just opening my mouth to say something that would allow me to think of one thing while saying something else, when she began a conversation aloud which apparently could continue for a long while. In such a situation the most interesting questions are neglected because *the* conversation continues. Having each said a sentence, we fell silent, tried once more to speak, and again fell silent.

The conversation—I: “No, it is impossible to talk. Since I see that this is awkward for you, it would be better if your husband were to return.”

She: (Aloud) “Well, where is Ivan Ivanovich? Ask him to come in here.” . . . If anyone does not believe that there are such secret conversations, that should convince him.

“I am very glad that we are now alone,” I continued, speaking silently, “I have already mentioned to you that you often offend me by your lack of confidence. If my foot accidentally touches yours, you immediately hasten to apologize and do not give me time to do so, while I, having realized that it was actually your foot, was just about to apologize myself. I cannot keep up with you, and you think me indelicate.”

Her husband came in. We sat for a while, had supper, and chatted. At about twelve-thirty I went home.

IN THE SLEDGE

It was spring, the twenty-fifth of March. The night was clear and still; a young moon was visible from behind the red roof of a large white house opposite; most of the snow was already gone.

Only my night sledge was at the entrance, and even without the footman’s shout of “Let’s go, there!” Dmitri knew quite well that I was leaving. A smacking sound was audible, as though he were kissing someone in the dark, which, I conjectured, was intended to urge the little mare and the sledge away from the pavement stones on which the runners grated and screeched unpleasantly. Finally the sledge drew up. The solicitous footman took me under the elbow and assisted me to my seat. If he had not held me I should simply have jumped into the sledge, but as it was, in order not to offend him, I walked slowly, and broke through the thin ice which covered the puddle—getting my feet wet. “Thank you, my friend.” “Dmitri, is there a frost?”—“Of course, sir; we have a bit of a frost every night now.”—

—How stupid! Why did I ask that?—No, there is nothing stupid about it. You wanted to talk, to enter into communication with

someone, because you are in high spirits. And why am I in high spirits? Half an hour ago if I had gotten into my sledge, I wouldn't have started to talk.—Because you spoke elegantly when taking your leave, because her husband saw you to the door and said, "When will we see you again?"—Because as soon as the footman caught sight of you he jumped up, and despite the fact that he reeked of parsley, he took pleasure in serving you.—I gave him a fifty-kopek piece a few days ago.—In all our recollections the middle falls away and the first and last impressions remain, especially the last. For this reason there exists the splendid custom of the master of the house accompanying his guest to the door, where, twining one leg about the other, as a rule, the host must say something kind to his guest. Despite any intimacy of relations, this rule should not be disregarded. Thus, for example, "When will we see you again?" means nothing, but from vanity the guest involuntarily translates it as follows: *When* means, "please make it soon;" *we* means, "not only myself but my wife, who is also pleased to see you;" *see you* means, "give us the pleasure another time;" *again* means, "we have just spent the evening together, but with you it is impossible to be bored." And the guest carries away a pleasant impression.

It is also necessary to give money to the servants, especially in homes that are not well regulated and where not all the footmen are courteous—in particular the doorman (who is the most important personage because of the first and last impression). They will greet you and see you off as if you were a member of the family, and you translate their complaisance—whose source is your fifty-kopek piece—as follows: "Everyone here loves you and honors you, therefore we try, in pleasing the masters, to please you." Perhaps it is only the footman who loves and honors you, but all the same it is pleasant. What's the harm if you are mistaken? If there were no mistakes, there would be no . . .

"Are you crazy! . . . What the devil!"

Dmitri and I were very quietly and modestly driving down one of the boulevards, keeping to the ice on the right-hand side, when suddenly some "chowderhead" (Dmitri gave him this name afterwards) in a carriage and pair ran into us. We separated, and only after we had gone on about ten paces did Dmitri say, "Look at that, the chowderhead, he doesn't know his right hand from his left!"

