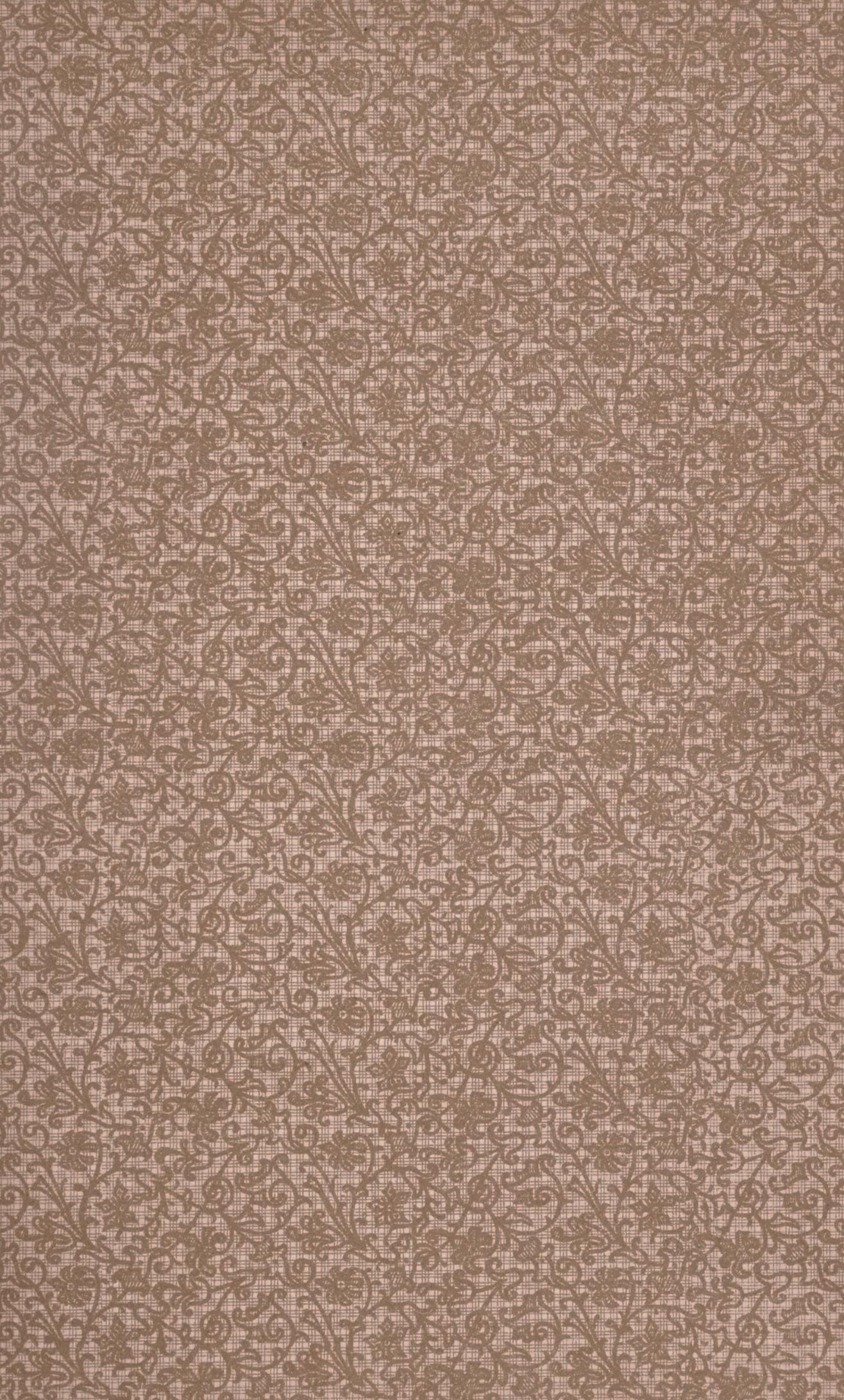


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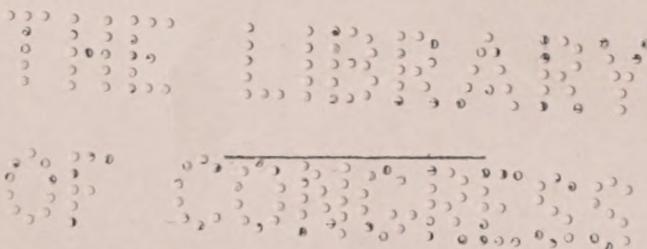
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COUNT TOLSTOÏ'S
GOSPEL STORIES

TRANSLATED FROM THE RUSSIAN

BY

NATHAN HASKELL DOLE

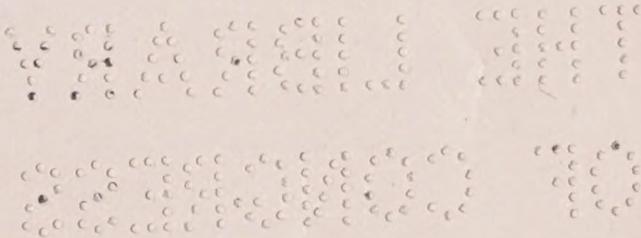


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INTRODUCTORY NOTE.

NOWHERE has Count Tolstoi's genius as a writer been more wonderfully displayed than in his tracts for the people. Written in an artless style, they are vivid, dramatic, touching. Their very simplicity adds to their charm.

Several of these short stories published separately in the form of booklets have had a wide circulation, and attracted much attention.

The present little volume is made up of all the various stories which have been included in several volumes of Count Tolstoi's collected works. It is hoped that in this form they will meet with a renewed popularity, and still more widely disseminate the great truths which they so beautifully illustrate.

N. H. D.

BOSTON, Feb. 26, 1890.

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IF YOU NEGLECT THE FIRE, YOU DON'T PUT IT OUT.

“Then came Peter to him, and said, Lord, how oft shall my brother sin against me, and I forgive him? till seven times?”

Jesus saith unto him, I say not unto thee, Until seven times: but, Until seventy times seven.

Therefore is the kingdom of heaven likened unto a certain king, which would take account of his servants.

And when he had begun to reckon, one was brought unto him, which owed him ten thousand talents.

But forasmuch as he had not to pay, his lord commanded him to be sold, and his wife, and children, and all that he had, and payment to be made.

The servant therefore fell down, and worshipped him, saying, Lord, have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

Then the lord of that servant was moved with compassion, and loosed him, and forgave him the debt.

But the same servant went out, and found one of his fellowservants, which owed him an hundred pence: and he laid hands on him, and took *him* by the throat, saying, Pay me that thou owest.

And his fellowservant fell down at his feet, and besought him, saying, Have patience with me, and I will pay thee all.

And he would not: but went and cast him into prison, till he should pay the debt.

So when his fellowservants saw what was done, they were very sorry, and came and told unto their lord all that was done.

Then his lord, after that he had called him, said unto him, O thou wicked servant, I forgave thee all that debt, because thou desiredst me:

Shouldest not thou also have had compassion on thy fellowservant even as I had pity on thee?

And his lord was wroth, and delivered him to the tormentors, till he should pay all that was due unto him.

So likewise shall my heavenly Father do also unto you, if ye from your hearts forgive not every one his brother their trespasses.”—MATT. xviii. 21-35.

IVÁN SHCHERBAKÓF, a peasant, lived in the country. He lived well. He had perfect health, he was the best workman in the village, and he had three sons grown

up: one was married, one was engaged, and the third was a lad who was just beginning to tend the horses and plough. His old wife, Ivánova, was a clever *baba*, and a good housekeeper; and the daughter-in-law was peaceful and industrious. All that Iván had to do was to live with his family. The only idle mouth in his household was his infirm old father. (For six years he had been lying on the oven, suffering from asthma.) Iván had plenty of every thing: he had three horses and a colt, a cow with a calf, and fifteen sheep. The *babas* not only mended their husbands' clothes, but made them, and also worked in the field: the *muzhíks* worked like true peasants. The old grain held out till the new came. They paid their taxes, and supplied all their necessities, with their oat-crop. All Iván had to do was to live with his children.

But in the next *dvor* lived Iván's neighbor, Gavrílo, a cripple, the son of Gordyéï Ivánof. And a quarrel arose between them.

As long as the old Gordyéï was alive, and Iván's father was manager, the *muzhíks* lived like exemplary neighbors. If the *babas* needed a sifter or a tub, or the *muzhíks* needed a corn-cloth or a new wheel, they would send from one yard to the other, and, like good neighbors, accommodate each other. If a calf broke into the threshing-floor, they would drive it out, and only say, "Look out, don't let him come in again: we have not moved the corn yet." But as for hiding or locking things up, either the threshing-floor or the shed, or quarrelling, such things never happened.

Thus they got along while the old folks were alive. But when the next generation took the reins, a new state of things came about.

The whole trouble arose from a trifle.

A little hen belonging to Iván's daughter-in-law took to laying early in the season. The young wife began to collect the eggs for Easter. Every day she went after the eggs to the wagon-box that stood in the shed. But the children, it seems, scared the hen, which flew over the fence into the neighbor's yard, and there began to lay. The young woman heard the little hen cackling: she thinks, "I haven't time now: I must clean up the izbá¹ against the holidays. I'll go and get it by and by. In the evening she went to the shed, to the wagon-box: not a sign of an egg. The molodáika began to ask her mother-in-law and her brother-in-law if they had taken any out. "No," say they, "we haven't." But Taraska, the smallest brother-in-law, says, —

"Your bantam has been laying over in the next yard. She was cackling over there, and she came flying back from there."

And the molodáika looked at her bantam: she was sitting next the cockerel on the roost; her eyes were already shut; she was just going to sleep. And she would have asked her where she had been laying, if the hen could only have answered. And the molodáika went over to her neighbors. The old woman came to the door.

"What do you want, mólodka?"

"Well," says she, "báushka,² my little bantam flew over into your yard to-day. I wonder if she didn't lay an egg?"

"We haven't seen it at all. Our own hens, thank God, have been laying this long time. We gathered up our own, but we don't need other folks's. We, my

¹ Peasant's cottage.

² Báushka, for báushka, old woman or grandmother.

little girl, never go into strangers' yards to collect eggs."

This was an insult to the *molodáika*; she said things that she ought not: the neighbor replied in the same way, and the *babas* began to berate each other. Ivánof's wife came out after water, and she also put in her word. Gavrílo's wife rushed out of the room, began to blame her neighbor: she recalled things that had happened, and added things that had never happened. A regular thunder-storm ensued.

All screamed at once, and tried to say two words at a time. Yes, and the words were all bad: "You are such and such," "you are a thief," "you are a trollop," "you starve your old father-in-law," "you are a beast."

"And you mean little beggar that you are, you made a hole in my sieve!" — "And you've got our bucket-yoke.¹ I want it back again." They caught hold of the bucket-yoke, spilt the water, tore off each other's shawls, and began to fight.

Just here Gavrílo came in from the field, and took his *baba's* part. Iván and his son rushed over, and they all fell in a heap. Iván was a strong *muzhík*, and threw them all in different directions. He tore out a handful of Gavrílo's whiskers. A crowd collected, and it was hard to separate them.

This was the beginning of it.

Gavrílo wrapped up his bunch of whiskers in a piece of writing-paper, and brought suit in the district court.

"I did not grow it," says he, "for the sake of letting that pigheaded Vánka pull it out."

And his wife kept telling her neighbors that now they would get Iván into a scrape, send him to Siberia; and so the quarrel went on.

¹ *Koromuíslo*, the yoke which is used for carrying water.

From the very first day the old man, as he lay on the oven, tried to pacify them ; but the young people would not listen to him. He said to them, —

“ Children, you are acting foolishly ; and it was from a piece of foolishness that the whole thing started. Just think, the whole trouble is about an egg ! Suppose the children did pick up the little egg. Why, let them have it.¹ One egg isn't worth much. God has plenty for all. Well, suppose she did say a bad word ; you ought to have corrected it ; you ought to have taught her to say better things. Well, you've had your fight — we are all sinners ! Such things happen. Now go and make it up, and all will be forgotten ! But, if you act out of spite, things will go from bad to worse for you.”

The younger ones did not listen : they thought the old man was talking nonsense, and was only grumbling, as old men are apt to do.

Iván did not give in to his neighbor.

“ I did not pull his whiskers,” says he, “ he pulled them himself ; but his son tore out all my eye-hooks, and tore the shirt off my back. Just look at it !”

And Iván also went to court. The case was tried before the magistrate and at the district court. While they were at law, a bolt was missing from Gavrílo's telyéga. Gavrílo's babas accused Iván's son of stealing it.

“ We ourselves saw him go by the window,” they said, “ on his way to the telyéga ; and the godmother said that he stopped at the tavern, and tried to sell the bolt to the tavern-keeper.”

Another suit was begun ; and at home every day, there was a new quarrel, a new fight. The little children,

¹ Literally, “ *Nu!* God be with them !”

imitating their elders, quarrelled; and the babas, when they met at the river, did not pound so much with their paddles as they clacked with their tongues, and all to no good.

At first the muzhíks only accused each other, but in course of time they actually began to steal whatever happened to be lying round. And the women and children also learned to do the same. Their lives grew constantly worse and worse.

Iván Shcherbakóf and Gavrílo the cripple had their cases tried before the commune, and in the district court, and before the justice of the peace, until all the judges were weary of it: either Gavrílo had Iván fined and put into jail, or Iván would do the same to Gavrílo. And the more harm they did to each other, the angrier they became. When dogs get to fighting, the more they tear each other, the more desperate they become. If some one pounds the dog from behind, he thinks it is the other dog that is biting, and grows madder still. So it was with these muzhíks. They went ahead with their lawsuits: either one or the other would get punished by fine or arrest; and for all that, their hearts were filled with still greater hatred.

“Just wait! I’ll get even with you yet!”

Thus their affairs dragged on for six years. Still the old man on the oven kept saying the same thing. He used to try to reason with them:—

“What are you doing, children? Drop all these doings; don’t neglect your business, and don’t bear malice; it will be much better. For the angrier you get, the worse it becomes.”

They pay no attention to the old man.

On the seventh year it came to pass that at a wedding, Iván’s daughter-in-law insulted Gavrílo in the

presence of the people. She began to accuse him of horse-stealing. Gavrílo was drunk; he could not control his temper, and he struck the baba; he hit her so hard that she was confined to her bed for a whole week, for she was a rather stout baba. Iván was glad of the occurrence, and he went for a warrant at the magistrate's.

“Now,” thinks he, “I shall square accounts with my neighbor: he shall not escape prison or Siberia.” But again Iván lost his case. The magistrate did not accept his petition: the baba was examined; when the baba got up, there were no marks at all on her. Iván went to the justice of the peace, and the latter transferred the case to the district court. Iván began to bother the voïost: he drank up two or three gallons of mead with the secretary and the elder,¹ and he succeeded in having Gavrílo sentenced to be whipped. They read the sentence to Gavrílo in court. The secretary read it:—

“The court has decided that the peasant Gavrílo Gordyéef is to be punished with twenty lashes in presence of the court.”

Iván also listens to the sentence, and looks at Gavrílo:—“Now, what will become of him?” Gavrílo listened to it, turned as white as a sheet, turned around, and went out into the ante-chamber. Iván followed him, started to go to his horse; but he heard Gavrílo saying,—

“All right,” says he: “he will lash my back; it will burn; but something worse may happen to him.”

Iván heard these words, and immediately turned to the judges.

“Just judges! he has threatened to set my house

¹ *Starshíná.*

on fire! Listen: he said it in the presence of witnesses!"

Gavrílo was called back.

"Is it true you said so?"

"I said nothing. Lash me, since you have the power. It seems that I am the only one to suffer, though I am right; but he's allowed to do any thing."

Gavrílo wanted to say more, but his lips and cheeks began to tremble. And he turned his face to the partition. Even the judges were frightened as they looked at Gavrílo. "Now," they think, "suppose he actually makes up his mind to do some harm to his neighbor or himself." And the little old judge began to speak:—

"See here, brothers! you had better make up your minds to become friends again. You, brother Gavrílo, did you do right in striking the stout baba? It is fortunate for you that God spared her, else what a sin you would have committed. Was it right? Confess, and ask his pardon, and he will forgive you. Then we'll change the sentence."

When the secretary heard it, he said, "This cannot be done, because, according to the 117th article, there was no peaceful settlement; but the judge's sentence was passed, and the sentence must be carried out."

But the judge did not heed the secretary. "Your tongue has itched to speak long enough. There is only one article, and that is the first, Remember God; and God has commanded that you become reconciled." And again the judge tried to persuade the muzhiks, but his words were in vain. Gavrílo paid no heed to his words.

"I am almost fifty years old," he says. "I have a married son, and I was never beaten in all my life; but now this pig-headed Vanka has brought me under the

lash, and yet I am to ask his forgiveness, am I? Well — it will — let Vanka look out for me!”

Gavrílo's voice trembled again: he could talk no longer. He turned around and went out.

It was ten versts from the court-house to the door, and it was late when Iván went home. The babas had already gone to get the cattle. He unharnessed his horses, put things away, and went into the house. There was no one in the izbá. The children had not yet returned from the field, and the babas were after the cattle. Iván went in, sat down on the bench, and became lost in thought.

He remembered how the sentence was read to Gavrílo, and how he turned pale, and faced the partition; and his heart felt oppressed. He imagined himself in the same position, about to receive the punishment of lashes. And he began to pity Gavrílo. And he heard the old man coughing on the oven, then shifting from side to side, stretching out his legs, and then clambering down to the floor. The old man clambered down, dragged himself to the bench, and sat down. The old man found it hard to drag himself to the bench; he coughed and coughed; and when his coughing-fit was over, he leaned his elbows on the table, and says, —

“Well, was he sentenced?”

