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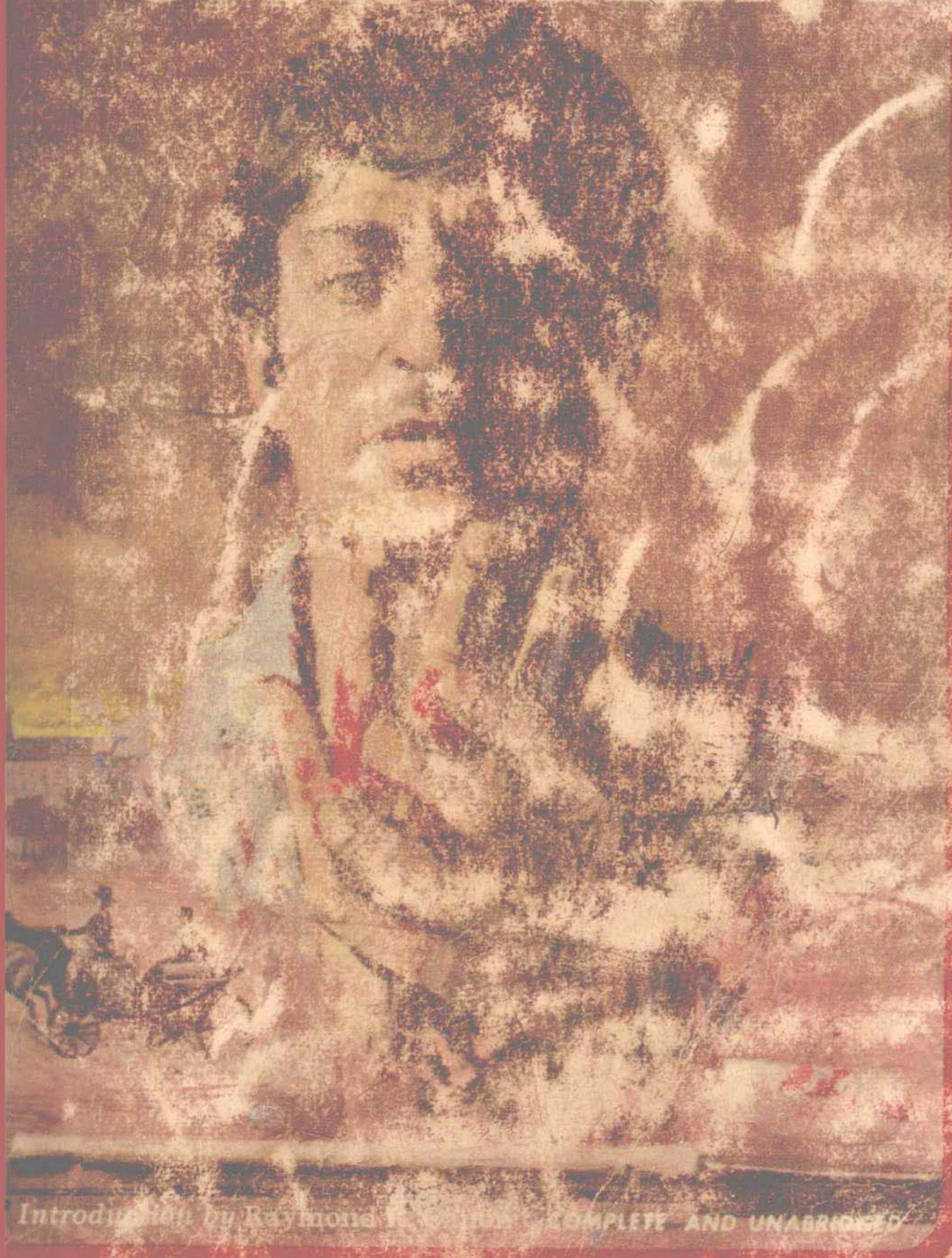
FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

CRIME AND PUNISHMENT



Introduction by Raymond [illegible] COMPLETE AND UNABRIDGED

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FYODOR DOSTOYEVSKY

(1821 – 1881)

Translation by Constance Garnett

AIRMONT PUBLISHING COMPANY, INC.
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Introduction