Don't think that Dmitri was a timid man or slow to answer. No, on the contrary, although he was of small stature, clean shaven—but with a moustache—he was deeply conscious of his own dignity

and strictly fulfilled his duties. His weakness in this case was attributable to two circumstances: 1) Dmitri was accustomed to driving vehicles which inspired respect, but now we were driving in a small sledge with very long shafts, pulled by a very small horse, which he could hardly reach even with a whip; what is more, the horse dragged its hind feet pitifully—and all this could easily evoke the derision of by-standers. Consequently this circumstance was all the more difficult for Dmitri and could quite destroy his feeling of [self-confidence?].¹ 2) Probably my question, “Is there a frost?” had reminded him of similar questions that I had asked him in the autumn on starting out to hunt. A hunter has something to day-dream about, and he forgets to hurl a well-timed curse at the driver who does not keep to the right-hand side. With coachmen, as with everyone else, the one who shouts first and with the greatest assurance is right. There are certain exceptions. For example, a droshki-driver cannot shout at a carriage; a singleton—even an elegant one—can hardly shout at a four-in-hand; but then, everything depends on the nature of the individual circumstances and, most important, on the personality of the driver and the direction in which he is going. I once saw in Tula a striking example of the influence that one man can have on others through sheer audacity.

Everyone was driving to the carnival: sleighs with pairs, four-in-hands, carriages, trotters, silk cloaks—all drawn out in a line on the Kiev highway—and there were swarms of pedestrians. Suddenly there was a shout from a side street: “Hold back, hold back your horses! Out of the way there!” in a self-assured voice. Involuntarily the pedestrians made way, the pairs and four-in-hands were reined in. And what do you think? A ragged cabby, brandishing the ends of the reins over his head, standing on a broken-down sledge drawn by a filthy jade, tore through with a shout to the other side, before anyone realized what was happening. Even the policemen burst out laughing.

Although Dmitri is a reckless fellow and loves to swear, he has a kind heart and spares his poor horse. He uses the whip not as an incentive but as a corrective, that is, he doesn't spur his horse on with the whip: this is incompatible with the dignity of a city driver. But if the trotter doesn't stand still at the entrance, he will “give him one.” I had occasion to observe this presently: crossing from one street to another our little horse was hardly able to drag us along, and I noticed from the desperate movements of Dmitri's back and

¹This word is illegible in Tolstoy's manuscript.

hands and from his clucking that he was having difficulties. Would he use the whip? That was not his custom. But what if the horse stopped? That he would not tolerate, even though here he didn't need to fear the wag who would say, "Feeding time, eh?" . . . Here was proof that Dmitri acted more from a consciousness of his duty than from vanity.

I thought much more about the many and varied relations of drivers among themselves, of their intelligence, resourcefulness, and pride. I suppose that at large gatherings those who have been involved in collisions recognize one another and pass from hostile to peaceable relations. Everything in the world is interesting, especially the relationships which exist in classes other than our own.

If the vehicles are going in the same direction the disputes last longer. The one who was to blame attempts to drive the other away or to leave him behind, and the latter sometimes succeeds in proving to him the wrongness of his action, and gains the upper hand; however, when they are driving on the same side the odds are in favor of the one whose horses are more mettlesome.

All of these relationships correspond very closely to the general relationships in life. The relationships of gentlemen among themselves and with their drivers in the case of such collisions are also interesting.—"Hey there, you scoundrel, where do you think you're going?"—When this cry is addressed to the whole vehicle, the passenger involuntarily tries to assume a serious, or gay, or unconcerned expression—in a word, one that he did not have before. It is evident that he would be pleased if the situation were reversed. I have noticed that gentlemen with moustaches are especially sensitive to the insults sustained by their vehicles.

—"Who goes there?"

This shout came from a policeman who had in my presence been very much offended by a driver this same morning. At the entrance across from his sentry-box a carriage was standing; a splendid figure of a driver with a red beard, having tucked the reins under him, and resting his elbows on his knees, was warming his back in the sun—with evident pleasure, for his eyes were almost completely closed. Opposite him the policeman walked up and down on the platform in front of his sentry-box and, using the end of his halberd, adjusted the plank which was laid across the puddles near his balcony.—Suddenly he seemed to resent the fact that the carriage was standing there, or else he began to envy the driver who was warming himself with such pleasure, or perhaps he merely

wished to start a conversation. He walked the length of his little balcony, peered into the side street, and then thumped with his halberd on the plank: "Hey you, where are you stopping? You're blocking the road." The driver unscrewed his left eye a little, glanced at the policeman, and closed it again.