Iván says, —

“Sentenced to twenty lashes.”

The old man shook his head.

“You are doing wrong, Iván!” says he. “Akh! wrong! Not to him, but to yourself, you are doing wrong. Now, suppose they lash his back: will it do you any good?”

“He won't do it any more,” said Iván.

“What won't he do any more? Is he doing any thing worse than you do?”

“Do you want to know what he has done to me?” asked Iván. “Why, he nearly killed the baba, and even now he threatened to set the house on fire! Why must I beg his pardon for it?”

The old man sighed, and said, —

“This whole free world is open for you, Iván, to come and go upon; and because I have been lying on the oven for these last few years, you must think that you see all, and I see nothing. No, young man, you see nothing at all: anger has blinded your eyes. The faults of others are before you, but your own are behind your back. You say he did wrong: if he were the only man to do wrong, then there would be no wickedness in the world. Does wrong arise among people on account of one man? There must be two in a quarrel. You can see his sins, but you can't see your own. Had he been the only one to do wrong, and you had done right, there would have been no quarrel. Who pulled out his beard? Who threw down his hay-rick? Who dragged him around in the courts? And yet you blame him for every thing! Your own life is wrong, and that is bad. That isn't the way I used to live, brother: that isn't what I taught you. Is that the way that the old man — his father — and I used to live? How did we live? Like good neighbors. If he was out of flour, the baba would come — ‘Uncle Frol, we are out of flour.’ — ‘Just go to the closet, young woman, and get what you need.’ He had no one to tend to the horses — ‘Go, Ványatka,¹ and take care of his horses.’ And whatever I am short of, I go to him — ‘Uncle Gordyéi, I need such and such a thing.’ — ‘Take it, uncle Frol!’ And so it used to

¹ Diminished diminutive of Iván.

go with us. And it used to be the same nice way with you. And how is it now? Now, a soldier was telling about Plevna: well, your quarrel is worse than that of Plevna. Is this living? It's a sin! You are a muzhík, you are master of a house. You will have to answer for it. What are you teaching your babas and children to do? To fight like dogs! The other day, Taraska, that dirty-nosed rascal, was abusing aunt Arína and her mother's memory, and his own mother was enjoying it. Is that good? You'll have to answer for it. Just think about your soul. Ought things to go on this way? You give me a word — I give you two back: you give me a slap — I give back two. No, my dear. Christ went about on earth, but he did not teach us fools such things. If a word is said to you, hold your peace: his own conscience will accuse him. That is the way he taught us, bátiushka. If any one slap you, turn the other cheek: 'Here, strike, if I am worth it.' And his conscience will prick him. He will be disarmed, and will hear what you have to say. That is the way He commanded us, but not to be stiff-necked. Why don't you say something? am I not telling you the truth?"

Iván is silent — he is listening.

The old man had a fit of coughing; raised some phlegm, and began to speak again.

"Do you think that what Christ taught us is wrong? It was intended for us for our good. Think about your earthly life: has it been good, or bad, for you since this Plevna began between you? Just count up how much you have lost by these lawsuits, your traveling expenses, and all you have spent in eating. Those sons of yours are growing like young eagles: you ought to be living and enjoying life, and 'climb the mountain;'

and here you are losing what you have! And why is it? It is all for nothing! All because of your pride! You ought to go with your children, and work in the field, and do the planting yourself; but the Devil drives you off, either to the judge or to the pettifogger. You are late in getting up, you don't plant at the right time, and *mátushka* Earth does not bring forth her fruit. Why were there no oats this year? When did you sow them? When you came from town! And what did you gain? You got up to your neck! Ekh! you foolish fellow! just attend to business. Work with your boys in the field and in the house: and if any one insults you, then forgive them in God's name; and you will be far better off, and your heart will feel much easier."

Iván said nothing.

"Just see here, Ványa! Listen to me: I am an old man. Go and harness the roan, go right back to court again, have all your cases dismissed, and in the morning go to Gavrílo, beg his forgiveness in God's name, invite him to the house, — to-morrow is a holiday (this happened to be Christmas Eve), — light the samovarchik,¹ bring out a bottle, and clear up all the sins so that they may not happen again, and tell the babas and the children to do the same."

Iván sighed, and thinks, "The old man says right," and his heart softened: only he does not know how to begin, how to become reconciled now.

And the old man began again, as though he read his thoughts.

"Go ahead, Ványa! don't put it off. Put out the fire when it first begins; but when it burns up, it is hard to do it."

¹ Little tea-urn.

The old man started to say something more, but he did not finish: the babas came into the izbá, and it sounded like a convention of crows. All the news had reached them, — how Gavrílo had been sentenced to be lashed, and how he had threatened to set their house on fire. They had heard every thing, and they made their own additions; and they had already succeeded in getting into a quarrel with Gavrílo's babas, in the pasture.

They began to tell how Gavrílo's daughter-in-law had threatened to set the marshal on them. The marshal, it seems, takes Gavrílo's part. He will reverse the whole case: and the school-teacher, it seems, had written a second petition to the tsar himself, against Iván, and put in the petition all the things, about the bolt, and about the garden, and half of the farm would now be given to them. As Iván listened to their speeches, his heart grew hard again, and he changed his mind about becoming reconciled with Gavrílo.

The farmer always has many things to do about his dvor. Iván did not care to talk to the babas, so he got up and left the izbá: he went to the threshing-floor and to the shed. Before he had finished his work, and returned to the door, the little sun was already set: the boys, too, had come in from the field. They were preparing to plough for the spring-corn. Iván met them, asked them about their work; he helped them put away their tools, laid aside the torn horse-collar; he was going also to put away the poles under the shed, but it had already become quite dark.

Iván left the poles till the next day, but he fed the cattle: he opened the gates, and let Taraska take his horses to the pasture for the night, and shut them again, set up the gate-pole. "Now for supper and bed,"

thought Iván, as he picked up the torn collar, and went into the izbá.

By this time he had forgotten all about Gavrílo, and all that his father had said to him. He had scarcely taken hold of the door-knob, and entered the vestibule, when he heard his neighbor from behind the fence scolding some one in a hoarse voice. "Who in the Devil is Gavrílo pitching into now?"

"He ought to be killed!"

When Iván heard these words, all his former anger against his neighbor arose in him. He stood for a while and listened while Gavrílo was scolding. When Gavrílo became quiet, Iván went into the izbá. He entered the izbá. The izbá was lighted up. The molo-dáika was sitting in one corner with her spinning-wheel, the old woman was getting supper, the oldest son was twisting cloth around his *lapti*.¹ The second one was sitting by the table with a little book. Taráska was going out for the night.

In the izbá, all had been pleasant, comfortable, if it had not been for this bad neighbor.

Iván came in angry, pushed the cat from the bench, scolded the babas because the slop-pail wasn't in the right place. Iván felt blue; he sat down, frowned, and began to mend the horse-collar; and Gavrílo's words kept rising in his mind, how he threatened him at court, and how he just now shouted in a hoarse voice about some one, "He ought to be killed!"

The old woman prepared supper for Taraska: he ate it, put on his sheep-skin shubyónka, his kaftan, put on

¹ *Lapti* are the wooden sandals worn by the peasants of Great Russia and White Russia instead of boots; the leg being wrapped up in rags or cloths, and fastened with strings. One of the Russian poets sings, "*Staranis sapogi, lapti gulaiut*;" — "Away with boots, let the *lapti* have full sway;" that is, the peasant will sometime have his share in the world's fun."

his belt, took some bread, and went out to his horses. His older brother intended to see him out; but Iván rose, and went to the front steps. It was already dusky on the street; it was beginning to grow quite dark; the clouds covered the sky, and a wind sprung up. Iván descended the steps, helped his son to mount, stirred up the little colt, then he stood for a while looking and listening as Taráska galloped down through the village, as he greeted the other boys, and as they all went out of hearing distance. Iván stood long at the gate, and Gavriło's words did not leave his mind: "Something worse may happen to you."

"He would not take pity on himself," thought Iván. "Every thing is dried up, and there is a wind besides. He might get in from the rear, start a fire, and all would be up with us: the villain might burn us up, and not get caught. Now, if I could only catch him, he would not get off so easy."

And thus it occurred to Iván not to go back by the front way; but he went straight into the street, and hid in a corner behind the gate.

"No, I'll go round the dvor. Who knows what he's up to now?"

And Iván crept quietly alongside of the gates. Just as he turned around the corner, and looked in the direction of the fence, it seemed to him that he saw something move in the corner, as though some one stuck his head out, and then hid again.

Iván stood still, and held his breath. He listened, and strained his eyes; all was quiet; only the wind was rustling the little leaves on the twigs, and whistling in the straw-heap. Sometimes it was as dark as a pocket.¹ And then, again, his eyes got accustomed to

¹ Literally, "as though an eye were taken out."

the darkness ; and Iván could see the whole corner, and the sokha-plough, and the sloping roof. He stood for a while, and gazed, but there was no one to be seen.

“It must have been a deception,” thought Iván : “still, I will make a turn around.” And he went stealthily alongside the shed. Iván crept softly, in his sabots, so that he himself could not hear his own steps. He reached the corner, and lo ! at the very farther end something near the plough flashed up and instantly vanished again. A pang seized Iván’s heart, and he stood still. He had scarcely stopped before a brighter light flashed up in the same place, and a man with a cap on was plainly seen squatting down with his back turned, and was trying to kindle a bundle of straw that he held in his hand.

Iván’s heart began to flutter like a bird ; and he braced himself up, and advanced with long steps, but so cautiously that he himself could not hear them.

“Now,” says he to himself, “I’ve got him now : I’ve caught him in the very act.”

But before Iván had gone two more steps, suddenly something flared up brightly, — brightly, but in an entirely different place ; and it was no small fire, either : and the straw blazed up under the pent-roof, and began to spread toward the house ; and then Gavriło was seen standing in the light.

Like a hawk on a sparrow, Iván threw himself on the cripple.

“I’ll choke the life out of him ! he won’t escape me this time,” he says to himself. But the cripple must have heard his steps : he looked around, and, in spite of his lameness, leaped like a rabbit toward the shed.

“You sha’n’t escape!” shouted Iván, and he flew after him.

But just as he was about to get him by the collar, Gavrílo slipped from under his hand, and Iván caught him by the coat-tail. The coat-tail tore out, and Iván fell. Iván leaped to his feet. “Help! Catch him!” And he started after him again.

But, by the time he got to his feet, Gavrílo was already at his own *dvor*; but Iván caught up with him, even then. But, as he tried to lay hands on him, something struck him on the head, as though a stone had hit his temple. It was Gavrílo, who had picked up an oak stave; and when Iván came up to him, he struck him on the head with all his force.

Iván saw stars; every thing grew dark; he staggered, and fell senseless. When he came to, Gavrílo was gone; it was as light as day; in the direction of his yard, there was a noise like a machine, a crackling and roaring. Iván turned around, and saw that the back-shed was already gone, that the side-shed was on fire, and the flame and smoke and burning straw were drifting toward the *izbá*.

“What does this mean? Heavens and earth, *bratsui!*”¹ exclaimed Iván, lifting his hand, and slapping his thigh. “All it needs, is to pull down the pent-roof, and trample it out. What does it mean, *bratsui?*” he repeated.

He tried to shout, but he had no breath: his voice stuck in his throat. He tried to run, but his feet refused to move: they tripped each other up. He merely walked and staggered: again his breath failed him. He stood for a moment, got his wind, and then started again. While he was making his way round

¹ *Bratsui*, literally brothers.

to the shed, and getting to the fire, the side-shed also burned to the ground, and the corner of the izbá and the gates caught fire. The flames poured up from the izbá, and all entrance to the door was cut off. A great crowd gathered, but nothing could be done. The neighbors were carrying out their own effects, and driving their cattle out of their yards.

After Iván's dvor had burned up, Gavrílo's took fire: the wind arose, and carried the fire across the street. Half the village was destroyed.

From Iván's house the old man was rescued with difficulty, and his people rushed out with only the clothes they had on. Every thing else was burned, with the exception of the horses, that had gone to the night-pasture. All the cattle were destroyed. The poultry were burned on their roosts: the telyégas, the ploughs, the harrows, the women's boxes, the corn and wheat in the granary, every thing was destroyed.

Gavrílo's cattle were rescued, and a few of his effects were removed in safety.

The fire lasted all night long. Iván stood by his dvor, and gazed, and kept repeating, "What does this mean? Heavens and earth! All it needs, is to pull it down, and trample it out."

But, when the ceiling of his izbá fell in, he crept up close to the fire, caught hold of a burning beam, and tried to pull it out. The babas saw him, and began to call him back; but he pulled the beam out, and went back after another, but staggered, and fell into the fire.

Then his son dashed in after him, and pulled him out. Iván's beard and hair were burned off, his clothes were scorched, his hands were ruined, and yet he did not notice it. "He has lost his wits from grief," said the crowd.

The fire began to die down; and Iván still stood in the same place, and kept repeating, "Heavens and earth! Only pull it down!"

In the morning the stárosta sent his son after Iván.

"Uncle Iván, your father is dying: he wants you to come and say good-by."

Iván had forgotten all about his father, and did not comprehend what they said to him.

"What father?" says he: "wants whom?"

"He wants you to come and bid him good-by: he is dying in our izbá. Come, let us go, uncle Iván," said the village elder's son, and took him by the hand. Iván followed the stárosta's son.

The old man, when he was rescued, was surrounded by burning straw, and was badly burned. He was taken to the stárosta's, at the farther end of the village. That part of the village was not burned.

When Iván came to his father, there was no one in the izbá except a little old woman, — the stárosta's wife, — and some children on the oven. All the rest were at the fire. The old man was lying on the bench with a little candle in his hand, and was gazing at the door. When his son entered, he started. The old woman went to him, and told him that his son had come. He asked him to come nearer. Iván approached, and the old man said, —

"Well, Ványatka," he said, "I told you so. Who burned up the village?"

"He, bátiushka," said Iván. "I myself caught him at it. Right before my eyes he touched off the roof. All I needed to do, was to pull out the bunch of burning straw, trample it down, and it would never have happened."

“Iván,” said the old man, “my death has come: you, too, will have to die. Whose sin is it?”

Iván looked at his father, and said nothing. He could not utter a word.

“Tell me in God’s presence! Whose sin was it? What did I tell you?”

Only at this moment Iván came to himself, and comprehended all. He began to snuffle with his nose, and said, —

“Mine, bátiushka!” and he fell on his knees before his father, began to weep, and said, —

“Forgive me, bátiushka: I am guilty before you and before God.”

The old man waved his hands, took the candle in his left, and pointed with his right to his forehead; tried to cross himself, but failed to lift it high enough, and stopped short.

“Praise the Lord, praise the Lord!” he said, and then he looked sternly at his son.

“But Vánka, Vánka!”

“What is it, bátiushka?”

“What ought you to do now?”

Iván kept on weeping.

“I don’t know, bátiushka,” he said. “How are we going to live now, bátiushka?”

The old man shut his eyes, moved his lips, as though trying to gather his strength; and then he opened his eyes again, and said, “You will get along! if you live with God — you will get along.”

The old man stopped speaking, and smiled, and said, “Look, Ványa! don’t tell who set the fire. Hide your neighbor’s sin, and God will forgive two sins.”

The old man took the candle in both his hands, held

them crossed on his breast, sighed, stretched himself, and died.

Iván did not expose Gavrílo, and no one knew who set the fire.

And Iván's heart grew soft toward Gavrílo, and Gavrílo was surprised because Iván did not tell any one about him. At first Gavrílo was afraid of him, but afterwards he got accustomed to it. The muzhíks ceased to quarrel, their families also. While they were rebuilding, both families lived in one dvor; and when the village was restored, and the dvors were put at a greater distance apart, Iván and Gavrílo again became neighbors in one nest.

And Iván and Gavrílo lived in neighborly fashion, just as the old men used to live. And Iván Shcherbakóf remembers the old man's advice, and God's proof that a fire ought to be quenched at the beginning.

And if any one does him harm, he does not try to retaliate, but he tries to arrange things; and if any one calls him a bad name, he does not try to outdo him in his reply, but he tries to teach him not to say bad things; and thus he teaches his babas and children; and thus Iván Shcherbakóf reformed, and began to live better than before.

WHERE LOVE IS, THERE GOD IS ALSO.

1885.

IN the city lived Martuin Avdyéitch, a shoemaker. He lived in a basement, in a little room with one window. The window looked out on the street. Through the window he used to watch the people passing by: although only their feet could be seen, yet by the boots Martuin Avdyéitch recognized their owners. Martuin Avdyéitch had lived long in one place, and had many acquaintances. Few pairs of boots in his district had not been in his hands once and again. Some he would half-sole, some he would patch, some he would stitch around, and occasionally he would also put on new uppers. And through the window he quite often recognized his work. Avdyéitch had plenty to do, because he was a faithful workman, used good material, did not make exorbitant charges, and kept his word. If he can finish an order by a certain time, he accepts it: if not, he will not deceive you, — he tells you so beforehand. And all knew Avdyéitch, and he was never out of work.

Avdyéitch had always been a good man; but as he grew old, he began to think more about his soul, and get nearer to God. Martuin's wife had died when he was still living with his master. His wife left him a boy three years old. None of their other children had

lived. All the eldest had died in childhood. Martuin at first intended to send his little son to his sister in the village, but afterwards he felt sorry for him : he thought to himself, “ It will be hard for my Kapitoshka to live in a strange family. I shall keep him with me.”