The nineteenth century was a great century in Russia for literary gems, but few of these gems shine with more brilliance than Dostoyevsky's *Crime and Punishment*. Few books have been accorded the acclaim it has achieved, and few books written before the twentieth century have appealed so much to the readers of this century. One cannot help but regret the fact that the author was not able to live to enjoy more fully his literary rewards, or have been able to write more while he lived. In fact, it is remarkable that he achieved as much as he did, for his early years were not guaranteed to provide him with robust health. From a severe and strict family life, he went to a military academy at St. Petersburg, where the discipline and punishments were even more severe. He suffered not only because of his relative poverty, but also because of his shyness and poor health. But he loved to read, and numbered among his favorites Scott, Hoffman, Schiller, as well as Pushkin and Gogol. He interspersed his reading with a great deal of writing or making plans for future writing.

After graduating from the academy as an officer in 1842, he worked for a while in the War Department, but found it not to his liking. He resigned the following year to devote himself entirely to his literature. The next few years were characterized for the most part by utter destitution. On the few occasions when he did come into some money, he spent it lavishly. Much of his early work was in the field of translations of foreign authors, but

his first work, "Poor Folk," which appeared in 1846, was a literary success if not a financial one, and his name became better known in the literary world.

His health steadily deteriorated and his moments of lucid thinking were mixed with periods of profound hypochondria. In 1848, he joined a secret society, only to be arrested and sentenced to be executed. While he was waiting for the firing squad to end his life, he and two others of his group were pardoned. Of the three, one went mad, the second had his hair turn white, and Dostoyevsky, who should have cracked under the strain, amazingly held up. He was sentenced to four years of hard labor in Siberia. The conditions he found there were almost unbelievable, but strangely enough, the only book the prisoners were allowed to read was the New Testament. Small wonder that Dostoyevsky's religious fervor, for years almost nonexistent, developed into an intense feeling.

The four years of imprisonment were followed by four more of military service—which was almost a holiday after what he had gone through. It was during this time, which was spent at Semipalatinsk, that the first drafts were written of stories which were to appear later. He also found time to get married, but his married life was as tempestuous as his earlier life had been, and so the marriage failed.

It was not until 1858 that Dostoyevsky was allowed to return to Russia proper. It is not surprising that he already looked like an old man, and suffered from a nervous tic. In spite of the fact that he was rejected by many of the more radical writers, his fame as a writer grew, not only in Russia but also in Western Europe. He turned to journalism as a profession, and founded, together with his brother, a review which was eventually suppressed by the government. He traveled to Western Europe, all the while carrying on a love affair with a girl in her twenties who served as a model for some of his stories. His passion for gambling stuck with him, and that, together with a final breakup of his love affair, left him destitute physically and mentally. It was shortly after this that *Crime and Punishment* appeared.

His life was not to be without its moments of joy, for in the year following the appearance of the novel, he fell in love with a pretty secretary to whom he had dictated one of his works. His first wife had died of tuberculosis, so he was free to marry if he wished. It was not long until he proposed to this secretary, Anna Snitkina. They were married in 1867, and she became a devoted wife to him. In view of his earlier lack of security, it can be imagined how much Dostoyevsky treasured this devotion, and he returned the affection to the utmost of his ability.

Crime and Punishment, undoubtedly one of Dostoyevsky's greatest works, was started while he was wasting his money in the casinos of Wiesbaden in Germany. He was pursued by his creditors, despised by the people because he was unable to pay his bills, and in many ways closely resembled Raskolnikov in the opening chapter of *Crime and Punishment*. The general theme of the story had long interested him, for several times he had written passages concerning the psychological workings of a criminal's mind up to the time he committed a crime, and the repentance that often sets in shortly after the deed has been done. During his imprisonment in Siberia, the whole question of crime and punishment in all its legal and moral aspects must have occupied his mind, for his first intention was to write a novel in the form of a confession. The first draft was actually written in the first person, but it was soon afterwards destroyed, for Dostoyevsky realized that he could not incorporate all the material he had in the form of a first person novel. In a letter which he wrote from Wiesbaden, he revealed the general outline of the novel. It was to be a contemporary novel, the story of a university student who decides to kill an old woman moneylender who, in the student's opinion, is worthless to society. He will take her money, help his family, and spend the rest of his life as a respected citizen doing his duty toward humanity. The student is convinced that this alone will atone for the crime, if killing a worthless old woman can be called a crime in the first place.

