

He was very young, with blushing cheeks, and spoke in the most respectful manner to those present, because all of them were his elders. Axelrod introduced him with a ring of delight in his voice. "Katya," he said, "this young man is a peasant. He was once a serf, and used to ride as a footman behind his master's coach."

To revolutionists, in those days, nothing was holier or dearer than a peasant — especially a peasant who seemed to realize their ideals. For was not this young man educated, and full of advanced ideas, and eager to aid in spreading liberty and light? Axelrod was proud to introduce him.

The nobleman who owned this young serf had noticed that the boy was exceptionally bright, and had given him an education. When he came to Kiev as a delegate, he was a student at the University of Odessa. He seemed modest and plain, and took only a humble part in the discussion. No one could guess then that seven or eight years later he would become the most conspicuous revolutionary figure in Russia. His name was Andrei Zhelyabov. When the Czar Alexander II, after emancipating the serfs and giving the nation hopes of further great reforms, backslid in his later life and became a ruthless reactionary, it was Andrei Zhelyabov who organized and carried through the conspiracy that resulted in his assassination.

In the unfinished building in Kiev, the discussion turned on the old topic, how best to help the peasants. As usual, there were some who believed in cautious and deliberate approaches, and others who favored quick action. The delegates from Lavrov soared to higher and higher regions, and the delegates from