And Avdyéitch left his master, and went into lodgings with his little son. But, through God’s will, Avdyéitch had no luck with children. As Kapitoshka grew older, he began to help his father, and would have been a delight to him, but fell sick, went to bed, suffered a week, and died. Martuin buried his son, and fell into despair. So deep was this despair, that he began to complain of God. Martuin fell into such a melancholy state, that more than once he prayed to God for death, and reproached God because he did not take away him who was an old man, instead of his beloved only son. Avdyéitch also ceased to go to church.

And once a little old man, a fellow-countryman, came from Troïtsa (Trinity) to see Avdyéitch : for seven years he had been absent. Avdyéitch talked with him, and began to complain about his sorrows.

“ I have no more desire to live,” he said : “ I only wish I was dead. That is all I pray God for. I am a man without any thing to hope for now.”

And the little old man said to him, —

“ You don’t talk right, Martuin : we must not judge God’s doings. The world moves, not by your skill, but by God’s will. God decreed for your son to die,— for you — to live. Consequently, it is for the best. And you are in despair, because you wish to live for your own happiness.”

“ But what shall one live for ? ” asked Martuin.

And the little old man said, “ We must live for God, Martuin. He gives you life, and for his sake you

must live. When you begin to live for him, you will not grieve over any thing, and all will seem easy to you."

Martuin kept silent for a moment, and then says, "But how can one live for the sake of God?"

And the little old man said, "Christ has taught us how to live for God. You know how to read? Buy a Testament, and read it: there you will learn how to live for God. Every thing is explained there."

And these words kindled a fire in Avdyéitch's heart. And he went that very same day, bought a New Testament in large print, and began to read. At first Avdyéitch intended to read only on holidays; but as he began to read, it so cheered his soul that he used to read every day. At times he would become so absorbed in reading, that all the kerosene in the lamp would burn out, and still he could not tear himself away. And so Avdyéitch used to read every evening. And the more he read, the clearer he understood what God wanted of him, and how one should live for God; and his heart constantly grew easier and easier. Formerly, when he lay down to sleep, he used to sigh and groan, and always think of his Kapitoshka; and now he only exclaimed, "Glory to thee! glory to thee, Lord! Thy will be done."

And from that time Avdyéitch's whole life was changed. In other days he, too, used to drop into a saloon, as a holiday amusement, to drink a cup of tea; and he was not averse to a little brandy either. He would take a drink with some acquaintance, and leave the saloon, not intoxicated exactly, yet in a happy frame of mind, and inclined to talk nonsense, and shout, and use abusive language at a person. Now he left off this sort of thing. His life became quiet

and joyful. In the morning he sits down to work, finishes his allotted task, then takes the little lamp from the hook, puts it on the table, gets his book from the shelf, opens it, and sits down to read. And the more he reads, the more he understands, and the brighter and happier it is in his heart.

Once it happened that Martuin read till late into the night. He was reading the Gospel of Luke. He was reading over the sixth chapter; and he was reading the verses, "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloak forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise." He read further also those verses, where God speaks: "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me, and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will shew you to whom he is like: he is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock: and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it: for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

Avdyéitch read these words, and joy filled his soul. He took off his spectacles, put them down on the book, leaned his elbows upon the table, and became lost in thought. And he began to measure his life by these words. And he thought to himself, —

"Is my house built upon the rock, or upon the sand?"

'Tis well if on the rock. It is so easy when you are alone by yourself; it seems as if you had done every thing as God commands: but when you forget yourself, you sin again. Yet I shall still struggle on. It is very good. Help me, Lord!"

Thus ran his thoughts: he wanted to go to bed, but he felt loath to tear himself away from the book. And he began to read further in the seventh chapter. He read about the centurion, he read about the widow's son, he read about the answer given to John's disciples, and finally he came to that place where the rich Pharisee desired the Lord to sit at meat with him; and he read how the woman that was a sinner anointed his feet, and washed them with her tears, and how he forgave her. He reached the forty-fourth verse, and began to read, —

"And he turned to the woman, and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet: but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss: but this woman since the time I came in hath not ceased to kiss my feet. My head with oil thou didst not anoint: but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment." He finished reading these verses, and thought to himself, "*Thou gavest me no water for my feet, thou gavest me no kiss. My head with oil thou didst not anoint.*"

And again Avdyéitch took off his spectacles, put them down upon the book, and again he became lost in thought.

"It seems that Pharisee must have been such a man as I am. I, too, apparently have thought only of myself, — how I might have my tea, be warm and

comfortable, but never to think about my guest. He thought about himself, but there was not the least care taken of the guest. And who was his guest? The Lord himself. If he had come to me, should I have done the same way?"

Avdyéitch rested his head upon both his arms, and did not notice how he fell asleep.

"Martuin!" suddenly seemed to sound in his ears. Martuin started from his sleep: "Who is here?"

He turned around, glanced toward the door — no one.

Again he fell into a doze. Suddenly he plainly hears, —

"Martuin! Ah, Martuin! look to-morrow on the street. I am coming."

Martuin awoke, rose from the chair, began to rub his eyes. He himself does not know whether he heard those words in his dream, or in reality. He turned down his lamp, and went to bed.

At daybreak next morning, Avdyéitch rose, made his prayer to God, lighted the stove, put on the *shchi*¹ and the *kasha*,² put the water in the samovar, put on his apron, and sat down by the window to work.

Avdyéitch is working, and at the same time thinking about all that had happened yesterday. He thinks both ways: now he thinks it was a dream, and now he thinks he really heard a voice. "Well," he thinks, "such things have been."

Martuin is sitting by the window, and does not work as much as he looks through the window: when any one passes by in boots that he does not know, he bends down, looks out of the window, in order to see, not only the feet, but also the face. The *dvornik*³ passed by in

¹ Cabbage-soup.

² Gruel.

³ House-porter.

new *valenki*; ¹ the water-carrier passed by; then came alongside of the window an old soldier of Nicholas's time, in an old pair of laced felt boots, with a shovel in his hands. Avdyéitch recognized him by his felt boots. The old man's name was Stepánuitch; and a neighboring merchant, out of charity, gave him a home with him. He was required to assist the *dvornik*. Stepánuitch began to shovel away the snow from in front of Avdyéitch's window. Avdyéitch glanced at him, and took up his work again.

"Pshaw! I must be getting crazy in my old age," said Avdyéitch, and laughed at himself. "Stepánuitch is clearing away the snow, and I imagine that Christ is coming to see me. I was entirely out of my mind, old dotard that I am!" Avdyéitch sewed about a dozen stitches, and then felt impelled to look through the window again. He looked out again through the window, and sees Stepánuitch has leaned his shovel against the wall, and is either warming himself, or resting. He is an old, broken-down man: evidently he has not strength enough, even to shovel the snow. Avdyéitch said to himself, "I will give him some tea: by the way, the samovar must be boiling by this time." Avdyéitch laid down his awl, rose from his seat, put the samovar on the table, made the tea, and tapped with his finger at the glass. Stepánuitch turned around, and came to the window. Avdyéitch beckoned to him, and went to open the door.

"Come in, warm yourself a little," he said. "You must be cold."

"May Christ reward you for this! my bones ache," said Stepánuitch.

Stepánuitch came in, and shook off the snow, tried

¹ Felt boots.

to wipe his feet, so as not to soil the floor, but staggered.

“Don’t trouble to wipe your feet. I will clean it up myself: we are used to such things. Come in and sit down,” said Avdyéitch. “Drink a cup of tea.”

And Avdyéitch filled two glasses, and handed one to his guest; while he himself poured his tea into a saucer, and began to blow it.

Stepánuitch finished drinking his glass of tea, turned the glass upside down,¹ put upon it the half-eaten lump of sugar, and began to express his thanks. But it was evident he wanted some more.

“Have some more,” said Avdyéitch, filling both his own glass and his guest’s. Avdyéitch drinks his tea, but from time to time keeps glancing out into the street.

“Are you expecting any one?” asked his guest.

“Am I expecting any one? I am ashamed even to tell whom I expect. I am, and I am not, expecting some one; but one word has impressed itself upon my heart. Whether it is a dream, or something else, I do not know. Don’t you see, brother, I was reading yesterday the gospel about Christ, the *Bátiushka*;² how he suffered, how he walked on the earth. I suppose you have heard about it?”

“Indeed I have,” replied Stepánuitch: “but we are people in darkness; we can’t read.”

“Well, now, I was reading about that very thing,—how he walked upon the earth: I read, you know, how he comes to the Pharisee, and the Pharisee did not treat him hospitably. Well, and so, my brother, I was reading, yesterday, about this very thing, and was thinking to myself how he did not receive Christ, the

¹ A custom among the Russians.

² Little father.

Bátiushka, with honor. If, for example, he should come to me, or any one else, I think to myself, I should not even know how to receive him. And he gave him no reception at all. Well! while I was thus thinking, I fell asleep, brother, and I hear some one call me by name. I got up: the voice, just as though some one whispered, says, 'Be on the watch: I shall come to-morrow.' And this happened twice. Well! would you believe it, it got into my head? I scold myself — and yet I am expecting him, the Bátiushka."

Stepánuitch shook his head, and said nothing: he finished drinking his glass of tea, and put it on the side; but Avdyéitch picked up the glass again, and filled it once more.

"Drink some more for your good health. You see, I have an idea, that, when the Bátiushka went about on this earth, he disdained no one, and had more to do with the simple people. He always went to see the simple people. He picked out his disciples more from among our brethren, sinners like ourselves from the working-class. He, says he, who exalts himself, shall be humbled, and he who is humbled shall become exalted. You, says he, call me Lord, and I, says he, wash your feet. Whoever wishes, says he, to be the first, the same shall be a servant to all. Because, says he, blessed are the poor, the humble, the kind, the generous." And Stepánuitch forgot about his tea: he was an old man, and easily moved to tears. He is sitting listening, and the tears are rolling down his face.

"Come, now, have some more tea," said Avdyéitch; but Stepánuitch made the sign of the cross, thanked him, turned up his glass, and arose.

"Thanks to you," he says, "Martun Avdyéitch,

for treating me kindly, and satisfying me, soul and body.”

“You are welcome; come in again; always glad to see a friend,” said Avdyéitch.

Stepánuitch departed; and Martuin poured out the rest of the tea, drank it up, put away the dishes, and sat down again by the window to work, to stitch on a patch. He is stitching, and at the same time looking through the window. He is expecting Christ, and is all the while thinking of him and his deeds, and his head is filled with the different speeches of Christ.

Two soldiers passed by: one wore boots furnished by the Crown, and the other one, boots that he had made; then the master¹ of the next house, passed by in shining galoshes; then a baker with a basket passed by. All passed by; and now there came also by the window a woman in woollen stockings and wooden shoes. She passed by the window, and stood still near the window-case.

Avdyéitch looked up at her from the window, sees it is a strange woman poorly clad, and with a child: she was standing by the wall with her back to the wind, trying to wrap up the child, and she has nothing to wrap it up in. The woman was dressed in shabby summer clothes: and from behind the frame, Avdyéitch hears the child crying, and the woman trying to pacify it; but she is not able to pacify it. Avdyéitch got up, went to the door, ascended the steps, and cried, “Hey! my good woman!”² The woman heard him and turned around.

“Why are you standing in the cold with the child? Come into my room, where it is warm: you can manage it better. Right in this way!”

¹ *Khozyiin.*

² *Umnitsa ah!*

The woman was astonished. She sees an old, old man in an apron, with spectacles on his nose, calling her to him. She followed him. They descended the steps, entered the room: the old man led the woman to his bed.

“There,” says he, “sit down, my good woman, nearer to the stove: you can get warm, and nurse the child.”

“I have no milk for him. I myself have not eaten any thing since morning,” said the woman; but, nevertheless, she took the child to her breast.

Avdyéitch shook his head, went to the table, brought out the bread and a dish, opened the oven-door, poured into the dish some cabbage-soup, took out the pot with the gruel, but it was not done yet; so he filled the dish with *shchi* only, and put it on the table. He got the bread, took the towel down from the hook, and put it upon the table.

“Sit down,” he says, “and eat, my good woman; and I will mind the little one. You see, I once had children of my own: I know how to handle them.”

The woman crossed herself, sat down at the table, and began to eat; while Avdyéitch took a seat on the bed near the infant. Avdyéitch kept smacking and smacking to it with his lips; but it was a poor kind of smacking, for he had no teeth. The little one still cries. And it occurred to Avdyéitch to threaten the little one with his finger: he waves, waves his finger right before the child's mouth, and hastily withdraws it. He does not put it to its mouth, because his finger is black, and soiled with wax. And the little one looked at his finger, and became quiet: then it began to smile, and Avdyéitch also was glad. While the woman is eating, she tells who she is, and whither she was going.

“I,” says she, “am a soldier’s wife. It is now seven months since they sent my husband away off, and no tidings. I lived out as cook; the baby was born; no one cared to keep me with a child. This is the third month that I have been struggling along without a place. I ate up all I had. I wanted to engage as a wet-nurse — no one would take me — I am too thin, they say. I have just been to the merchant’s wife, where lives our *bábotchka*,¹ and so they promised to take us in. I thought this was the end of it. But she told me to come next week. And she lives a long way off. I got tired out; and it tired him, too, my heart’s darling. Fortunately, our landlady takes pity on us for the sake of Christ, and gives us a room, else I don’t know how I should manage to get along.”

Avdyéitch sighed, and said, “Haven’t you any warm clothes?”

“Now is the time, friend, to wear warm clothes; but yesterday I pawned my last shawl for a twenty-kopek piece.”²

The woman came to the bed, and took the child; and Avdyéitch rose, went to the little wall, and succeeded in finding an old coat.

“Na!” says he: “it is a poor thing, yet you may turn it to some use.”

The woman looked at the coat, looked at the old man; she took the coat, and burst into tears: and Avdyéitch turned away his head; crawling under the bed, he pushed out a little trunk, rummaged in it, and sat down again opposite the woman.

And the woman said, “May Christ bless you, *diédushka*!³ He must have sent me himself to your

¹ Little grandmother.

² Dvagrivennui, silver, worth sixteen cents.

³ Little grandfather.

window. My little child would have frozen to death. When I started out, it was warm, but now it is terribly cold. And he, Báciushka, led you to look through the window, and take pity on me, an unfortunate."

Avdyéitch smiled, and said, "Indeed, he did that! I have been looking through the window, my good woman, not without cause." And Martuin told the soldier's wife his dream, and how he heard the voice,—how the Lord promised to come and see him that day.

"All things are possible," said the woman. She rose, put on the coat, wrapped up her little child in it; and, as she started to take leave, she thanked Avdyéitch again.

"Take this, for Christ's sake," said Avdyéitch, giving her a twenty-kopek piece: "redeem your shawl." She made the sign of the cross. Avdyéitch made the sign of the cross, and went with her to the door.

The woman left. Avdyéitch ate some shchi, washed some dishes, and sat down again to work. While he works he still remembers the window: when the window grew darker, he immediately looked out to see who was passing by. Both acquaintances and strangers passed by, and there was nothing out of the ordinary.

But here Avdyéitch sees that an old apple-woman has stopped right in front of his window. She carries a basket with apples. Only a few were left, as she had nearly sold them all out; and over her shoulder she had a bag full of chips. She must have gathered them up in some new building, and was on her way home. One could see that the bag was heavy on her shoulder: she wanted to shift it to the other shoulder. So she lowered the bag upon the sidewalk, stood the basket with the apples on a little post, and began to shake down the splinters in the bag. And while she was shaking

her bag, a little boy in a torn cap came along, picked up an apple from the basket, and was about to make his escape ; but the old woman noticed it, turned around, and caught the youngster by his sleeve. The little boy began to struggle, tried to tear himself away ; but the old woman grasped him with both hands, knocked off his cap, and caught him by the hair.

The little boy is screaming, the old woman is scolding. Avdyéitch lost no time in putting away his awl ; he threw it upon the floor, sprang to the door, — he even stumbled on the stairs, and dropped his eye-glasses, — and rushed out into the street.

The old woman is pulling the youngster by his hair, and is scolding, and threatening to take him to the policeman : the youngster defends himself, and denies the charge. “ I did not take it,” he says : “ what are you licking me for ? let me go ! ” Avdyéitch tried to separate them. He took the boy by his arm, and says, —

“ Let him go, *bábushka* ; forgive him, for Christ’s sake.”

“ I will forgive him so that he won’t forget till the new broom grows. I am going to take the little villain to the police.”

Avdyéitch began to entreat the old woman : —

“ Let him go, *bábushka*,” he said : “ he will never do it again. Let him go, for Christ’s sake.”

The old woman let him loose : the boy tried to run, but Avdyéitch kept him back.

“ Ask the *bábushka*’s forgiveness,” he said, “ and don’t you ever do it again : I saw you taking the apple.”

With tears in his eyes, the boy began to ask forgiveness.

“ Nu ! that’s right ; and now, here’s an apple for

you.” Avdyéitch got an apple from the basket, and gave it to the boy. “I will pay you for it, *bábushka*,” he said to the old woman.

“You ruin them that way, the good-for-nothings,” said the old woman. “He ought to be treated so that he would remember it for a whole week.”

“Eh, *bábushka*, *bábushka*,” said Avdyéitch, “that is right according to our judgment, but not according to God’s. If he is to be whipped for an apple, then what do we deserve for our sins?”

The old woman was silent.

Avdyéitch told her the parable of the *khozyáin* who forgave a debtor all that he owed him, and how the debtor went and began to choke one who owed him.

The old woman listened, and the boy stood listening.

“God has commanded us to forgive,” said Avdyéitch, “else we, too, may not be forgiven. All should be forgiven, and the thoughtless especially.”

The old woman shook her head, and sighed.

“That’s so,” said she; “but the trouble is, that they are very much spoiled.”

“Then, we, who are older, must teach them,” said Avdyéitch.