The crime is perfect in that it is committed without the slightest suspicion falling on him. But it is at this point that the psychological processes take over, and the student is driven to give himself up. Dostoyevsky concluded one of his letters on the novel by stating that he felt the subject was justified to some extent by events that were taking place at that time.

Crime and Punishment was one of a series of Dostoyevsky's writings which concerned poor people who were isolated by their very poverty and the social injustice of the time. They tried to rise above their low station in life by self-assertion—with disastrous results, for they were defeated by some weakness from within. The only way out of this was, according to Dostoyevsky, simple purity of heart and soul. It is Sonia in the novel who, having become a prostitute in order to support her family, still maintains a firm belief in God. This faith gives her the strength she needs in order to bear the degradations she must suffer. When Raskolnikov comes to know her, we would suspect that his mentality, based on reason, would reject all that Sonia stands for. But he does not. Far from it. He comes to love her, even though it is she who starts him on his final downfall.

Sonia is not the only one who shakes Raskolnikov's confidence in the intellectual quality of his mind. In his long conversation with the District Attorney, he does not come out on top as he feels he should, although, because of his pride, he continues his arguments to the end.

The ultimate collapse of Raskolnikov, triggered by Sonia, is brought about by the increasing impact of his inner conflict. It is a defeat, not a conversion, although a hope is expressed that something like a conversion might happen in the future. The fate of Raskolnikov is indicative of the fate of other of Dostoyevsky's heroes in his writings of this period. They are defeated from within, and in Dostoyevsky's eyes their only salvation would be an acceptance of a religious spirit and faith to counteract their isolation and rebellion.

To know *Crime and Punishment* and the associated novels (*The Gambler, Notes from the Underground*) is to see only one side of the picture, for Dostoyevsky went on to portray a more positive approach in *The Idiot*. The hero of this story is in direct contrast to Raskolnikov, and he suffers from an illness which forces him to spend some time in a Swiss sanatorium. On his return to Russia, in spite of his poverty, he asks only for a job as a simple clerk. Unlike Raskolnikov, he does not put himself above human law, and so his simple, honest actions are bewildering to those who are ruled by greed, pride, or anger. But unfortunately, Myshkin, the hero, does not come to any better end than Raskolnikov. Just as the latter underestimated the power of good in the world, so Myshkin underestimates the power of evil. He is far too permissive, and while his way may be an interesting study, it unfortunately does not bring us any nearer to an acceptable solution. It is a matter of interest that none of Dostoyevsky's novels ever did arrive at this solution.

A reading of *Crime and Punishment* opens the door to the rest of Dostoyevsky's great novels; *The Idiot, The Brothers Karamazov,* and *The Possessed* are all great works which have received their just acclaim. Certainly Dostoyevsky has become one of the most widely read authors in the West. And Dostoyevsky himself showed a great interest in Western writers, and included Hugo Balzac and Sand among his favorites. The number of English writers alone who have been influenced by his works is too long to include in any short introduction.

In spite of the fact that Dostoyevsky's works had to spend years in the Communist ideological doghouse, he is one of the most widely read authors in Russia today. This has been helped by the fact that the Communists have softened, during the past few years, the earlier stand they had taken on his works.

But what is there in Dostoyevsky's works that appeals to the modern reader? It is above all a rather clinical examination of the irrational in man, in an age when such examinations have become parlor conversations. The reading of his novels has all the reading of a life experience in them. The remarkable thing about them is that he has anticipated many of the psychological problems of the time, and has asked questions that we are still unable to answer. The reader of his novels may find him morbid or painful, but he is unable to deny that there is astounding power throughout all his writings.

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Part ONE —

1

On an exceptionally hot evening early in July a young man came out of the garret in which he lodged in S. Place and walked slowly, as though in hesitation, towards K. bridge.