—"Get a move on! I'm talking to you!" No attention.—"Are you deaf? Eh? Move along, I said!" The policeman, seeing that there was no response, walked the length of his little balcony, peered into the side street once more, and evidently was getting ready to say something devastating. At this point the driver raised himself a little, adjusted the reins under him, and turning with sleepy eyes to the policeman, said, "What are you gaping at? They wouldn't even give you a gun, you simpleton, and still you go around yelling at people!"

"Get out of here!"

The driver roused himself and got out of there.

I looked at the policeman. He muttered something and looked angrily at me; apparently he was embarrassed that I had overheard and was looking at him. I know of nothing that can offend a man more deeply than to give him to understand that you have noticed something but do not wish to mention it. As a result I became embarrassed myself; I felt sorry for the policeman and went away.

I love Dmitri's ability to give people names on the spur of the moment; it amuses me. "Get along, little cap! Get along, monkey suit! Get along, whiskers! Get along, washerwoman! Get along, horse-doctor! Get along, bigwig! Get along, M'sieu!" The Russian has an amazing ability to find the incisive epithet for a person he has never seen before, and not only for an individual, but for a whole social class. A member of the lower middle class is a "catdealer", because, it is said, they trade in catskins; a footman is a "lapper," a "lickspittle"; a peasant is "Rurick"—why, I don't know; a driver is a "waggon-eater," etc.,—it is impossible to list them all. If a Russian quarrels with someone whom he has just met, he immediately christens him with a name which goes straight to the most sensitive point: "crooked nose," "crosseyed devil," "thick-lipped scoundrel," "snub-nose." One must experience this himself to realize how accurately such epithets always hit the sorest spot. I shall never forget the insult which I once received behind my back. A Russian said of me, "Oh, he's a snaggle-toothed one!" It should be known that my teeth are extremely bad, decayed, and sparse.

AT HOME

I arrived at home. Dmitri hurried to climb down and open the gate, and I did the same so as to pass through the gate before him. It always happens this way: I hurry to go in because I am accustomed to do so; he hurries to drive me up to the porch because he is accustomed to that.—For a long time I couldn't rouse anyone with my ringing. The tallow candle had burned very low and Prov, my old footman, was asleep. While I rang I was thinking as follows: Why is it always repugnant to me to come home, no matter where or how I live—repugnant to see the same Prov in the same place, the same candle, the same spots on the wallpaper, the same pictures? The whole thing is positively dismal.

I am particularly tired of the wallpaper and the pictures because they have pretensions to variety, and after looking at them for two days in a row they are worse than a blank wall. This unpleasant sensation upon coming home is due, I suppose, to the fact that man is not meant to lead a bachelor's life at the age of twenty-two.

It would be quite different if I could ask Prov as he opens the door (he has jumped up and is clumping with his boots to show that he has been listening for a long time and is wide awake): "Is the mistress asleep?"

—"No sir, not at all, she's reading in a book"—That would be something: I should put both my hands behind her head, hold her at arm's length before me, look at her, kiss her—another look, and another kiss; and I would not feel lonely on returning home.

Now the only question that I can ask Prov—to show him that I have noticed that he never sleeps when I am not at home—is: "Did anyone call?"—"No one."—Every time I ask this question Prov answers in a pathetic voice, and I always want to say to him, "Why do you speak in such a pathetic voice? I am very glad that no one called." But I restrain myself; Prov might be offended and he is a man of dignity.

In the evening I usually write in my diary, my Franklin journal, and my daily accounts.

Today I didn't spend anything because I haven't even a half-kopek piece left, so there is nothing to write in the account book.—The diary and the journal are another matter. I ought to write in them, but it is late; I'll put it off until tomorrow.—

I have often heard the words, "He's a frivolous person; he lives without a goal." I myself have often said this, and I say it not

because I repeat other people's words but because I feel in my heart that this is bad and that one should have a goal in life.

But how is one to do this—to be a “complete person and have a goal in life”? To set up a goal for oneself is impossible.—I have tried this many times and it does not work. One should not invent a goal, but find such a one as harmonizes with man's inclinations, which existed previously, but of which one has just become aware. It seems to me I have found such a goal: a well-rounded education and the cultivation of all my talents. One of the principal accepted means for its attainment is the diary and Franklin journal. Every day I confess in my diary everything that I have done badly. I have my weaknesses written out in columns in the journal—laziness, mendacity, gluttony, indecision, the desire to show off, sensuality, lack of *fierté*, etc.,—all such petty addictions. I post my transgressions from the diary to the journal by placing little crosses in the columns.