“That’s just what I say,” remarked the old woman. “I myself had seven of them, — only one daughter is left.” And the old woman began to relate where and how she lived with her daughter, and how many grandchildren she had. “Here,” she says, “my strength is only so-so, and yet I have to work. I pity the youngsters — my grandchildren — how nice they are! No one gives me such a welcome as they do. *Aksintka* won’t go to any one but me. (*Bábushka*, dear *bábushka*, loveliest”) — and the old woman grew quite sentimental.

“Of course, it is a childish trick. God be with him,” said she, pointing to the boy.

The woman was just about to lift the bag upon her shoulder, when the boy ran up, and says, “Let me carry it, *bábushka*: it is on my way.”

The old woman nodded her head, and put the bag on the boy’s back.

Side by side they both passed along the street. And the old woman even forgot to ask Avdyéitch to pay for the apple.

Avdyéitch stood motionless, and kept gazing after them; and he heard them talking all the time as they walked away. After Avdyéitch saw them disappear, he returned to his room; he found his eye-glasses on the stairs, — they were not broken; he picked up his awl, and sat down to work again.

After working a little while, it grew darker, so that he could not see to sew: he saw the lamplighter passing by to light the street-lamps.

“It must be time to make a light,” he thought to himself; so he fixed his little lamp, hung it up, and betook himself again to work. He had one boot already finished; he turned it around, looked at it: “Well done.” He put away his tools, swept off the cuttings, cleared off the bristles and ends, took the lamp, put it on the table, and took down the Gospels from the shelf. He intended to open the book at the very place where he had yesterday put a piece of leather as a mark, but it happened to open at another place; and the moment Avdyéitch opened the Testament, he recollected his last night’s dream. And as soon as he remembered it, it seemed as though he heard some one stepping about behind him. Avdyéitch looked around, and sees — there, in the dark corner, it seemed as though

people were standing: he was at a loss to know who they were. And a voice whispered in his ear, —

“Martuin — ah, Martuin! did you not recognize me?”

“Who?” uttered Ardyéitch.

“Me,” repeated the voice. “It’s I;” and Stepán-uitch stepped forth from the dark corner; he smiled, and like a little cloud faded away, and soon vanished.

“And this is I,” said the voice. From the dark corner stepped forth the woman with her child: the woman smiled, the child laughed, and they also vanished.

“And this is I,” continued the voice; both the old woman and the boy with the apple stepped forward; both smiled and vanished.

Avdyéitch’s soul rejoiced: he crossed himself, put on his eye-glasses, and began to read the Evangelists where it happened to open. On the upper part of the page he read, —

“For I was an hungred, and ye gave me meat: I was thirsty, and ye gave me drink: I was a stranger, and ye took me in.” . . .

And on the lower part of the page he read this: —

“Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these my brethren, ye have done it unto me” (St. Matthew, chap. xxv.).

And Avdyéitch understood that his dream did not deceive him; that the Saviour really called upon him that day, and that he really received him.

A CANDLE.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth:

But I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” — MATT. v. 38, 39.

THIS affair took place in the days when there were masters. There used to be all kinds of masters. There were those who remembered God, and that they must die, and took pity on people; and there were dogs, — excuse the use of the term. But there was nothing worse than the overseers,¹ who had risen from serfdom. As it were, out of the mud, they became princes! And they made life worse than any thing else.

There happened to be such a prikáshchik on a proprietor's estate. The peasants worked their share for the estate. There was plenty of land, and the land was good — there was water, and meadows, and woodland. There was enough, and to spare, for barin and muzhíks; but the barin made one of his house-serfs from another estate the prikáshchik.

The prikáshchik took the power on his hands, and sat upon the necks of the muzhíks. He himself had a family, — a wife, and two married daughters, — and he had made money. He might easily have lived without sin; but he was a covetous man, and fell into sin.

¹ Nachalniks.

He began to compel the muzhíks to work on the barin's estate more than their regular day's work. He started a brick-yard: he wore out all the peasants, both babas and muzhíks, and sold the bricks.

The muzhíks went to complain to the proprietor at Moscow, but they had no success. He dismissed the muzhíks without any thing, and did not curb the prikáshchik's power. The prikáshchik learned that the muzhíks had been to complain of him, and he began to vent his spite. The muzhíks were worse off than before. There happened to be false men among the muzhíks, who used to carry stories about each other. And all the people were in a ferment, and the prikáshchik kept growing worse and worse.

As time went on, the prikáshchik became so bad that the people came to fear him worse than a terrible wild beast. When he passed through the village, all would keep out of his way as from a wolf, hiding wherever they could, so as to keep away from his eyes. The prikáshchik saw it; and the fact that they were afraid of him, made him still more angry. He persecuted the people, both by blows and hard work; and the muzhíks suffered terribly at his hands.

There were times when such evil-doers were put out of the way, and the muzhíks began to plan some such way of escape. They would meet in some retired spot, and the boldest among them would say, —

“Must we go on suffering forever from our persecutor? — We are lost anyhow — to kill such a man is no sin.”

The muzhíks were one time gathered in the forest: it was before Holy Week. The prikáshchik had sent them out to clear up the proprietor's forest. They gathered at dinner, and began to talk.

“How can we live now?” they said. “He will destroy us root and branch. He tortures us with work: neither we nor the babas have any rest day or night any more. The least thing not to his mind, and he finds fault, he lashes us. Semyón died under his whip, Anísim was tortured in the stocks. What else can we expect? He will come here this evening; he will be making trouble again; let’s just pull him off from his horse, give him a blow with the axe, and that’ll be the end of it. We’ll bury him somewhere like a dog, and there’ll be no clew. Only one condition: we must all stand together — not peach.”

Thus spoke Vasíli Minaef. He was more than all the rest incensed against the prikáshchik, who had whipped him every week, robbed him of his wife, taking her as his cook.

Thus talked the muzhíks: in the evening the prikáshchik came; he was on horseback: as soon as he came, he began to find fault with their work. He discovered a little linden in the pile.

“I,” says he, “did not tell you to cut the lindens. Who cut it down? Confess, or I’ll lash you all!”

He began to inquire in whose pile the linden was. They told him it was Sídor’s. The prikáshchik beat Sídor’s face till it bled. Then he lashed Vasíli Tatar fashion because his pile was small: then he started home.

In the evening the muzhíks met again, and Vasíli was the spokesman.

“Ekh! What people you are! Not men, but sparrows! ‘We’ll stand together, we’ll stand together!’ but when it comes to the point, all rush under the pent-roof. Thus sparrows try to fight a hawk: ‘Don’t peach, don’t peach, we’ll stand together!’ But when

he swooped down on us, all scattered in the grass! And so the hawk caught the one he wanted, carried it off. The sparrows hopped out: ‘*Cheeveek! cheeveek!*’ There is one missing! ‘Who is gone?’ Vánka, eh! That’s his road, let him go! He deserves it. The same way with you. If you ain’t going to peach, then don’t peach. When he seized Sídor, you should have clubbed together, and put an end to him. But still it is, ‘Don’t peach, don’t peach! we’ll stand together!’ But when he swooped down, all flew into the bushes!”

Thus they spoke more and more often, and at last the muzhíks determined to do away with the prikáshchik. On Good Friday the prikáshchik announced to the muzhíks that they must be ready to plough for the barin at Easter, so as to sow the oats. This seemed to the muzhíks an insult; and on Good Friday they gathered at Vasíli’s, in the back-yard, and began to talk again.

“Since he has forgotten God,” say they, “and wants to do such things, we must really kill him. We are ruined anyway.”

Piotr Mikhyéef also came with them. Piotr Mikhyéef was a peace-loving muzhík, and did not agree with the muzhíks. Mikhyéef came, heard their talk, and says, —

“You are meditating a great sin, brethren. To destroy a soul is a great crime. To destroy another man’s soul is easy, but how about your own? He does wrong: it is bad for him. Brethren, we must bear it.”

Vasíli was angry at these words. “He keeps repeating the same thing over and over,” says he: “‘It’s a sin to kill a man! You know it is a sin to kill such a man,’ says he. It is a sin to kill a good man, but even God has commanded to kill such a dog. You must

kill a mad dog, out of pity for men; and not to kill him, would be a greater sin. Why does he ruin people? But though we should suffer for it, we ought to do it for others. People will thank us. And to get rid of such spittle! He is ruining everybody. You talk nonsense, Mikhyéitch. Why, it would be less of a sin than for all to go to work on Easter Sunday. You yourself would not go.”

And Mikhyéitch replied, —

“Why not go?” he asked. “They will send us, and I am going to plough. Not for myself. But God knows whose sin it is, only we should not forget him. I, brethren,” says he, “don’t speak my own thoughts. If we had been commanded to do evil for evil, there would have been a law from God to that effect; but just the opposite is commanded us. You will do evil, but it will come back upon you. It is wicked to kill a man. His blood will stick in your soul. Kill a man — you stain your own soul with blood. You think, ‘I have killed a bad man.’ You think, ‘I have destroyed a pest.’ On the contrary, look, you have been led into doing a much worse sin to yourself. Yield to fate, and fate will yield to you.”

And so the muzhíks did not agree: they were divided by their thoughts. Some have the same opinion as Vasílyef: others coincide with the views of Piotr, that they should not attempt the sin, but bear it.

The muzhíks were celebrating the first of the holidays, Sunday. At evening comes the village elder,¹ with police from the master’s country-seat, and they say, —

“Mikhail Semyónovitch, the overseer,² has given

¹ *Stárosta.*

² *Prikáshchik.*

orders that all the muzhíks prepare on the morrow to plough in the oat-field.

The village elder went round with the police through the village, gave the orders for all to go out and plough the next day, calling to this one on the river, this one from the high-road. The muzhíks wept, but dared not disobey. In the morning they came with their ploughs,¹ began to plough.

At church the early morning-mass is going on, the people everywhere are celebrating the festival: our muzhíks are ploughing!

Mikháil Semyónovitch, the overseer, woke up not very early, and rode over to the farm: his people were dressed, and had on their finery — his wife, his widowed daughter (she had come for the festival); a workman harnessed for them the little telyéga; they went off to mass; they returned; the serving-woman put on the samovar; Mikháil Semyónovitch came in; they began their tea-drinking.

After Mikháil Semyónovitch had drunk enough tea, he lighted his pipe, called the village elder.

“Well, then,² did you set the muzhíks to ploughing?”

“I did, Mikháil Semyónovitch.”

“What! did all go?”

“All went: I myself set them at it.”

“Setting them at work is all very well, but are they ploughing? Go out and look, and tell them that I am coming after dinner to see if they have been ploughing a desyátin to every two ploughs, and ploughing it well, besides. If I find any mistake, I sha’n’t hear to any festival.”

“All right.”

And the village elder had started, but Mikhail Semyónovitch called him back: he hesitates, wants to say something, but knows not how.

He hesitated and hesitated, and now he says, —

“ Now, here, I want you to listen to what those villains are saying about me. Who is grumbling, and what he says, — tell me all about it. I know those villains; they don't like to work; unless I punch 'em in the side, they would be wandering about. They like to gormandize and have holidays, but they don't think that you'll put off the ploughing. Now, then, you just listen to their talk, what any one says, and just report it to me. I must know about it. Go along and notice, and tell me all, and don't hide any thing.”

The village elder turned round, went off, mounted his horse, and rode off to the muzhíks in the field.

The overseer's wife had heard her husband's talk with the village elder, and came to her husband, and began to question him. The prikáshchitsa was a peace-loving woman, and her heart was tender. Where it was possible, she restrained her husband, and stood up for the muzhíks.

She came to her husband, and began to question him: —

“ My dear Míshenka,”¹ says she, “ on the great day, the festival of the Lord, don't commit a sin; for Christ's sake, let the muzhíks off!”

Mikhail Semyónovitch did not take his wife's words: he only began to laugh at her.

“ It's a long time, isn't it,” says he, “ since you had a little taste of the whip, that you dare mix yourself up with other people's affairs?”

¹ Diminutive of Mikhaíl.

“Míshenka, my love, I had a bad dream about you: heed me; let the muzhíks off!”

“And I, too, have something to say,” says he: “if you give me much of your sauce, the whip will bring you to reason. Look out!” Semyónovitch got angry, thrust his lighted pipe into his wife’s teeth, pushed her away, ordered dinner brought him.

Mikhaïl Semyónovitch ate some cold meat, a pirog, cabbage-soup with pork, roast shoat, vermicelli cooked in milk; he drank some cherry-wine, tasted a sweet pie, called up the cook, set her to performing some songs; and he himself took his guitar, and began to play the accompaniments.

Mikhaïl Semyónovitch is sitting in a gay frame of mind, belches, thrums on the strings, and jests with the cook.

The village elder came in, bowed low, and began to report what he had seen in the field.

“Well, then,¹ are they ploughing? Are they finishing their stint?”

“They have already done more than half of the ploughing.”

“None left undone?”

“I did not see any; they plough very well; they are afraid.”

“Well, does the ground turn up well?”

“The ground turns up easily, as the poppy has been scattered.”

The overseer was silent.

“Well, and what do they say about me? do they revile me?”

The stárosta began to stammer, but Mikhaïl Semyónovitch bade him tell the whole truth. “Tell me all:

¹ *Nu tchto.*

you won't be speaking your own words, but somebody else's. If you tell the truth, I will reward you; but if you deceive me, look out! I will pickle you! Yay, Kátrusha, give him a glass of vodka to keep his courage up."

The cook came, offered him the brandy. The village elder thanked her, drank it up, wiped his lips, and began to speak:—

"All the same," thinks he, "'t isn't my fault that they don't praise him. I will tell the truth, since he tells me to." And the stárosta plucks up courage, and begins to speak:—

"They grumble, Mikhaíl Semyónovitch, they grumble."

"Yes; but what do they say? Tell me."

"They say just one thing: 'He does not believe in God.'"

The prikáshchik sneered.

"Who says that?"

"They all say it. They say, 'He has sold himself to the Devil.'"

The prikáshchik laughs.

"That," says he, "is excellent: now tell me individually who says that. Does Váska say so?"

The stárosta did not want to tell on his own people, but there had been a quarrel between Vasíli and the stárosta for a long time.

"Vasíli," says he, "scolds worse than any one else."

"Yes: what does he say? Speak it out."

"But it is terrible to tell—even to tell it. He says, 'You won't escape a violent death.'"

"Ay! the brave fellow! I suppose he's dawdling round! He won't kill me—his hands won't reach

me! Just wait!" says he, "Váska! we'll be quits with you! Now, how about Tishka? That dog also, I suppose?"

"Yes: they all speak bad."

"Yes; but what do they say?"

"Well, they say something abominable."

"What was abominable? Don't be afraid to tell."

"Well,¹ they say that your belly will break open, and your bowels gush out."

Mikhail Semyónovitch was delighted: he burst into a horse-laugh.

"We will see whose does first! Who says that? Tishka?"

"No one said any thing good: all growl, all are full of threats."

"Well,² but how about Pétrushka Mikhyéef? What does he say? The gobbler! he growls also, I suppose?"

"No, Mikhaïlo Semyónovitch. Pyotra does not complain."

"What does he?"

"He is the only one of all the muzhíks that says nothing. He is a clever muzhík. I wondered at him, Mikhail Semyónovitch."

"But why?"

"At what he did; and all the muzhíks wondered at him."

"But what did he do?"

"Yes, it was very queer. I tried to get near him. He is ploughing on the desyátin on Turkin height. I tried to get near him. I hear him singing something: he is carrying something gingerly, carefully; and on his plough, between the handles, something is shining."

¹ *Da.*

² *Nu.*

“ Well? ”

“ It is exactly like a little fire, shining. I come nearer; I look; a little wax candle — cost five kopeks — is stuck on to the cross-bar, and is burning; and the wind doesn't blow it out. And he, in his clean shirt, goes up and down, ploughing, and singing Sunday songs. And his cuffs are turned up, and he shakes, and the candle doesn't go out. He shook before me, turned the club, lifted the plough, and all the time the candle burns, and doesn't go out.”

“ And what did he say? ”

“ Well,¹ he didn't say any thing, only looked at me, crossed himself, and began to sing again.”

“ But what did you say to him? ”

“ I did not speak: but the muzhíks came up, and they began to make sport of him; here they say, ‘ Mikhyéitch, in an age of sin, you won't get off by praying because you ploughed on Sunday.’ ”

“ What did he say? ”

“ He only said, ‘ On earth, peace, good will to men.’ Again he took hold of the plough, started up the horse, and sang in a low voice; but the candle burns, and doesn't go out.”

The overseer ceased to make ridicule, laid down the guitar, hung his head, and fell into thought.

He kept sitting there, and sitting there; then he sent out the cook and the stárosta, and went to the curtain; lay down on the bed, and began to sigh, began to groan, as though a cart-load of sheaves lay on him. His wife came to him, began to talk with him: he did not reply to her. Only he said, —

“ He has conquered me. Now it's my turn.”

His wife began to say to him, “ Yes, go and let

¹ *Da.*

them off. Perhaps there's no harm. No matter what you have done, don't be afraid; for what is there to be afraid of now?"

"I am lost," he said: "he has conquered me;" and he kept repeating, "He has conquered, conquered!"

His wife shouted to him, —

"Go ahead! let the muzhíks go, then it will be all right. Go ahead, I will saddle the horse."

She got out the horse; and the prikáshchitsa urged her husband to go out to the field, and let the muzhíks go.

Mikháil Semyónovitch mounted his horse, and rode out to the field. He came to the neighborhood; a baba opened the gate for him; he rode into the village. As soon as the people saw the prikáshchik, all the people hid themselves from him, one in a door, another in a corner, another in a garden.