He had successfully avoided meeting his landlady on the staircase. His garret was under the roof of a high, five-storied house and was more like a cupboard than a room. The landlady who provided him with garret, dinners, and attendance, lived on the floor below, and every time he went out he was obliged to pass her kitchen, the door of which invariably stood open. And each time he passed, the young man had a sick, frightened feeling, which made him scowl and feel ashamed. He was hopelessly in debt to his landlady, and was afraid of meeting her.

This was not because he was cowardly and abject, quite the contrary; but for some time past he had been in an overstrained irritable condition, verging on hypochondria. He had become so completely absorbed in himself, and isolated from his fellows that he dreaded meeting, not only his landlady, but any one at all. He was crushed by poverty, but the anxieties of his position had of late ceased to weigh upon him. He had given up attending to matters of practical importance; he had lost all desire to do so. Nothing that any landlady could do had a real terror for him. But to be stopped on the stairs, to be forced to listen to her trivial, irrelevant gossip, to pestering demands for payment, threats and complaints, and to rack his brains for excuses, to prevaricate, to lie—no, rather than that, he would creep down the stairs like a cat and slip out unseen.

This evening, however, on coming out into the street, he became acutely aware of his fears.

"I want to attempt a thing *like that* and am frightened by these trifles," he thought, with an odd smile. "Hm . . . yes, all is in a man's hands and he lets it all slip from cowardice, that's an axiom. It would be interesting to know what it is men are most afraid of. Taking a new step, uttering a new word is what they fear most. . . . But I am talking too much. It's because I chatter that I do nothing. Or perhaps it is that I chatter

because I do nothing. I've learned to chatter this last month, lying for days together in my den thinking . . . of Jack the Giant-killer. Why am I going there now? Am I capable of *that?* Is *that* serious? It is not serious at all. It's simply a fantasy to amuse myself; a plaything! Yes, maybe it is a plaything."

The heat in the street was terrible: and the airlessness, the bustle and the plaster, scaffolding, bricks, and dust all about him, and that special Petersburg stench, so familiar to all who are unable to get out of town in summer—all worked painfully upon the young man's already overwrought nerves. The insufferable stench from the pot-houses, which are particularly numerous in that part of the town, and the drunken men whom he met continually, although it was a working day, completed the revolting misery of the picture. An expression of the profoundest disgust gleamed for a moment in the young man's refined face. He was, by the way, exceptionally handsome, above the average in height, slim, well-built, with beautiful dark eyes and dark brown hair. Soon he sank into deep thought, or more accurately speaking into a complete blankness of mind; he walked along not observing what was about him and not caring to observe it. From time to time, he would mutter something, from the habit of talking to himself, to which he had just confessed. At these moments he would become conscious that his ideas were sometimes in a tangle and that he was very weak; for two days he had scarcely tasted food.

He was so badly dressed that even a man accustomed to shabbiness would have been ashamed to be seen in the street in such rags. In that quarter of the town, however, scarcely any shortcoming in dress would have created surprise. Owing to the proximity of the Hay Market, the number of establishments of bad character, the preponderance of the trading and working class population crowded in these streets and alleys in the heart of Petersburg, types so various were to be seen in the streets that no figure, however queer, would have caused surprise. But there was such accumulated bitterness and contempt in the young man's heart, that, in spite of all the fastidiousness of youth, he minded his rags least of all in the street. It was a different matter when he met with acquaintances or with former fellow students, whom, indeed, he disliked meeting at any time. And yet when a drunken man who, for some unknown reason, was being taken somewhere in a huge waggon dragged by a heavy dray horse, suddenly shouted at him as he drove past: "Hey there, German hatter" bawling at the top of his voice and pointing at him—the young man stopped suddenly and clutched tremulously at his hat. It was a tall round hat from Zimmerman's, but completely worn out, rusty with age, all torn and bespattered, brimless and bent on one side in a most unseemly fashion. Not

shame, however, but quite another feeling akin to terror had overtaken him.