As I began to undress I thought: “Where in all this is your well-rounded education and the cultivation of your talents, of your virtue? Will you ever attain to virtue by this path? Where is this journal leading you?—It serves you only as an indication of your weaknesses, which have no end, and which increase every day. Even if you overcame these weaknesses you would not attain to virtue.—You are only deceiving yourself and playing with this like a child with a toy.—Surely it is not sufficient for an artist to know what things should not be done in order to become an artist. Surely one cannot accomplish anything worthwhile merely by negatively refraining from doing harm. It is not enough for the farmer to weed his field, he must till and sow. Set up rules of virtue and follow them.”—It was the part of my mind which is occupied with criticism that said this.

I became thoughtful. Surely it is not enough to destroy the cause of evil in order to bring about the good. Good is positive and not negative. And it is sufficient that good is positive and evil negative for the very reason that evil can be destroyed but good cannot. Good is always in our soul and the soul is good; but evil is implanted. If there were no evil the good would develop freely. The comparison with the farmer is not valid; he has to sow and plow, but in the soul the good is already sown. The artist must practice and he will master his art, if he does not conform to negative rules, but he must [be free?]² from arbitrariness. Practice is not necessary for the exercise of virtue—the practice is life itself.

²This word is illegible in Tolstoy's manuscript.

Cold is the absence of heat. Darkness is the absence of light, evil the absence of good.—Why does man love heat, light, and good? Because they are natural. There is a cause of heat, light, and good—the sun, God; but there is no cold or dark sun, no evil God. We see light and rays of light, we seek the cause and say that there is a sun. Light and heat and the law of gravitation prove this to us. This is in the physical world. In the moral world we see good, we see its rays, we see that there is a law of gravitation of the good towards something higher, and that its source is God.—

Remove the coarse crust from a diamond and it will sparkle; throw off the envelope of weaknesses and you will find virtue. But is it possible that it is only these trifles, these little weaknesses which you write down in the journal that prevent you from being good? Are there not greater passions? And why is such a large number added every day: *it is either self-deception or faintheartedness*, or something of the kind. There is no lasting improvement. In many respects there is no progress at all.—Again the part occupied with criticism made this observation.

It is true that all the weaknesses that I have written down may be reduced to three classes, but since each has many degrees they may be combined in infinite ways. 1) Pride, 2) weakness of will, 3) deficiency of intelligence.—But it is not possible to relate all weaknesses individually to a given class, for they result from a combination. The first two classes have decreased; the last, as an independent one, can make progress only with time. For example, I lied recently, and clearly without cause. I was asked to dinner. I refused and then said that I could not come because I had a lesson.—What kind?—An English lesson, I said, when I actually had gymnastics. The reasons: 1) lack of intelligence, that I failed to observe at once that it was stupid to lie, 2) lack of resolution, that I did not say why, 3) stupid pride, assuming that an English lesson is a better excuse than gymnastics.—

Surely virtue does not consist of correcting the weaknesses which harm you in life. It would seem in such a case that virtue is self-denial.—But that is not true. Virtue brings happiness because happiness brings virtue.—Whenever I write candidly in my diary I do not experience the least vexation toward myself for my weaknesses; it seems to me that when I avow them, they have already ceased to exist.

This is pleasant. I said my prayers and lay down to sleep. In the evening I pray better than in the morning; I understand better what

I am saying and feeling. In the evening I do not fear myself, in the morning I do—there is much before me.

Sleep in all its phases is a wonderful thing: the preparation, falling asleep, and sleep itself.—As soon as I lay down I thought, “What a delight to wrap oneself up warmly and immediately forget oneself in sleep.” But as soon as I began to fall asleep I remembered that it is pleasant to fall asleep, and I woke up. All the pleasures of the body are destroyed by consciousness. One should not be conscious; but I was conscious that I was conscious, and I continued to be conscious, and I couldn’t go to sleep. How annoying! Why did God give us consciousness when it only interferes with life?—Because moral pleasures on the contrary are felt more deeply when they are conscious.