The prikáshchik rode through the whole village: he came to other horse-gates. The gates were shut, and he could not open them on horse-back. He shouted, the prikáshchik shouted for some one to open for him, but no one came. Getting down from his horse, he opened the gate himself, and tried to mount again. He lifted his foot to the stirrup, tried to swing himself into the saddle; but the horse took fright at a pig, sprang against the paling: and the man was heavy; he could not spring into the saddle, and was thrown on his belly against the paling. There was only one sharp pole that stood out above the fence, and this was higher than the others. And he fell on his belly straight on this pole. And it ripped open his belly, and he fell on the ground.

The muzhíks came hurrying from the ploughing; they

were saying sharp things : as their horses turn into the gate, the muzhíks see that Mikhaïl Semyónovitch is lying on his back, his arms stretched out, and his eyes fixed, and his insides gushed out over the ground, and his blood making a pool — the earth would not drink it.

The muzhíks were frightened ; they drive the horses : only Piotr Mikhyéitch dismounts, goes to the overseer, sees that he is dead, closes his eyes, harnesses the telyéga, helps the dead man's son to put him in a box, and carries him to the manor-house.

The barin learned about all these things, and forgave the muzhíks their tax.

And the muzhíks learned that God's power works not by sin, but by goodness.

THE TWO PILGRIMS;

OR,

LOVE AND GOOD DEEDS.

I.

“The woman saith unto him, Sir, I perceive that thou art a prophet.

Our fathers worshipped in this mountain; and ye say, that in Jerusalem is the place where men ought to worship.

Jesus saith unto her, Woman, believe me, the hour cometh, when ye shall neither in this mountain, nor yet at Jerusalem, worship the Father.

Ye worship ye know not what: we know what we worship: for salvation is of the Jews.

But the hour cometh, and now is, when the true worshippers shall worship the Father in spirit and in truth: for the Father seeketh such to worship him.” — JOHN iv. 19-23.

Two old men resolved to worship God in ancient Jerusalem. One was a rich muzhík; his name was Yefím Tarásuitch Shevelef: the other was not a rich man, — Yeliséï Bodrof.

Yefím was a sedate muzhík; did not drink vodka, nor smoke tobacco, nor take snuff. All his life long he had never used a bad word, and he was a strict and upright man. Two terms Yefím had served as stárostá, and had come out without a deficit.¹

His family was large, — two sons and a married grandson, — and all lived together. As for himself, he was hale, long-bearded, erect, and, though he was in his seventh decade, his beard was only beginning to grow gray.

¹ The *stárostá*, or *starshina*, is president of the village council, and held accountable for the taxes levied on the *mir*, or commune.

Yeliséï was a little old man, neither rich nor poor : in former times he had gone about doing jobs in carpentry ; but now, as he grew old, he began to stay at home, and took to raising bees. One of his sons had gone away to work, the other was at home. Yeliséï was a good-natured and jolly man. He used to drink vodka, and take snuff, and he liked to sing songs ; but he was a peaceable man, and lived amicably with his family and his neighbors. As to his person, Yeliséï was a short, darkish little muzhík, with a curly beard ; and like his name-saint, Elisha the prophet, he was entirely bald.

The old men had long ago promised and agreed to go together, but Tarásutch had never found the leisure : his engagements had never come to an end. As soon as one was through with, another began : first the grandson got married ; then they expected the younger son from the army ; and then, again, he planned to build a new izbá.

One festival day the old men met, and were sitting in the sun.

“ Well,” says Yeliséï, “ when shall we set out, and fulfil our promise ? ”

Yefím knit his brow.

“ We must wait a while,” says he. “ This year it’ll come hard for me. I am engaged in building this izbá. I counted on spending about a hundred rubles ; but I’m already on the third, and it isn’t finished yet. You see, that’ll take till summer. In the summer, if God grants, we will go without let or hindrance.”

“ According to my idea,” says Yeliséï, “ we ought not to put it off : we ought to go to-day. It’s the very time — spring.”

“Time, certainly: but this work is begun; how can I leave it?”

“Haven’t you any one? Your son will attend to it.”

“How attend to it? My eldest son is not to be trusted — he gets drunk.”

“We shall die, old friend: they’ll have to live without us. Your son must learn.”

“That’s so; but I should like, with my own eyes, to see this job finished!”

“Ah! my dear man, you will never get all you want done. Only the other day at my house, the babas were cleaning house, fixing up for Easter. And both are necessary, but you’d never get through. And my oldest daughter-in-law, a sensible baba, says, ‘Thank the Lord,’ says she, ‘Easter is coming: it doesn’t wait for us, else,’ says she, ‘they would never get done, never finish it all.’”

Tarásutch was lost in thought.

“I have put a good deal of money,” says he, “into this building; and we can’t go on this journey with empty hands. It won’t take less than one hundred rubles.”

Yeliséi laughed out, —

“Don’t make a mistake, old friend,” says he: “you have ten times as much property as I have. And you talk about money! Only say when shall we go? I haven’t any thing, but I’ll get some.”

Tarásutch also smiled. “How rich you seem!” says he; “but where will you get it?”

“Well, I’ll scrape some up at home — that’ll be something: and for the rest, — I’ll let my neighbor have ten of my lives. He has been after them for a long time.”

“This is going to be a good swarming-year: you’ll regret it.”

“Regret it? No, old friend. I never regretted any thing in my life except my sins. There is nothing more precious than the soul!”

“That’s so. But it’s not pleasant when things aren’t right at home.”

“But how will it be with us if our souls are not right? Then it will be worse. But we have made a vow — let us go! I beg of you, let us go!”

II.

AND Yeliséï talked over his friend. Yefím thought about it, and thought about it; and in the morning he came to Yeliséï: "Well, then, let us go," says he. "You are right. In death and in life, God rules. Since we are alive, and have strength, we must go."

At the end of a week the old men had made their preparations.

Tarásuitch had money in the house. He took one hundred rubles for his journey: two hundred he left for the old woman.

Yeliséï also was ready. He sold his neighbor the ten bee-hives. And the bees that would swarm from the ten hives, also he sold to the neighbor. He received, all told, seventy rubles. The thirty rubles remaining in the house, he took from its hiding-place. The old woman gave him all that she had saved up against her funeral: the daughter-in-law gave hers.

Yefím Tarásuitch gave all his commands to his oldest son, — what meadows to rent out, and where to put manure, and how to finish and roof in the izbá. He thought about every thing, he fore-ordered every thing.

But Yeliséï only directed his old woman to hive the young swarms of bees that he had sold, and give them to his neighbor without any trickery; but about household affairs, he did not have any thing to say: "If any thing comes up, let them attend to it. You people at home do as you think best."

The old men were now ready. The wives baked a lot of flat-cakes,¹ sewed some bags, cut new leg-wrappers:² they put on new boots, took some extra bast-shoes (*lapti*), and set forth. The folks kept them company to the common pasture, wished them good-by, and the old men set out on their journey.

Yeliséi set out in good spirits; and as soon as he left the village, he forgot all about his cares. His only thoughts were how to please his companion, how not to say a single churlish word to any one, and how to go in peace and love to the (Holy) Places and return home. Yeliséi walks along the road, and all the time he either whispers a prayer, or calls to memory some saint's life which he knows. And if he meets any one on the road, or comes to any halting-place, he makes himself useful and as agreeable as possible to every one, and even says a word in God's service. He goes his way rejoicing. One thing Yeliséi cannot do. He intended to give up snuff-taking, and he left his snuff-box; but it was melancholy. A man on the road gave him some. And now and again he drops behind his companion, so as not to lead him into temptation, and takes a pinch of snuff.

Yefím Tarásuitch also gets along well — sturdily: he does nothing wicked, and he says nothing churlish, but he is not easy in his mind. He cannot get out of his mind his household affairs. He keeps thinking of what is doing at home. Had he forgotten to give his son some commands? and is his son doing as he was told? If he sees any one by the road planting potatoes, or spreading manure, he would think, "Is my son doing what I told him?" He was almost ready to turn round and show him how, and even do it himself.

¹ *Lepyóshki*.

² *Onútschi*. Strips of cloth used by the muzhíks instead of stockings.

III.

FIVE weeks the old men had been journeying ; their home-made lapti were worn out, and they had been obliged to buy new ones ; and they came to the land of the Top-Knots (Little Russia). From the time that they left home, they had paid for lodging and meals ; but now that they had come among the Top-Knots, the people began to vie with each other in giving them invitations. And they gave them shelter, and fed them, and would not take money from them, but even put bread, and sometimes flat-cakes, into their bags for the journey. Thus the old men journeyed nearly seven hundred (versts). They passed through this government, and came to a famine-stricken place.

They received them kindly and took them in, and would not take pay for lodging ; but they could no longer feed them. And they did not always let them have bread ; and, again, it was not always to be obtained at all. The year before, so the people said, nothing had grown. Those who were rich had been ruined, and forced to sell out ; those who lived in medium style had come down to nothing ; but the poor had either gone away altogether, or had come upon the commune,¹ or had almost perished in their homes. All winter they had been living on husks and pig-weed.

One time the old men put up at a little place ; they bought fifteen pounds of bread ; and, having spent the

¹ *Mir.*

night, they started off betimes, so as to get as far as possible before the heat of the day. They went ten versts, and reached a little river: they sat down, filled their cups with water, moistened the little loaves, and changed their shoes. They sat some time resting. Yeliséi got out his little snuff-horn. Tarásuitch shook his head at him.

“Why,” says he, “don’t you throw away that nasty stuff?”

Yeliséi wrung his hands. “The sin is too strong for me,” says he: “what can you do?”

They got up, and went on their way. They went half a score of versts farther. They came to a great village: they went right through it. And already it had grown hot. Yeliséi was dead with fatigue; he wanted to rest, and have a drink: but Tarásuitch does not halt. Tarásuitch was the stronger in walking, and it was rather hard for Yeliséi to keep up with him.

“I’d like a drink,” says he.

“All right. Get a drink. I don’t want any.”

Yeliséi stopped.

“Don’t wait,” says he: “I’m only going to run in for a minute here at this hut, and get a drink. I’ll overtake you in a jiffy.”

“All right.”

And Yefím Tarásuitch proceeded on his way alone, and Yeliséi turned back to the hut.

Yeliséi went up to the hut. The hut was small, and plastered with mud: below, it was black; above, white. The clay was peeling off; long, apparently, since it had been mended: and the roof in one place was broken through. The way to the hut led through the dvor. Yeliséi went into the dvor, and sees, lying on a pile of earth, a thin, beardless man, in shirt and drawers

— in Little Russian fashion. The man evidently had lain down when it was cool, but the sun beat straight down upon him. And he lies there, and is not asleep. Yeliséï shouted to him; asked him for a drink. The man made no reply.

“Either he’s sick or he’s ugly,” thought Yeliséï, and he went to the door. He hears children crying in the hut. Yeliséï rapped with the ring: “Masters.”¹ No reply. He rapped again on the door with his staff: “Christians!”²

No one moved. “Servants of God!” No one answers. Yeliséï was about to proceed on his way, but he listens: some one seems to be groaning behind the door.

“Can some misfortune have befallen these people? Must look and see.”

And Yeliséï went into the hut.

¹ *Khozyáeva.*

² *Kreshchénuic; literally, Ye baptized!*

IV.

YELISÉÏ turned the ring—it wasn't locked. He opened the door, and passed through the little vestibule. The door to the hut stood open; at the left was an oven; straight ahead was the corner; in the corner, the shrine, a table; by the table, a bench; on the bench, an old woman, in a single shirt, with dishevelled hair, is sitting, resting her head on the table. At her elbow an emaciated little boy, pale as wax, with a distended belly, is tugging at the old woman's sleeve, and screaming at the top of his voice, asking for something.

Yeliséi went into the hut. In the hut, the air was stifling; he looks; behind the oven, on a shelf, a woman is lying. She lies on her back, and does not look up; only moans, and sometimes stretches out her leg, sometimes draws it up again. And she throws herself from side to side, and the stench arising from her shows that she has been shamefully neglected. The old woman raised her head, and looked at the man.

“What do you want?” says she. “What do you want? We hain't got nothing for you.”¹

Yeliséi understood what she said: he went up to her. “I am a servant of God,” says he: “I come to get a drink.”

“Hain't got any, hain't got any. Hain't got any thing to get it in. Go away!”

¹ She speaks in the staccato Malo Russian dialect: *Chovo tobi treba? . . . Nyé ma, Cholovitché, nitchovo! tobi for tibyé; ma for mui; cholovitché for chelovyék (man).*

Yeliséi began to question her. "Tell me, isn't there any one of you well enough to take care of the woman?"

"Hain't got any one — the man in the dvor is dying, and we are here."

The boy had ceased crying when he saw the stranger; but when the old woman spoke, he began to tug again at her sleeve: "Bread, granny, bread!" and began screaming again.

Yeliséi was going to ask more questions of the old woman, when the muzhík came stumbling into the hut: he went along the wall, and was going to sit on the bench, but failed of it, and fell into the corner at the threshold. And he did not try to get up: he tried to speak. One word he speaks — then breaks off, is out of breath, speaks another: —

"Sick," — says he, "and starving. — Here — he — is — dying — starvation."

The muzhík indicated the boy with his head, and burst into tears.

Yeliséi shook off his sack from his shoulders, freed his arms, set the sack on the floor, then lifted it to the bench, and began to undo it. He undid it, took out bread, a knife, cut off a slice, gave it to the muzhík. The muzhík would not take it, but pointed to the boy and to the girl. "Give it to them, please."

Yeliséi held it out to the boy. The malchik smelt the bread, stretched himself up, seized the slice with both hands, and buried his nose in the slice. A little girl crept out from behind the oven, and stared at the bread. Yeliséi gave her some also. He cut off still another chunk, and gave it to the old woman. The old woman took it, tried to chew it.

“Would you bring some water?” she said: “their mouths are parched. I tried,” says she, “yesterday, or to-day, — I don’t remember which, — to get some. I fell, couldn’t get there; and the bucket is there yet, unless some one has stolen it.”

Yeliséi asked where their well was. The old woman gave him the directions. Yeliséi went and found the bucket, brought water, gave the people some to drink.

The children were still eating bread and water, and the old woman ate some too; but the muzhík refused to eat.

“It makes me sick at my stomach.” His baba, who did not notice any thing at all, or come to herself, only tossed about on the loft.

Yeliséi went to the village, bought at the shop some millet, salt, flour, butter, looked round for a hatchet. He split up some wood, — began to kindle up the oven. The little girl began to help him. Yeliséi boiled some porridge and kasha, fed the people.

V.

THE muzhík ate a little, and the old woman ate ; but the little girl and the little boy licked the bowl clean, and lay down to sleep locked in each other's arms.

The muzhík and the old woman began to relate how all this had come upon them.

“ We weren't rich, even before this,” say they ; “ but when nothing grew, we had to give all we had for food last autumn. We parted with every thing : then we had to go begging among our neighbors and kind people. At first they gave to us, but then they sent us away. Some would have gladly given to us, but they had nothing. Yes, and we were ashamed to beg : we got in debt to every one, both for money and flour and bread. I tried to get work,” said the muzhík, “ but there was no work. People everywhere were wandering about to work for something to eat. You'd work one day, and you'd go about for two hunting for work. The old woman and the little girl had to go a long way off begging. Not much was given them : no one had any bread to spare. And so we lived, hoping we'd get along somehow till new crops came. But then they stopped giving at all, and then sickness came on. Things were just as bad as they could be. One day we had something to eat, but the next two nothing. We began to eat herbs. Yes, perhaps it was from eating herbs, or something of the sort, that my wife got sick. My wife became sick, and I haven't any

strength," says the muzhík. "There was no way of curing us."

"I was the only one," says the old woman, "who kept up; but without eating, I lost my strength, and got puny. And the little girl got puny, and lost heart. We sent her to the neighbors, but she wouldn't go. She crept into the corner, and wouldn't come out. Day before yesterday a neighbor came round, yes, and she saw that we were starving, and were sick; but she turned round and went off. Her husband had left her, and she hadn't any thing to feed her little children with. . . . And so here we lay, — waiting for death."

Yeliséi listened to their talk, changed his mind about going to rejoin his companion that day, and spent the night there.

In the morning Yeliséi got up, did the chores as though he were master of the house. He and the old woman kneaded the bread, and he kindled the fire. He went with the little girl to the neighbors', to get what they needed; for there was nothing to be found — nothing at all; every thing had been disposed of; there was nothing for domestic purposes, and no clothing. And Yeliséi began to lay in a supply of what was needed. Some he himself made, and some he bought. Thus Yeliséi spent one day, spent a second, spent also a third.

The little boy got better, began to climb up on the bench, to caress Yeliséi. But the little girl becomes perfectly gay, helps in all things. And she keeps running after Yeliséi: "Grand-dad, dear little grand-daddy!"¹ And the old woman also got up, and went among the neighbors. And the muzhík began to walk,

¹ *Diãu, didúsyu*, Malo Russian for *dyédyá, dyédushka*.

supporting himself by the wall. Only the baba still lay unconscious ; but even she, on the third day, came to herself, and began to ask for something to eat. “ Well,” thinks Yeliséi, “ I didn’t expect to spend so much time : now I’ll be going.”

VI.

ON the fourth day, meat-eating was allowed for the first time after the fast; and Yeliséi thinks, "Come, now, I will feast with these people. I will buy them something for the Saints' day,¹ and toward evening I will go." Yeliséi went to the village again, bought milk, white flour, lard. He and the old woman boiled and baked; and in the morning Yeliséi went to mass, came home, ate meat with the people. On this day the wife also got up, and began to creep about. And the muzhík had shaved, put on a clean shirt, — the old woman had washed it out, — and gone to the village to ask mercy of a rich muzhík. Both meadow and corn-land had been mortgaged to the rich muzhík. So he went to ask if he would not give him the meadow and corn-land till the new crops.