"I knew it," he muttered in confusion, "I thought so! That's the worst of all! Why, a stupid thing like this, the most trivial detail might spoil the whole plan. Yes, my hat is too noticeable. . . . It looks absurd and that makes it noticeable. . . . With my rags I ought to wear a cap, any sort of old pancake, but not this grotesque thing. Nobody wears such a hat, it would be noticed a mile off, it would be remembered. . . . What matters is that people would remember it, and that would give them a clue. For this business one should be as little conspicuous as possible. . . . Trifles, trifles are what matter! Why, it's just such trifles that always ruin everything. . . ."

He had not far to go; he knew indeed how many steps it was from the gate of his lodging house: exactly seven hundred and thirty. He had counted them once when he had been lost in dreams. At the time he had put no faith in those dreams and was only tantalising himself by their hideous but daring recklessness. Now, a month later, he had begun to look upon them differently, and, in spite of the monologues in which he jeered at his own impotence and indecision, he had involuntarily come to regard this "hideous" dream as an exploit to be attempted, although he still did not realise this himself. He was positively going now for a "rehearsal" of his project, and at every step his excitement grew more and more violent.

With a sinking heart and a nervous tremor, he went up to a huge house which on one side looked on to the canal, and on the other into the street. This house was let out in tiny tenements and was inhabited by working people of all kinds—tailors, locksmiths, cooks, Germans of sorts, girls picking up a living as best they could, petty clerks, &c. There was a continual coming and going through the two gates and in the two courtyards of the house. Three or four door-keepers were employed on the building. The young man was very glad to meet none of them, and at once slipped unnoticed through the door on the right, and up the staircase. It was a back staircase, dark and narrow, but he was familiar with it already, and knew his way, and he liked all these surroundings: in such darkness even the most inquisitive eyes were not to be dreaded.

"If I am so scared now, what would it be if it somehow came to pass that I were really going to do it?" he could not help asking himself as he reached the fourth storey. There his progress was barred by some porters who were engaged in moving furniture out of a flat. He knew that the flat had been occupied by a German clerk in the civil service, and his family. This German was moving out then, and so the fourth floor on this staircase would be untenanted except by the old woman. "That's a good

thing anyway," he thought to himself, as he rang the bell of the old woman's flat. The bell gave a faint tinkle as though it were made of tin and not of copper. The little flats in such houses always have bells that ring like that. He had forgotten the note of that bell, and now its peculiar tinkle seemed to remind him of something and to bring it clearly before him. . . . He started, his nerves were terribly overstrained by now. In a little while, the door was opened a tiny crack: the old woman eyed her visitor with evident distrust through the crack, and nothing could be seen but her little eyes, glittering in the darkness. But, seeing a number of people on the landing, she grew bolder, and opened the door wide. The young man stepped into the dark entry, which was partitioned off from the tiny kitchen. The old woman stood facing him in silence and looking inquiringly at him. She was a diminutive, withered up old woman of sixty, with sharp malignant eyes and a sharp little nose. Her colourless, somewhat grizzled hair was thickly smeared with oil, and she wore no kerchief over it. Round her thin long neck, which looked like a hen's leg, was knotted some sort of flannel rag, and, in spite of the heat, there hung flapping on her shoulders, a mangy fur cape, yellow with age. The old woman coughed and groaned at every instant. The young man must have looked at her with a rather peculiar expression, for a gleam of mistrust came into her eyes again.

"Raskolnikov, a student, I came here a month ago," the young man made haste to mutter, with a half bow, remembering that he ought to be more polite.

"I remember, my good sir, I remember quite well your coming here," the old woman said distinctly, still keeping her inquiring eyes on his face.

"And here . . . I am again on the same errand," Raskolnikov continued, a little disconcerted and surprised at the old woman's mistrust. "Perhaps she is always like that though, only I did not notice it the other time," he thought with an uneasy feeling.

The old woman paused, as though hesitating; then stepped on one side, and pointing to the door of the room, she said, letting her visitor pass in front of her:

"Step in, my good sir."

The little room into which the young man walked, with yellow paper on the walls, geraniums and muslin curtains in the windows, was brightly lighted up at that moment by the setting sun.