Reflecting thus, I turned over onto the other side and in so doing uncovered myself. What a disagreeable sensation to uncover yourself in the dark. It always seems as if some one or something is clutching me or something cold or hot is touching my bare leg. I covered myself up quickly, tucked the blanket in under me on all sides, hid my head and began to go to sleep; it seemed to me that under this blanket no one and nothing could reach me.—My thoughts ran as follows:

“Morpheus, enfold me in your embrace.” This is a Divinity whose priest I would willingly become. And do you remember how the young lady was insulted when they said to her: “Quand je suis passé chez vous, vous étiez encore dans les bras de Morphée.” She thought Morphée was a name like André or Malaphée. What a comical name! . . . A charming expression, *dans les bras*; I picture to myself so clearly and elegantly the condition *dans les bras*,—and especially clearly the *bras* themselves—dimpled arms, bare to the shoulder, with little folds of skin, and a white chemise indiscreetly open.—How wonderful arms are in general, especially if they have a little dimple!—I stretched. Do you remember, Saint Thomas forbade stretching. He is like Didrikhs. They rode with him on horseback. The baiting was fine. Gelke rode beside the district police officer hallooming to the hounds, and Nalyot was doing his best, even on the frozen mud. How vexed Seryozha³ was! He’s at sister’s.—How lovely Masha⁴ is—if only I could find such a wife! Morpheus would be good on a hunt, only the naked one must ride, or else you might find a wife.—Bah, how Saint Thomas rolls—and the lady has

³Tolstoy’s brother, Sergei Nikolaevich.

⁴Tolstoy’s sister, Maria Nikolaevna.

already set off to overtake them all; she stretches out in vain, but then that wonderful *dans les bras*.—Here I suppose I went to sleep completely.—I dreamed that I wanted to overtake the young lady, suddenly there was a mountain, I pushed it with my hands, pushed it again—it collapsed; (I threw down the pillow) and I came home to eat. Not ready yet. Why not?—Vasili was swaggering loudly (it was the mistress of the house asking from behind the partition what the noise was, and the chambermaid answering her; I heard this, that is why I dreamed it). Vasili came in just as everyone wanted to ask him why it wasn't ready. They saw that Vasili was in his undershirt and that there was a ribbon across his chest; I became frightened, I fell on my knees, cried and kissed his hand; it was as pleasant to me as though I were kissing her hands,—even more so. Vasili took no notice of me and asked, "Have you loaded?" The Tula pastry-cook Didrikhs said, "Ready!"—"Well, fire!"—They discharged a volley. (The shutter banged.)—Vasili and I started to dance the polonaise, but it was no longer Vasili, it was she. Suddenly, oh horror! I noticed that my trousers were so short that my bare knees were showing. It is impossible to describe how I suffered (my legs became uncovered; for a long time I wasn't able to cover them up in my sleep, but finally I did). We continued dancing the polonaise and the Queen of Württemberg was there; suddenly I started to dance a Russian dance. Why?—I couldn't restrain myself. Finally they brought me an overcoat and boots; but even worse: no trousers at all. It cannot be that I am awake; surely I am asleep. I woke up.—I went to sleep again.—I thought, then I could no longer think; I began to imagine things, but I imagined them connectedly and pictorially; then my imagination went to sleep; dark images remained. Then my body went to sleep too.—A dream is made up of the first and last impressions.

Sleep is a condition in which man completely loses consciousness; but since a man goes to sleep by degrees, he also loses consciousness by degrees. Consciousness is what is called the soul; but the soul is regarded as something simple, while there are as many consciousnesses as there are separate parts of a human being. It seems to me that there are three such parts: 1) mind, 2) feeling, 3) body.—1) The first is the highest and this consciousness is an attribute of intelligent people only; animals and animal-like men do not have it. It goes to sleep first. 2) The consciousness of feeling is also an attribute of men only; it goes to sleep next. 3) The consciousness of the body goes to sleep last and seldom completely.—Animals do not have this

gradation of consciousness, nor do people when they are in such a state that they lose all consciousness—after a strong shock or when intoxicated.—The consciousness of being asleep awakens one immediately.