The khozyáin returned toward evening, gloomy and in tears. The rich muzhík would not have pity on him: "He says, 'bring your money.'"

Again Yeliséi falls into thought.

"How will he live now?" thinks he. "The men will be going out to mow: he has nothing. His hay-field is mortgaged. The rye is ripening; the men are beginning to harvest it (our good *mátushka* has come up well this year), but these won't have any thing: their field² has been mortgaged to the rich muzhík. If I go away, they'll all go wrong again."

¹ St. Peter and St. Paul; July 11 (June 29, O.S.).

² *Desyátina*.

And Yeliséi was much troubled by these thoughts, and did not take his departure that evening: he waited till morning. He went out into the *dvor* to sleep. He said his prayers, lay down, but couldn't sleep. "I must go — here I have been spending so much money and time — and I'm sorry for these people. You can't give to everybody, evidently. I meant to get them some water, and give them a slice of bread; but just see how it has taken me! Now — I must redeem their meadow and their field. And when I've redeemed their field, I must buy a cow for the children, and a horse to carry the *muzhík's* sheaves. There you are in a pretty pickle, brother Yeliséi Kuzmitch! You're anchored here, and you don't get off so easy!"

Yeliséi got up, took his *kaftan* from under his head, unfolded it, found his snuff-horn, took a pinch of snuff, tried to clear up his thoughts; but no, he thought and he thought, but could not think it out. He must go; but he pitied these people. And what to do, he knew not. He folded up his *kaftan* for a pillow, and lay down again. He lay and he lay, and the cocks were already singing when he finally fell into a doze. Suddenly, something seemed to wake him up. He sees himself, as it were, all dressed, with his sack and his staff; and he has to go into a gate, but the gate is so nearly shut that only one person can get through at a time. And he goes to the gate, and got caught on one side by his sack: he tried to detach it, and got caught on the other side by his leg-wrapper; and the leg-wrapper untied. He tried to detach it, but he was not caught by the wattle after all; but that little girl holds him, crying, "Grand-dad, dear little grand-daddy, bread!"¹ He looked down at his leg, and to his leg-wrapper the

¹ *Didu, didúsyu, khlíba.*

little boy is clinging: the old woman and the muzhík are gazing from the window.

Yeliséi woke up, and said to himself aloud, "Tomorrow," says he, "I will redeem the field and the meadow; and I will buy a horse, and flour enough to last till the new comes; and I will buy a cow for the children. For you will go across the sea to find Christ, and lose him in your own soul. I must set these people right."

And Yeliséi slept till morning.

Yeliséi woke up early. He went to the rich muzhík: he redeemed the rye-field; he paid cash for it, and for the meadow-land. He bought a scythe, — the very one that had been disposed of, — brought it back. He sent the muzhík to mow, and he himself went to the muzhíks; at last found a horse and telyéga which an inn-keeper was ready to sell. He struck a bargain, bought them. He bought, also, some flour, put the sack in the telyéga, and went farther to buy a cow. Yeliséi is going along: he overtakes two Top-Knots. They are babas; and, as they walk, they gossip. And Yeliséi hears the babas talking in their own speech, and he makes out that they are talking about him.

"Heavens! at first they didn't know what to make of him: their idea was, he was a mere man. As he came by, it seems, he stopped to get a drink, and then he staid. Whatever they needed, he bought. I myself saw him this very day buy of the tavern-keeper a nag and cart.¹ Didn't know there were such folks in the world. Must go and see him!"

Yeliséi heard this; understood that they were praising him, and did not go to buy the cow. He returned to the tavern, and paid the money for the horse. He

¹ *Воз.* Malo Russian for *telyéga*.

harnessed up, and drove with the wheat back to the hut. He drove up to the gate, reined in, and dismounted from the telyéga. The household saw the horse: they wondered. And it comes to them that he had bought the horse for them, but they dare not say so. The khozyáin came out to open the gate.

“Where,” says he, “did you get the nag, grandpa?”

“I bought it,” says he. “I got it cheap. Mow a little grass, please, for the stall, for her to lie on over night. Yes, and lug in the bag.”

The khozyáin unharnessed the horse, lugged the bag into the house, mowed a lot of grass, spread it in the stall. They went to bed. Yeliséi lay down out-doors, and there he had lugged his sack the evening before. All the folks were asleep. Yeliséi got up, shouldered his sack, fastened his boots, put on his kaftan, and started on his way after Yefím.

VII.

YELISÉÏ had gone five versts : it began to grow light. He sat down under a tree, opened his sack, began to reckon. He counted his money : there were left only seventeen rubles, twenty kopeks.

“ Well,” thinks he, “ with this you won’t get across the sea. And to beg in Christ’s name — that might be a great sin. Friend Yefím will go alone : he’ll set a candle for me. But the tax will remain on me till death. Thank the Lord, the Master is kind : he will have patience.”

Yeliséi got up, lifted his sack upon his shoulders, and went back. Only, he went out of his way round the village, so that the people of it might not see him. And Yeliséi reached home quickly. When he started, it seemed hard to him, beyond his strength, to keep up with Yefím ; but going back, God gave him such strength that he walks along and does not know fatigue. He walks along gayly, swings his staff, goes his seventy versts a day.

Yeliséi reached home. Already the fields had been harvested. The folks were delighted to see their old man : they began to ask him questions, — how, and what, and why he had left his companion, why he did not go on, but came home. Yeliséi did not care to tell them about it.

“ God did not permit me,” says he. “ I spent my

money on the road, and got behind my companion. And so I did not go. Forgive me, for Christ's sake."

And he handed the old woman his remaining money. Yeliséi inquired about the domestic affairs: it was all right; every thing had been done properly; there was nothing left undone in the farm-work, and all are living in peace and harmony.

On this very same day, Yefím's people heard that Yeliséi had returned: they came round to ask after their old man. And Yeliséi told them the same thing.

"Your old man," says he, "went on sturdily; we parted," says he, "three days before Peter's Day; I intended to catch up with him, but then so many things happened: I spent my money, and, as I couldn't go on with what I had, I came back."

The people wondered how such a sensible man could have done so foolishly — start out, and not go on, and only waste his money. They wondered and forgot. And Yeliséi forgot. He began to do the chores again; he helped his son chop wood against the winter; he threshed the corn with the babas; he re-thatched the shed, arranged about the bees, and gave his neighbor the ten hives with their increase. His old woman wanted to hide how many swarms had come from the hives that he had sold: but Yeliséi himself knew what hives had swarmed, and what had not; and he gave his neighbor, instead of ten, seventeen swarms. Yeliséi arranged every thing, sent his son off to work, and he himself settled down for the winter to make bast-shoes¹ and chisel out bee-hives.

VIII.

ALL that day that Yeliséï staid in the sick folks' hut, Yefím waited for his companion. He went a little way, and sat down. He waited, waited; went to sleep, woke up; still sat there; no companion! He gazed with all his eyes. Already the sun had gone behind the trees — no Yeliséï.

“He can't have gone past me, or ridden by (perhaps some one gave him a lift), and not seen me while I was asleep, can he? He could not have helped seeing me. You see a long way on the steppes. If I should go back,” he thinks, “he would be getting ahead. We might miss each other: that would be still worse. I will go on: we shall meet at our lodging.”

He went on to a village, asked the village policemen¹ to send such and such an old man, if he came along, to yonder hut.

Yeliséï did not come to the lodging.

Yefím went farther; asked everybody if they had seen a bald, little old man. No one had. Yefím wondered, and went on alone.

“We shall meet,” he thinks, “in Odessa somewhere, or on board ship.” And he ceased to think about it.

On the way he met a *stránnik*.² The *stránnik* wore a skull-cap and cassock, and had long hair; had been to the Athos Monastery, and was going to Jerusalem for the second time. They met at the lodgings, got into conversation, and went on together.

¹ *Desyátski*.

² A professional pilgrim, of the genus tramp.

They reached Odessa safely. They waited thrice twenty-four hours for a ship. Many pilgrims were waiting there. They were from different lands. Again Yefím made inquiries about Yeliséi: no one had seen him.

Yefím asked for a passport: it cost five rubles. He paid forty silver rubles¹ for a return-ticket; bought bread and herring for the voyage. The vessel was loaded, the pilgrims embarked: Tarásuitch also took his place with the stránnik. They hoisted anchor, set sail, flew across the sea. They sailed well all day; at evening a wind sprang up, rain fell; it began to get rough, and the waves dashed over the ship. The people were thrown about, the babas began to scream, and the weaker among the men began to run about the vessel, trying to find a place.

Fear fell upon Yefím also, but he did not show it. Exactly where he had sat down on coming on board, near some old men from Tambof, here also he kept sitting all night and all the next day: they only clung to their sacks, and said nothing. It cleared off on the third day. On the fifth day they reached *Tsar-grad*.² Some of the stránniks were put ashore: they wanted to look at the temple of Sophia-Wisdom, where now the Turks hold sway. Tarásuitch did not land: he still sat on board. Only he bought some white loaves. They staid twenty-four hours: again they flew over the sea. They made another stop at the city of Smyrna; at another city, Alexandria; and they happily reached the city of Jaffa. At Jaffa all the pilgrims disembarked. It was seventy versts on foot to Jerusalem. Also at landing, the people were panic-struck: the ship was high, and the people had to jump

¹ *Tsyelkóviks*.

² Constantinople, the *Tsar-city*.

down into boats ; and the boat rocked, and one might not strike it, but fall in alongside ; and two men were drenched, but all ended happily.

They landed and started off on foot. On the third day after landing, they reached Jerusalem. They established themselves in the city at the Russian hostelry ;¹ their passports are visa-ed ; they ate dinner ; they went with the *stránnik* to the Holy Places. But to the Lord's sepulchre itself, there was no longer any admittance.

They went to the Patriarchal Monastery ; there all the worshippers collected ; the feminine sex sat down, the masculine sex also sat down in another place. They were bidden to take off their shoes, and to sit in a circle. A monk came in with a towel, and began to wash all their feet : he washes them, wipes them, and kisses them ; and thus he does to all. He washed Yefím's feet, and kissed them. They attended vespers, matins : they said their prayers, they placed candles, and presented petitions for their parents. And here also they took an occasional bite, and brought wine.

In the morning they went to the cell of Mary of Egypt, where she made her refuge. They set up candles, sang a *Te Deum*. Thence they went to the Monastery of Abraham. They saw the garden on Mount Moriah — the place where Abraham was going to sacrifice his son

¹ The five or six thousand Russian pilgrims who every year visit Jerusalem, says a recent traveller, "are all accommodated in the extensive premises belonging to the Russian Government, in the centre of which the Russian Consulate is situated, and which forms a sort of Russian suburb to the Holy City." Mr. Oliphant quotes a correspondent of the *Daily News* to the effect that the "Orthodox Palestine Society, one of whose tasks it is to facilitate Russian pilgrimage to the Holy Land," has a membership of more than six hundred members, a reserve capital of sixty thousand rubles, and a Grand Duke — the uncle of the Tsar — as its president. It is a curious question how long religious fanatics will be able to impose the "pious frauds" of the religious places upon credulous pilgrims, such as Yefim Tarásuitch.

to God. Then they went to the place where Christ revealed himself to Mary Magdalene, and to the Church of James the Brother of the Lord.

The stránnik pointed out all these places, and always told where it was necessary to contribute money. They returned for dinner to the hostelry; and after dinner, just as they were getting ready to go to bed, the stránnik began to say *Akh*, to shake his clothes, to search. "I have been robbed," he says, "of my *portmonet*, with my money. Twenty-three rubles," says he, "there was in it — two ten-ruble notes, and three in change." The stránnik mourned, mourned; nothing to be done: they lay down to sleep.

IX.

YEFÍM lay down to sleep, and temptation fell upon him. "The stránnik's money was not stolen," he thinks: "he didn't have any. He never gave any. He told me where to give, but he himself did not give: yes, and he borrowed a ruble of me."

Thus Yefím thinks, and then he begins to scold himself. "Why," says he, "do I judge the man? I do wrong. I won't think about it."

As he becomes sleepy, again he begins to think how sharp the stránnik was about money, and how he tells an unlikely story about his *portmonet* being stolen. "He hadn't any money," he thinks. "It was a trick."

Next morning they got up, and went to early mass in the great Church of the Resurrection; to the tomb of the Lord. The stránnik does not leave Yefím: he goes with him everywhere.

They went to the church. A great crowd of people were collected together, of pilgrim-stránniks, Russians, and all peoples — of Greeks and Armenians, and Turks and Syrians. Yefím entered the sacred gates with the people. A monk led them. He led them past Turkish guards to the place where the Saviour was taken from the cross, and anointed, and where the nine great candlesticks are burning. He points out every thing, and tells them every thing. Here Yefím placed a candle. Then some monks led Yefím to the right hand up the little flight of steps to Golgotha, where the cross

stood. Here Yefím said a prayer. Then they pointed out to Yefím the hole where the earth had opened down to hell ; then they pointed out the place where they had fastened Christ's hands and feet to the cross ; then they showed the tomb of Adam, over whose bones Christ's blood had flowed ; then they came to the stone whereon Christ had sat when they put on him the crown of thorns ; then to the pillar to which they bound Christ when they scourged him ; then Yefím saw the stone with two hollows for Christ's feet. They were going to show them something more, but the crowd were in a hurry : they all rushed to the very grotto of the Lord's sepulchre. There the foreign mass had just ended, the orthodox mass was just beginning. Yefím went into the grotto with the throng.

He was anxious to get rid of the stránnik, for continually in his thoughts he was sinning against the stránnik : but the stránnik would not be got rid of ; in company with him he goes to mass at the Lord's sepulchre. They tried to get nearer : they did not get there in time. The people are wedged so close that there is no going forward or back. Yefím stands, gazes forward, says his prayers ; but it is no use ;¹ he keeps feeling whether his purse is still there. He is divided in his thoughts : one way he thinks the stránnik is deceiving him ; the other, he thinks, " Or, if he is not deceiving me, and he was really robbed, why, then, it might be the same with me also."

¹ *N'yét, n'yét.* Literally, *no, no.*

X.

THUS Yefím stands, says his prayers, and looks forward toward the chapel where the sepulchre itself is; and on the sepulchre the thirty-six lamps are burning. Yefím stands, looks over the heads, when, what a marvel! Under the lamps themselves, where the blessed fire burns before all, he sees a little old man standing, in a coarse kaftan, with a bald spot over his whole head, just as in the case of Yeliséi Bodrof.

“It’s like Yeliséi,” he thinks. “But it can’t be him. He can’t have got here before me. No vessel had sailed for a week before us. He couldn’t have got in ahead. And he wasn’t on our vessel. I saw all the pilgrims.”

While Yefím was thus reasoning, the little old man began to pray; and he bowed three times — once straight ahead, toward God, and then toward the orthodox throng on all sides. And as the little old man bent down his head to the right, then Yefím recognized him. It is Bodrof himself, with his blackish, curly beard, growing gray on the cheeks; and his eyebrows, and eyes, and nose, and all his peculiarities. It is Yeliséi Bodrof himself.

Yefím was filled with joy because his companion had come, and wondered how Yeliséi had got there ahead of him. “Well, well, Bodrof,” he says to himself,

“how did he get up there in front? He must have fallen in with somebody who put him there. Let me just meet him as we go out: I’ll get rid of this stránnik in his skull-cap, and go with him; and perhaps he will get me a front place too.”

And all the time Yefím keeps his eyes on Yeliséi, so as not to miss him.

Now the mass was over; the crowd reeled, they tried to make their way, they struggled; Yefím was pushed to one side. Again the fear came upon him that some one would steal his purse.

Yefím clutched his purse, and tried to break through the crowd, so as to get into an open space. He made his way into the open space; he went and went, he sought and sought for Yeliséi, and in the church also. And there, also, in the church he saw many people in cloisters; and some were eating, and drinking wine, and sleeping, and reading. And there was no Yeliséi anywhere. Yefím returned to the hostelry, did not find his companion. And this evening the stránnik also did not come back. He disappeared, and did not return the ruble. Yefím was left alone.

On the next day Yefím again went to the Lord’s sepulchre with an old man from Tambof, who had come on the same ship with him. He wanted to get to the front, but again he was crowded back; and he stood by a pillar, and prayed. He looked to the front: again under the lamps, at the very sepulchre of the Lord, in the foremost place, stands Yeliséi, spreads his arms like the priest at the altar; and the light shines all over his bald head.

“Well,” thinks Yefím, “now I’ll surely not miss him.”

He tries to push through to the front. He pushes through. No Yeliséi. Apparently gone out.

And on the third day, again he gazes towards the Lord's sepulchre: in the same sacred spot stands Yeliséi, with the same aspect, his arms outspread, and looking up, almost as though his eyes were fixed upon him. And the bald spot on his whole head shines.

"Well," thinks Yefím, "now I'll not miss him: I'll go and stand at the door. There we sha'n't miss each other."

Yefím went and stood and stood. He stood there half the day: all the people went out — no Yeliséi.

Yefím spent six weeks in Jerusalem, and visited every thing; and in Bethlehem, and Bethany, and on the Jordan: and he had a seal stamped on a new shirt at the Lord's sepulchre, so that he might be buried in it; and he got some Jordan water in a vial, and some earth; and he got some candles with the holy fire, and he noted down his recollections in all places; and having spent all his money, except enough to get him home, Yefím started on the home-journey. He went to Jaffa, took passage in a ship, sailed to Odessa, and started to walk home.

XI.

YEFÍM walks alone over the same road as before. As he began to near his home, again the worryment came upon him as to how the folks were getting along without him. "In a year," thinks he, "much water leaks away. You spend a whole lifetime making a house, and it don't take long to go to waste." How had his son conducted affairs? how had the spring opened up? how had the cattle weathered the winter? how had they done the *izbá*?"