"So the sun will shine like this *then* too!" flashed as it were by chance through Raskolnikov's mind, and with a rapid glance he scanned everything in the room, trying as far as possible to notice and remember its arrangement. But there was nothing

special in the room. The furniture, all very old and of yellow wood, consisted of a sofa with a huge bent wooden back, an oval table in front of the sofa, a dressing-table with a looking-glass fixed on it between the windows, chairs along the walls and two or three half-penny prints in yellow frames, representing German damsels with birds in their hands—that was all. In the corner a light was burning before a small ikon. Everything was very clean; the floor and the furniture were brightly polished; everything shone.

"Lizaveta's work," thought the young man. There was not a speck of dust to be seen in the whole flat.

"It's in the houses of spiteful old widows that one finds such cleanliness," Raskolnikov thought again, and he stole a curious glance at the cotton curtain over the door leading into another tiny room, in which stood the old woman's bed and chest of drawers and into which he had never looked before. These two rooms made up the whole flat.

"What do you want?" the old woman said severely, coming into the room and, as before, standing in front of him so as to look him straight in the face.

"I've brought something to pawn here," and he drew out of his pocket an old-fashioned flat silver watch, on the back of which was engraved a globe; the chain was of steel.

"But the time is up for your last pledge. The month was up the day before yesterday."

"I will bring you the interest for another month; wait a little."

"But that's for me to do as I please, my good sir, to wait or to sell your pledge at once."

"How much will you give me for the watch, Alyona Ivanovna?"

"You come with such trifles, my good sir, it's scarcely worth anything. I gave you two roubles last time for your ring and one could buy it quite new at a jeweller's for a rouble and a half."

"Give me four roubles for it, I shall redeem it, it was my father's. I shall be getting some money soon."

"A rouble and a half, and interest in advance, if you like!"

"A rouble and a half!" cried the young man.

"Please yourself"—and the old woman handed him back the watch. The young man took it, and was so angry that he was on the point of going away; but checked himself at once, remembering that there was nowhere else he could go, and that he had had another object also in coming.

"Hand it over," he said roughly.

The old woman fumbled in her pocket for her keys, and disappeared behind the curtain into the other room. The young

man, left standing alone in the middle of the room, listened inquisitively, thinking. He could hear her unlocking the chest of drawers.

"It must be the top drawer," he reflected. "So she carries the keys in a pocket on the right. All in one bunch on a steel ring. . . . And there's one key there, three times as big as all the others, with deep notches; that can't be the key of the chest of drawers . . . then there must be some other chest or strong-box . . . that's worth knowing. Strong-boxes always have keys like that . . . but how degrading it all is."

The old woman came back.

"Here, sir: as we say ten copecks the rouble a month, so I must take fifteen copecks from a rouble and a half for the month in advance. But for the two roubles I lent you before, you owe me now twenty copecks on the same reckoning in advance. That makes thirty-five copecks altogether. So I must give you a rouble and fifteen copecks for the watch. Here it is."

"What! only a rouble and fifteen copecks now!"

"Just so."

The young man did not dispute it and took the money. He looked at the old woman, and was in no hurry to get away, as though there was still something he wanted to say or to do, but he did not himself quite know what.

"I may be bringing you something else in a day or two, Alyona Ivanovna—a valuable thing—silver—a cigarette box, as soon as I get it back from a friend . . ." he broke off in confusion.

"Well, we will talk about it then, sir."

"Good-bye—are you always at home alone, your sister is not here with you?" He asked her as casually as possible as he went out into the passage.

"What business is she of yours, my good sir?"

"Oh, nothing particular, I simply asked. You are too quick. . . . Good-day, Alyona Ivanovna."

Raskolnikov went out in complete confusion. This confusion became more and more intense. As he went down the stairs, he even stopped short, two or three times, as though suddenly struck by some thought. When he was in the street he cried out, "Oh, God, how loathsome it all is! and can I, can I possibly. . . . No, it's nonsense, it's rubbish!" he added resolutely. "And how could such an atrocious thing come into my head? What filthy things my heart is capable of. Yes, filthy above all, disgusting, loathsome, loathsome!—and for a whole month I've been. . . ." But no words, no exclamations, could express his agitation. The feeling of intense repulsion, which had begun to oppress and torture his heart while he was on his way to the old woman, had by now reached such a pitch and had taken such a definite form that he did not know what to do with himself to