

a moment.

She was white, her lower lip quivered, the light in her eyes had darkened.

"The old man has come, Irinel. What then? He will dine with us? All the better. We shall be a bigger party at table."

Was it I speaking? There were only she and I in the garden.

"The old man has come, has come. Alas!" she replied, covering her eyes with both her hands. "The old man has come and some one is going to leave this house! He has----"

Irinel began to cry.

"What has he?"

"A son who is an engineer."

"Engineer? Has he learnt engineering?"

"Yes, he has learnt engineering!" Irinel replied angrily, and uncovered her crimson cheeks. "Yes, he has learnt en-gi-neer-ing, and some one is going to leave this house!"

I watched how she stood in the doorway, and then crossed it lightly as she wiped away her tears on a clean corner of her gown. I looked long after her, then I threw myself face upwards under one of the fruit-trees.

Nature was full of life! The apple-trees bent their great boughs; the sparrows chattered, some of them were fluttering their wings, others were collecting into groups preparing for a fierce fight. Little patches of sunlight played upon my face. When I felt two rows of tears trickling into my ears, I jumped to my feet, I gazed towards the door, and said gently, full of a profound melancholy:

"Some one is going to leave this house!"

The next day I showed my uncle a faked recommendation, in writing, from a doctor ordering me to Bourboule under pretext of a serious affection of the left lung.

I pass rapidly over this episode. I kissed my uncle's hand and Irinel. Irinel!

Only when I was crossing the frontier and looking from the open window of the train at the Hungarian landscape lying stretched out before me, did I begin to wonder. Supposing she had not looked at me so intently! A searching look paralysed me. Supposing she had asked me what it was I wanted to say to her? Such shyness is a form of madness. But what courage I should have wanted! How could I have convinced my uncle? Was not Irinel like my sister? Ah, no! It was impossible! It was impossible!

The train, which was puffing along, gave a whistle that echoed through the country. A few tears fell through the window, and seeking with my eyes the country from which I had come, and the direction where lay the house and garden in which I had grown up so happily, I gave a wave with my hand, and said sighing:

"Good-bye, Irinel!"

THE END