Yefím reached that place where, the year before, he had parted from Yeliséi. It was impossible to recognize the people. Where, the preceding year, the people were wretchedly poor, now all lived in sufficient comfort. There had been good crops. The people had recovered, and forgotten their former trouble.

Yefím at evening reached the very village where, the year before, Yeliséi had stopped. He had hardly entered the village, when a little girl in a white shirt sprang out from behind a hut:—

"Grandpa! Dear grandpa!¹ Come into our house!"

Yefím was inclined to go on, but the little girl would not allow him: she seizes him by the skirts, pulls him along into the hut, and laughs.

There came out upon the doorsteps a woman with a little boy; she also beckons to him: "Come in, please,

¹ *Did! didko.* Malo Russian for *D'yéd, d'yédushka.*

grand-sire, *d'yédushko*, — and take supper with us, — you shall spend the night.”

Yefim went in.

“That’s just right,” he thinks: “I will ask about Yeliséi. No doubt, this is the very hut where he stopped to get a drink.”

Yefim went in: the woman took his sack from him, gave him a chance to wash, and set him at the table. She put on milk, *varéniki*,¹ kasha-gruel, — she set them all on the table. Tarásuitch thanked and praised the people for being so hospitable to stránniks. The woman shook her head: —

“We cannot help being hospitable to stránniks. We owe our lives to a stránnik. We lived, we had forgotten God, and God had forgotten us, so that all that we expected was death. — Last summer it went so bad with us, that we were all sick, — and had nothing to eat, and — we were sick. And we should have died; but God sent us such a nice old man, just like you! He came in just at noon to get a drink; and when he saw us, he was sorry for us, yes, and he staid on with us. And he gave us something to drink, and fed us, and put us on our legs; and he bought back our land, and he bought us a horse and telyéga, left them with us.”

The old woman came into the hut; she interrupted the woman’s story: “And we don’t know at all,” says she, “whether it was a man, or an angel of God. He loved us all so, and he was so sorry for us; and he went away, and did not tell us [who he was], and we don’t know who we should pray God for. I can see it now just as it was: there I was lying, expecting to die; I see a little old man come in — not a bit stuck up —

¹ A sort of triangular doughnuts, or boiled patties, stuffed with cheese or curds.

rather bald — he asks for water. Sinner that I was, I thought, ‘What are they prowling round here for?’ And think what he did! As soon as he saw us, he right off with his sack, and set it right on that spot, and untied it.”

And the little girl broke in, —

“No,” says she, “bábushka: first he set his sack right in the middle of the hut, and then he put it on the bench.”

And they began to discuss it, and to recall all his words and actions; both where he sat, and where he slept, and what he did, and what he said to any of them.

At nightfall came the muzhík-khozyáin on horseback: he, also, began to tell about Yeliséi, and how he had lived with them: —

“If he had not come to us,” says he, “we should all have died in our sins. We were perishing in despair: we murmured against God and against men. But he set us on our feet; and through him we learned to know God, and we have come to believe that there are good people. Christ bless him! Before, we lived like cattle: he made us men.”

The people fed Yefím, gave him enough to drink: they fixed him for the night, and they themselves lay down to sleep.

Yefím is unable to sleep; and the thought does not leave his mind, how he had seen Yeliséi in Jerusalem three times in the foremost place. “That’s how he got there before me,” he thinks. “My labors may, or may not, be accepted, but the Lord has accepted his.”

In the morning the people wished Yefím good-speed; they loaded him with pirozhki for his journey, and they went to their work: and Yefím started on his way.

XII.

YEFÍM had been gone exactly a year. In the spring he returned home.

He reached home in the evening. His son was not at home: he was at the tavern. His son came home tipsy. Yefím began to question him. In all respects he saw that the young man had got into bad ways during his absence. He had spent all the money badly, he had neglected things. The father began to reprimand him. The son began to be impudent.

“You yourself might have stirred about a little,” says he, “but you went wandering. Yes, and you took all the money with you besides, and then you call me to account!”

The father grew angry, beat his son.

In the morning Yefím Tarásuitch started for the stárosta's to talk with him about his son: he goes by Yeliséi's dvor. Yeliséi's old woman is standing on the doorsteps: she greets him.

“How's your health, neighbor?” says she: “did you have a good pilgrimage?”

Yefím Tarásuitch stopped.

“Glory to God,” says he, “I have been! I lost your old man, but I hear he got home!”

And the old woman began to talk. She was very fond of prattling.

“He got back,” says she, “good neighbor: he got

back long ago. Very soon after the Assumption. And glad enough we were that God brought him. It was lonesome for us without him. He isn't good for much work — his day is done; but he is the head, and we are happier. And how glad our lad was! 'Without father,' says he, 'it's like being without light in the eye.' It was lonesome for us without him, we love him and we missed him so!"

"Well, is he at home now?"

"Yes, friend, he's with the bees: he's living the new swarms. 'Splendid swarms,' says he: such a power of bees God never gave, as far as my old man remembers. God doesn't grant according to our sins, he says. Come in, neighbor: how glad he'll be to see you!"

Yefim passed through the vestibule, through the dvor to the apiary where Yeliséi was. He went into the apiary, he looks — Yeliséi is standing under a little birch-tree, without a net, without gloves, in his gray kaftan, spreading out his arms, and looking up; and the bald spot over his whole head gleams, just as when he stood in Jerusalem at the Lord's sepulchre; and over him, just as in Jerusalem the candles burned, the sunlight plays through the birch-tree; and around his head the golden bees circle in a crown, fly in and out, and do not sting him.

Yefim stood still.

Yeliséi's old woman called to her husband: —

"Our neighbor's come," says she.

Yeliséi looked around, was delighted, came to meet his companion, calmly detaching the bees from his beard.

"How are you, comrade, how are you, my dear friend! — did you have a good journey?"

“ My feet went on the pilgrimage, and I have brought you some water from the river Jordan. Come — you shall have it — but whether the Lord accepted my labors ” —

“ Well, glory to God, Christ save us ! ”

Yefím was silent for a moment.

“ My legs took me there, but whether it was my soul that was there, or another’s ” —

“ That is God’s affair, comrade, God’s affair. ”

“ On my way back I stopped also — at the hut where you left me ” —

Yeliséi became confused : he hastened to repeat, —

“ It’s God’s affair, comrade, God’s affair. What say you? shall we go into the izbá? — I will bring you some honey. ”

And Yeliséi changed the conversation : he spoke about domestic affairs.

Yefím sighed, and did not again remind Yeliséi of the people in the hut, and the vision of him that he had seen in Jerusalem. And he learned that in this world God bids every one do his duty till death — in love and good deeds.

TEXTS FOR WOOD-CUTS.

1885.

THE DEVIL'S PERSISTENT, BUT GOD IS RESISTANT.¹

THERE lived in old time a good master.² He had plenty of every thing, and many slaves served him. And the slaves used to praise their master.³ They said, —

“ There is not a better master under heaven than ours. He not only feeds us and clothes us well, and gives us work according to our strength, but he never insults any of us, and never gets angry with us : he isn't like other masters, who treat their slaves worse than cattle, and kill them whether they are to blame or not, and never say a kind word to them. Our master, he wishes us well, and treats us kindly, and says pleasant things to us. We couldn't have a better life than ours.”

Thus the slaves praised their master.

And here the Devil began to get vexed because the slaves lived in comfort and love with their master.

And the Devil got hold of one of the slaves of this master, named Al'yeb. He got hold of him — commanded him to entice the other slaves.

¹ *Vrazhye Lyépko a Bozhyé Kryépko.*

² *Khozyäin.*

³ *Gospodin, Lord.*

And when all the slaves were taking their rest, and were praising their master, Al'yeb raised his voice, and said, "It's all nonsense your praising our master's goodness. Try to humor the Devil, and the Devil will be good. We serve our master well, we humor him in all things. As soon as he thinks of any thing, we do it: we divine his thoughts. How make him be not good to us? Just stop humoring him, and do bad work for him, and he will be like all the others, and he will return evil for evil worse than the cross of masters."

And the other slaves began to argue with Alyeb. And they argued, and laid a wager. Alyeb undertook to make their kind master angry. He undertook it on the condition, that, if he does not make him angry, he shall give his Sunday clothes; but if he makes him angry, then they agree to give him, each one of them, their Sunday clothes; and, moreover, they agree to protect him from their master, if he should be put in irons, or, if thrown in prison, to free him. They laid the wager, and Al'yeb promised to make their master angry the next morning.

Alyeb served his master in the sheep-cote: he had charge of the costly breeding-rams.

And here in the morning the good master came with some guests to the sheep-cote, and began to show them his beloved, costly rams. The Devil's accomplice winked to his comrades:—

"Look! I'll soon get the master angry."

All the slaves had gathered. They peeked in at the door and through the fence; and the Devil climbed into a tree, and looks down into the dvor, to see how his accomplice will do his work.

The master came round the dvor, showed his guests

his sheep and lambs, and then was going to show his best ram.

“The other rams,” says he, “are good; but this one here, the one with the twisted horns, is priceless; he is dearer to me than my eyes.”

The sheep and rams are jumping about the dvor to avoid the people, and the guests are unable to examine the valuable ram. This ram scarcely comes to a stop when the Devil's accomplice, as though accidentally, scares the sheep, and again they get mixed up.

The guests are unable to make out which is the priceless ram.

Here the master became tired. He says, —

“Alyeb, my dear, just try to catch the best ram with the wrinkled horns, and hold him. Be careful.”

And, as soon as the master said this, Al'yeb threw himself, like a lion, amid the rams, and caught the priceless ram by the wool. He caught him by the wool, and instantly grabbed him with one hand by the left hind-leg, lifted it up, and, right before the master's eyes, bent his leg, and it cracked like a dry stick. Al'yeb broke the dear ram's leg near the knee. The ram bleated, and fell on his fore-knees. Alyeb grabbed him by the right leg; but the left turned inside out, and hung down like a whip. The guests and all the slaves said, “Akh!” and the Devil rejoiced when he saw how cleverly Al'yeb had done his job.

The khozyáin grew darker than night, frowned, hung his head, and said not a word. The guests and slaves were also silent. . . . They waited to see what would be.

The khozyáin kept silent a while: then he shook himself, as though trying to throw off something, and raised his head, and turned his eyes heavenward. Not

long he gazed before the wrinkles on his brow disappeared: he smiled, and fixed his eyes on Al'yeb. He looked at Al'yeb, smiled again, and said, "O Al'yeb, Al'yeb! Thy master told thee to make me angry. But my master is stronger than thine, and thou hast not led me into anger; but I shall make thy master angry. Thou wert afraid that I would punish thee, and hast wished to be free, Al'yeb. Know, then, that thy punishment will not come from me; but as thou art anxious for thy freedom, here, in the presence of my guests, I give thee thy dismissal. Go wherever it may please thee,¹ and take thy Sunday clothes."

And the kind master went back to the house with his guests. But the Devil gnashed his teeth, fell from the tree, and sank through the earth.

LITTLE GIRLS WISER THAN OLD MEN.

EASTER was early. Sleighing was just over. The snow still lay in the dvors, and little streams ran through the village. In an alley between two dvors a large pool had collected from the dung-heaps. And near this pool were standing two little girls from either dvor, — one of them younger, the other older.

The mothers of the two little girls had dressed them in new sarafans, — the younger one's blue, the elder's of yellow flowered damask. Both were tied with red handkerchiefs. The little girls, after mass was over, had gone to the pool, showed each other their dresses, and began to play. And the whim seized them to splash in the water. The younger one was just going to wade into the pool with her little slippers on; but the older one said, —

"Don't do it, Malashka — your mother will scold.

¹ Literally, "to all four sides."

I'm going to take off my shoes and stockings — you take off yours."

The little girls took off their shoes and stockings, held up their clothes, and went into the pool so as to meet. Malashka waded in up to her ankles, and says, —

"It's deep, Akuliushka — I am afraid."

"This is nothing. It won't be any deeper. Come right toward me."

They began to get nearer each other. And Akulka says, —

"Be careful, Malashka, don't splash, but go more slowly."

But the words were hardly out of her mouth, when Malashka put her foot down into the water: it splashed straight on Akulka's sarafan. The sarafan was well spattered, and it flew into her nose and eyes.

Akulka saw the spots on her sarafan: she became angry with Malashka, scolded her, ran after her, tried to slap her.

Malashka was frightened seeing what mischief she had done, leaped out of the pool, hastened home.

Akulka's mother happened to pass by, saw her little daughter's sarafan spattered, and her shirt bedaubed.

"How did you get yourself all covered with dirt, you good-for-nothing?"

"Malashka spattered me on purpose."

Akulkin's mother caught Malashka, and struck her on the back of the head.

Malashka howled along the whole street. Malashkin's mother came out: —

"What are you striking my daughter for?" She began to scold her neighbor. A word for a word: the women got into a quarrel. The muzhíks hastened out, a great crowd gathered on the street. All are scream-

ing. No one listens to anybody. They quarrel, and the one jostled the other; there was a general row imminent: but an old woman, Akulkin's grandmother,¹ interfered.

She came out into the midst of the muzhíks, and began to speak: "What are you doing, neighbors? What day is it? We ought to rejoice. And you are doing such wrong things!"

They heed not the old woman: they almost strike her. And the old woman would never have succeeded in persuading them, had it not been for Akulka and Malashka. While the babas were keeping up the quarrel, Akulka cleaned her *sarafanchik*, and came out again to the pool in the alley. She picked up a little stone, and began to clear away the earth by the pool, so as to let the water run into the street.

While she was cleaning it out, Malashka also came along, began to help her — to make a little gutter with a splinter.

The muzhíks were just coming to blows when the water reached the street, flowing through the gutter made by the little girls; and it went straight to the very spot where the old woman was trying to separate the muzhíks.

The little girls are chasing it, one on one side, the other on the other, of the runnel.

"Catch it, Malashka! catch it!" cries Akulka. Malashka also tries to say something, but laughter prevents.

Thus the little girls chase it, and laugh as the splinter swims down the runnel.

They ran right into the midst of the muzhíks. The old woman saw them, and she says to the muzhíks, —

¹ Babka.

“ You should fear God, you muzhíks! it was on account of the same little girls that you picked up a quarrel, but they forgot all about it long ago: dear little things, they are playing together lovingly again.”

The muzhíks looked at the little girls, and felt ashamed. Then the muzhíks laughed at themselves, and went home to their dvors.

“ If ye are not like children, ye cannot enter into the kingdom of God.”

TWO BROTHERS AND GOLD.

ONCE upon a time, there lived, not far from Jerusalem, two brothers, the elder Afanási, and the younger one Yoann. They lived on a mountain, not far from the city, and subsisted on what men gave them. The brothers spent all their time in work. They did not work on their own work, but on work for the poor. Wherever there were people worn out by work, wherever they were ill, or orphans or widows, there the brothers would go, and there they would work, and on their departure take no pay. Thus the brothers spent a whole week at a time, and met at their dwelling. Only on Sunday they staid at home, prayed and talked. And the angel of the Lord came to them and blessed them. On Monday they parted, each his own way.

Thus the brothers lived many summers; and every week the angel of the Lord came to them, and blessed them.

One Monday, when the brothers were going out to work, and had already started down different sides, the elder, Afanási, began to feel sorry to part from his beloved brother; and he halted, and looked back.

Yoann was walking on his way, with head bent, and not looking up.

But suddenly Yoann also stopped, and, as though he saw something, began to gaze back intently, shading his eyes with his hand. Then he approached what he was looking at: then suddenly he leaped to one side, and, without looking round, ran to the base of the mountain, and up the mountain, away from that place, as though a wild beast were pursuing him.

Afanási was surprised, and turned back to the place to see what had scared his brother so.

As he approached nearer, he saw something glistening in the sun. He came still nearer. On the grass, as though thrown out from a measure, is lying a heap of gold.

And Afanási was still more astonished, both at the gold, and at his brother's flight.

“What scared him? and why did he run away?” asked Afanási of himself. “There is no sin in gold: sin is in man. Gold can do no harm: it may do good. How many widows and orphans this gold can nourish! how many naked it can clad! how many poor and sick it can heal! We are now serving-men; but our service is small, just as our strength is small. But with this gold, we can be of better service to people.” Thus reasoned Afanási, and he wanted to tell all this to his brother; but Yoann was already gone out of hearing, and could only be seen now like a little beetle on the other mountain.

And Afanási took off his coat, filled it with as much gold as he had strength to lug, put it on his shoulder, and carried it to the city. He came to a hotel, deposited the gold with the hotel-keeper, and went for the rest of it.

And when he had got all the gold, he went to the merchants, bought land in the city, bought bricks and lumber, engaged laborers, and began to build three houses.

And Afanási lived in the city three months. He built in the city three houses, — one house, an asylum for widows and orphans; the second house, a hospital for the sick and poverty-stricken; the third house, for pilgrims¹ and beggars.

And Afanási found three pious old men; and one of them he placed over the asylum, the other over the hospital, and the third over the pilgrims' home.

And still Afanási had left three thousand gold-pieces. And he gave to each of the old men a thousand to distribute among the poor.

And all three of the houses began to fill with people, and men began to praise Afanási for all that he had done. And Afanási was so delighted at this, that he did not care to leave the city.

But Afanási loved his brother; and having said good-by to the people, and not leaving himself any money at all, and wearing the very same old clothes in which he had come, he went back to his house.

Afanási is climbing down his mountain, and thinking, —

“My brother reasoned wrong when he jumped away from the gold and fled. Haven't I done better?”

And this thought had scarcely occurred to Afanási, when suddenly he sees standing right in his path, the same angel who had blessed them: he looks sternly at him.

And Afanási was stupefied, and could only say, —
“What is it, Lord?”