The recollection of the time which we spend asleep does not proceed from the same source as do the recollections of real life—i.e., from memory, the ability to reproduce our impressions—but from the ability to group impressions. In the moment of awakening we unite all the impressions which we received while going to sleep and while asleep (man almost never sleeps completely) under the influence of the impression which caused us to awaken. This process is the same as falling asleep: it proceeds by degrees, starting with the lowest faculty and ending with the highest. This takes place so rapidly that it is impossible to detect it, and being accustomed to consistency and to the form of time in which life manifests itself, we accept this aggregate of impressions as a recollection of time passed in sleep. In this way you may explain the fact that you have a long dream which ends with the circumstance which awakened you.—You dream that you are going hunting, you load your gun, flush the game, take aim, fire—and the noise which you take for the shot is the water bottle which you knocked onto the floor in your sleep. Or you come to see your friend N., you wait for him, and finally a servant comes in and reports that N. has arrived; this is actually being said to you by your own servant to wake you up.

If you wish to check the accuracy of this explanation, you should not in any case believe the dreams which are told you by people who always dream something significant and interesting. These people are accustomed to draw conclusions from dreams according to the principles of fortune-telling; they have set up a certain form to which everything is reduced. They supply what is lacking from their imagination and omit everything that does not fit into this form. For example, a mother will tell you that she dreamed that her daughter flew up into the sky and said: “Farewell, mother dear, I shall pray for you”! And what she really dreamed was that her daughter climbed up onto the roof and said nothing, and after she had climbed up the daughter suddenly became the cook Ivan and said, “Don’t you climb up here.”

Perhaps what they tell is made up by their imaginations from mere force of habit; if so, this is a further proof of my theory of dreams. . . .

If you wish to verify what you yourself experience, recall your

thoughts and images at the time of going to sleep and of waking up, and if anyone watched you while you were sleeping and can tell you all the circumstances which could have produced an effect on you, you will understand why you dreamed what you did and not something else. These circumstances are so numerous, depending on your constitution, on your digestion, and on physical causes, that it is impossible to enumerate them all. But it is said that when we dream that we are flying or swimming this means that we are growing. Notice why you swim one day and fly another; recollect everything, and you can explain it very easily.

If one of those persons who are in the habit of interpreting dreams had dreamed my dream, here is how it would be told. "I saw Saint Thomas running and running for a long time, and I said to him: 'Why are you running?' and he said to me: 'I am seeking the bride.'—So you see, he will either get married or there will be a letter from him. . . ."

Note also that there is no chronological order to your recollections. If you will recall your dreams, you will realize that at some time in the past you actually saw what you dreamed later.—During the night you wake up several times (almost always), but only the two lower degrees of consciousness—body and feeling—are awakened. After this, feeling and body go to sleep again—and the impressions which were received at the time of this awakening join the general impression of the dream without any order or consistency. If the third, higher consciousness of understanding awoke also and afterwards went to sleep again, the dream would be divided into two parts.

ANOTHER DAY (ON THE VOLGA)

I took it into my head to travel from Saratov to Astrakhan by way of the Volga. In the first place, I thought, it is better in case of bad weather to travel a longer distance rather than jolt over bad roads for seven hundred versts; besides, the picturesque banks of the Volga, the dreams, the danger—all this is pleasant and may have a beneficial effect. I fancied myself a poet, I called to mind my favorite characters and heroes, putting myself in their places.—In a word, I thought, as I always think when I undertake anything new, "Only now real life is beginning; until now it has been merely a preface which was hardly worth bothering about." I know that this is nonsense. I have observed many times that I always remain the same and that I am no more a poet on the Volga than on the Voronka,⁵ but

⁵A stream on the grounds at Yasnaya Polyana.

I still believe, I still seek, I still wait for something. It always seems to me when I am in doubt whether to do something that a voice says: you won't really do that, you won't go there, and yet it was there that happiness was waiting for you; now you have let it escape for ever.—It always seems to me that something is about to start without me.—Although this is silly, it is the reason why I travelled by way of the Volga to Astrakhan. I used to be afraid and ashamed to act on such silly grounds, but no matter how much I examine my past life, I find that for the most part I have acted on grounds that were no less silly. I don't know how it is with others, but I am used to this, and for me the words "trivial" and "ludicrous" have become words without meaning. Where are the "large" and "serious" grounds?

I set off for the Moscow ferry and began to saunter about among the boats and rafts. "Are these boats taken? Is there a free one?" I asked a group of barge-haulers who were standing on the shore. "And what does your worship require?" an old man with a long beard in a gray peasant's coat and lamb's-wool hat asked me.—"A boat to Astrakhan." "Well, that can be managed, sir!"—