¹ *Stránniki.*

And the angel opened his lips, and said, —

“Get thee hence! Thou art unworthy to live with thy brother. Thy brother’s one leap is worth more than all those things that thou hast done with thy gold.”

And Afanási began to tell how many poor and wanderers he had fed, how many orphans he had cared for.

And the angel said to him, —

“The Devil, who put down the gold to seduce thee, also taught thee these words.”

And then Afanási felt the prick of conscience, and understood that he had not done these deeds for God’s sake; and he burst into tears, and began to repent.

Then the angel stepped out of the road, and allowed him to pass; and there stood Yoann, waiting for his brother. And from that time Afanási did not give in to the temptation of the Devil that had scattered the gold; and he learned that God and men can be served, not by gold, but only by deeds.

And the brothers began to live as before.

ILYÁS.

THERE lived in the government of Ufa a Bashkir, Ilyás. Ilyás was left poor by his father. His father got him a wife, and the next year died. At that time Ilyás’s possessions consisted of seven mares, two cows, and a score of sheep: but Ilyás was a good manager,¹ and he began to gain; from morning till night he and his wife worked; he got up earlier than any one else, and went to bed later than any one else, and each year he kept getting richer. Thus Ilyás toiled for thirty-five years, and he made a great fortune.

Ilyás had two hundred head of horse, a hundred and

¹ *Khozyán.*

fifty head of horned cattle, and twelve hundred sheep. The servants pastured the flocks and herds; and the maid-servants milked the mares and cows, and made *kumýs*, butter, and cheese.

Ilyás had plenty of every thing, and all in the neighborhood 'envied Ilyás's life. Men said, —

“ Lucky man, Ilyás. He has plenty of every thing : he doesn't need to die.”

Fine people began to get acquainted with Ilyás, and associate with him. And guests came to visit him from far and near. And Ilyás received them all, and fed them all, and gave them to drink. Whoever came had *kumýs* : all had tea, fish-broth,¹ and mutton. As soon as guests came, he would immediately have a ram killed, or two; and if many came, they would kill a mare also.

Ilyás had two sons and a daughter. He married off his sons, and got his daughter a husband. When Ilyás was poor, his sons worked with him, and they themselves pastured the flocks and herds; but as they became rich, the sons began to get spoiled, and one took to drinking.

One, the elder, was killed in a brawl: and the other, the younger, got a proud wife; and this son began to be disobedient to his father, and Ilyás was compelled to banish him.

Ilyás banished him, but gave him a house and cattle; and Ilyás's wealth was diminished. And soon after this a distemper fell upon Ilyás's sheep, and many perished. Then there came a year of famine; the hay did not ripen; many cattle died during the winter. Then the Kirgiz carried off his best horses, and Ilyás's property began to diminish.

¹ *Sherbá*, or *shcherbá*.

Ilyás began to fall lower and lower. And his strength was less than it had been. And at the age of seventy years, Ilyás had come to such a pass that he began to sell out his furs, his carpets, saddles, tip-carts,¹ and then he began to dispose of his last cattle, and Ilyás came to nothing.

He himself did not realize how he had nothing left; but he and his wife were obliged, in their old age, to hire out as servants. All Ilyás's possessions consisted of the clothes on his body, his shuba, a hat, shoes, and slippers — yes, and his wife, Sham-Shemagi, now an old woman. His banished son had gone to a far-off land, and his daughter died. And then there was no one to help the old people.

Their neighbor, Muhamedshah, felt sorry for the old people. Muhamedshah himself was neither poor nor rich, but lived in medium circumstances; and he was a good man.

He remembered Ilyás's hospitality,² and pitied him, and said to Ilyás, —

“Come, Ilyás,” says he, “and live with me — you and your old woman. In summer you can work for me in the garden, and in winter take care of the cattle; and Sham-Shemagi may milk the mares, and make kumýs. I will feed and clothe you both: and whatever you need, tell me; I will give it.”

Ilyás thanked his neighbor, and he and his wife began to live with Muhamedshah as servants. At first it came hard to them, but afterwards they got used to it; and the old people began to live, and work as much as their strength permitted.

The khozyáin found it profitable to keep such people, because they had been masters³ themselves, and knew

¹ *Kibétki*.

² *Khlyéb-col*; literally, bread-salt.

³ *Khozyáeva*.

how to keep things orderly, and were not lazy, and worked according to their strength: only Muhamedshah felt sorry to see how people of such high station should have fallen to such a low condition.

Once it came to pass, that some guests, distant kinsmen, came to visit Muhamedshah: a Mulla came with them.

Muhamedshah gave orders to have a ram caught and killed. Ilyás dressed the ram, cooked it, and served it to the guests. The guests ate the mutton, drank some tea, and took some kumýs.

While the guests are sitting with the khozyáin on down-pillows, on carpets, are drinking kumýs out of cups, and chatting, Ilyás had finished his chores, and was passing in front of the door.

Muhamedshah saw him, and asked a guest, —

“Did you see that old man who went by the door?”

“I saw him,” says the guest; “but what is there wonderful in him?”

“This is remarkable, — he was once our richest man. His name is Ilyás: maybe you have heard of him?”

“Certainly I have,” says the guest. “I never saw him before, but his fame has been wide-spread.”

“Now he has nothing at all left, and he lives out at service with me: he and his old woman milk the cows.”

The guest was amazed; snapped his tongue, shook his head, and says, —

“Yes, this shows how fortune turns round like a wheel: he who is on top gets to the bottom. Well, I suppose the old man feels pretty bad about it?”

“Who can tell about him? He lives quietly, peacefully; works well.”

The guest says, “Can I have a talk with him? I should like to ask him about his life.”

“Well,¹ you can,” says the khozyáin, and shouts toward the tip-cart,² “Babái (means little grandfather³ in Bashkirian), come in; bring some kumýs, and call your old woman.”

And Ilyás came with his wife. Ilyás greeted the guests and his master, repeated a prayer, and squatted down by the door. But his wife went behind the curtain, and sat with her mistress.⁴

Ilyás was given a cup of kumýs. Ilyás wished the health of the guests and of his master, bowed, sipped a little, and set it down.

“Well, dyédushka,” says the guest, “I suppose you feel rather blue looking at us, to remember your past life, — how you used to be in luck, and how now your life is spent in sorrow?”

And Ilyás smiled, and said, “If I told you about my fortune and misfortune, you would not believe me. Better ask my baba. She is a baba, — what’s in her heart’s on her tongue also. She will tell you the whole truth about this matter.”

And the host called to the curtain, “Well, now,⁵ bábushka, tell us what you think about your former luck, and your present misfortune.”

And Sham-Shemagi spoke from behind the curtain: —

“This is what I think about it: My old man and I have lived fifty years. We sought for happiness, and did not find it; and now here it is two years since we lost every thing, and have been living out at service; and we have found real happiness, and ask for nothing better.”

The guests were amazed; and the khozyáin was amazed, and even rose from his seat, lifted the curtain

¹ *Chto-zh.* ² *Kibítka.* ³ *Dyédushka.* ⁴ *Khozyäika.* ⁵ *Nu, chto-zh.*

to look at the old woman ; and the old woman is standing, with folded arms. She smiles as she looks at her old man, and the old man smiles back. The old woman went on, "I am speaking the truth, not jesting. We sought for happiness for half a century, and as long as we were rich we did not find it ; but now that we have nothing left, and have to go out to service, we have found such happiness that we ask for nothing better."

"But wherein consists your happiness now?"

"Well, in this : while we were rich, my old man and I never had an hour's rest. We never had time to talk, nor to think about our souls, nor to pray to God. There was nothing for us but care. When we had guests, it was a bother how to treat them, what to give them, so that they might not talk ill about us. Then, when guests went away, we had to look after our work-people : they must have rest, they must have enough to eat, and we must see to it that nothing that is ours gets lost. So we sinned. Then, again, care lest the wolf should kill a colt or a calf, or lest thieves should drive off our horses. You lay down to sleep, you can't sleep for fear the sheep trample the lambs. You go out, you walk in the night : you just get yourself calmed down — again, care how to get food for the winter. Besides this, my old man and I never agreed. He says we must do so, and I say we must do so ; and we begin to quarrel, we sin. So we lived in worry and care, in worry and care, and never knew the happiness of life."

"Well, and now?"

"Now when my old man and I get up in the morning, we always have a talk, in love and sympathy ; we have nothing to quarrel about, nothing to worry about ;

our only care is to serve our khozyáin. We work according to our strength, we work willingly, so that our khozyáin may not lose, but gain. When we come in, we have dinner, we have supper, we have kumýs. If it is cold, we have our *kizyák*¹ to warm us, and a sheepskin shuba. And we have time to talk and think about our souls, and to pray to God. For fifty years we sought for happiness, and only now we have found it!”

The guests began to laugh.

But Ilyás said, —

“Don’t laugh, brothers: this thing is no jest, but human life. And the old woman and I were foolish when we wept over the loss of our property, but now God has revealed the truth to us; and it is not for our own consolation, but for your good, that we reveal it to you.”

And the Mulla said, “This is a wise saying, and Ilyás has told the exact truth; and this is written also in the Scriptures.”

And the guests ceased laughing, and were lost in thought.

¹ *Kizyák*, or *tizyák*, a Tatar word, meaning a brick made of dried dung.

THE THREE MENDICANTS.

1886.

“ But when ye pray, use not vain repetitions, as the heathen do: for they think that they shall be heard for their much speaking.

Be not ye therefore like unto them: for your Father knoweth what things ye have need of, before ye ask him.” — MATT. vi. 6, 7.

A BISHOP set sail in a ship from the city of Archangel to Solovki.¹ In the same ship sailed some pilgrims to the saints.

The wind was favorable, the weather clear, the sea was not rough. The pilgrims, as they were lying down, as they were lunching, as they were sitting in a crowd, conversed together.

The bishop came on deck, began to walk up and down on the bridge. As he approaches the bow, he sees the people crowded together. A little muzhík is pointing his hand at something in the sea, and talking; and the people are listening.

The bishop stood still, and looked in the direction that the *muzhitchók* was pointing: nothing is to be seen, except the sea glistening in the sun.

The bishop came closer, began to listen. When the *muzhitchók* saw the bishop, he took off his cap, and stopped speaking. The people also, when they saw the bishop, took off their shápkas, and paid their respects.

¹ The Slovetsky Monastery, at the mouth of the Dvina River.

“Don’t mind me, brothers,” said the bishop. “I have also come to listen to what you are saying, my good friend.”

“This fisherman was telling us about some mendicants,”¹ said a merchant, taking courage.

“What about the mendicants?” asked the bishop, as he came to the gunwale, and sat down on a box. “Tell me too: I should like to hear. What were you pointing at?”

“Well, then,² yonder’s the little island just heaving in sight,” said the little peasant; and he pointed toward the port-side. “On that very islet, three mendicants¹ live, working out their salvation.”

“Where is the little island?” asked the bishop.

“Here, look along my arm, if you please. Way out there, at the left of that little cloud, you can see it.”

The bishop looked and looked: the water gleamed in the sun, and he could see nothing unusual.

“I don’t see it,” says he. “What sort of mendicants are they who live on the little island?”

“Hermits,”³ replied the peasant. “For a long time I had heard tell of ’em, but I never chanced to see them until last summer.”

And the fisherman again began to relate how he had been out fishing, and how he was driven to that island, and knew not where he was. In the morning he started to look around, and stumbled upon a little earthen hut; and he found in the hut one mendicant, and then two others came in. They fed him, and dried him, and helped him repair his boat.

“What sort of men were they?” asked the bishop.

¹ *Stártsui.*

² *Da vot.*

³ *Bozhi liudi*, usually the term for monks.

“One was rather small, humpbacked, very, very old; he was dressed in well-worn stole; he must have been more than a hundred years old; his beard was already silvery white; but he always had a smile ready, and he was as serene as an angel of heaven. The second was taller, also old, in a torn kaftan; his long beard was growing a little yellowish, but he was a strong man; he turned my boat over, — a tub, — and I didn’t even have to help him: he was also a jolly man. But the third was tall, with a long beard reaching to his knee, and white as the moon; but he was gloomy; his eyes glared out from under beetling brows; and he was naked, all save a plaited belt.”

“What did they say to you?” asked the bishop.

“They did every thing mostly without speaking, and they talked very little among themselves: one had only to look, and the other understood. I began to ask the tall one if they had lived there long. He frowned, muttered something, grew almost angry: then the little old man instantly seized him by the hand, smiled, and the large man said nothing. But the old man said, ‘Excuse us,’ and smiled.”

While the peasant was speaking, the ship sailed nearer and nearer to the islands.

“There, now you can see plainly,” said the merchant. “Now please look, your reverence,”¹ said he, pointing. The bishop tried to look, and he barely managed to make out a black speck — the little island.

The bishop gazed and gazed; and he went from the bow to the stern, and he approached the helmsman.

“What is that little island,” says he, “that you see over yonder?”

¹ *Vashe preosvyashchéntvo.*

“So far as I know, it hasn't any name: good many of 'em here.”

“Is it true what they say, that some mendicants live there?”

“They say so, your reverence, but I don't rightly know. Fishermen, they say, have seen 'em. Still, folks talk a good deal of nonsense.”

“I should like to land on the little island, and see the mendicants,” said the bishop. “How can I manage it?”

“It is impossible to go there in the ship,” said the helmsman. “You might do it in a boat, but you will have to ask the captain. Call the captain.”

“I should like to have a sight of those mendicants,” said the bishop. “Is it out of the question to take me there?”

The captain tried to dissuade him.

“It is possible, quite possible, but we should waste much time; and I take the liberty of assuring your reverence, it isn't worth your while to see them. I have heard from people that those old men live like perfect stupids; don't understand any thing, and can't say any thing, just like some sort of sea-fish.”

“I wish it,” said the bishop. “I will pay for the trouble, if you will take me there.”

There was nothing else to be done: the sailors arranged it; they shifted sail. The helmsman put the ship about: they sailed toward the island. A chair was set for the bishop on the bow. He sat down and looked. And all the people gathered on the bow, all look at the little island. And those who have trustworthy eyes, already see rocks on the island, and point out the hut. And one even saw the three mendicants. The captain got out a spy-glass, gazed through it,

handed it to the bishop: "Exactly," says he, "there on the shore at the right, standing on a great rock, are three men."

The bishop also looked through the glass; he sights where it must be; plainly the three men are standing there, — one tall, the second shorter, but the third very short. They are standing on the shore, they cling on with their hands.

The captain came to the bishop: —

"Here, your reverence, the ship must come to anchor; if it suit you, you can be put ashore in a yawl, and we will anchor out here."

Immediately they got the tackle ready, lowered the anchor, furled the sails: the vessel brought up, began to roll. They lowered a boat, the rowers manned it, and the bishop began to climb down by the companion-way. The bishop climbed down, took his seat on the thwart; the rowers lifted their oars; they sped away to the island. They sped away like a stone from a sling: they see the three old men standing, — the tall one naked, with his plaited belt; the shorter one in his torn kaftan; and the little old humpbacked one, in his old stole, — all three are standing there, clinging on with their hands.

The sailors made for shore, caught on with the boat-hook. The bishop got out.

The mendicants bowed before him; he blessed them; they bowed still lower. And the bishop began to speak to them: —

"I heard," says he, "that you hermits were here, working out your salvation, followers of Christ; that you worship God: and I am here by God's grace, an unworthy servant of Christ, called to be a shepherd to his flock; and so I desired also, if I might, to

give instruction to you, who are the servants of God.”

The mendicants made no reply: they smiled, they exchanged glances.

“Tell me how you are working out your salvation, and how you serve God,” said the bishop.

The middle mendicant sighed, and looked at the aged one, at the venerable one: the tall stárets frowned, and looked at the aged one, at the venerable one. And the venerable old stárets smiled, and said, —

“Servant of God, we have not the skill to serve God: we only serve ourselves, getting something to eat.”

“How do you pray to God?” asked the bishop.

And the venerable stárets said, “We pray thus: ‘You three, have mercy on us three.’”¹

And as soon as the venerable stárets said this, all three of the mendicants raised their eyes to heaven, and all three said, “*Tróe vas, tróe nas, promilúü nas!*”

The bishop smiled, and said, “You have heard this about the Holy Trinity, but you should not pray so. I have taken a fancy to you, men of God. I see that you desire to please God, but you know not how to serve him. You should not pray so; but listen to me, I will teach you. I shall not teach you my own words, but shall teach you from God’s scriptures how God commanded all people to pray to God.”

And the bishop began to explain to the mendicants how God revealed himself to men. He taught them about God the Father, God the Son, and God the Holy Spirit, and said, “God the Son came upon earth to save men, and this is the way he taught all men to pray: listen, and repeat after me” —

¹ *Tróe vas, tróe nas, pomilúü nas!*”

And the bishop began to say, "*Our Father.*" And one stárets repeated "*Our Father,*" and then the second repeated "*Our Father,*" and the third also repeated "*Our Father.*" — "*Who art in heaven;*" and the mendicants tried to repeat, "*Who art in heaven.*"

But the middle mendicant mixed the words up; he could not repeat them so: and the tall, naked stárets could not repeat them; his lips had grown together — he could not speak distinctly: and the venerable, toothless stárets could not stammer the words intelligibly.

The bishop said it a second time: the mendicants repeated it again. And the bishop sat down on a little boulder, and the mendicants stood about him; and they looked at his lips, and they repeated it after him until they knew it. And all that day till evening the bishop labored with them; and ten times, and twenty times, and a hundred times, he repeated each word, and the mendicants learned it by rote. And when they got entangled, he set them right, and made them begin all over again.

And the bishop did not leave the mendicants until he had taught them the whole of the Lord's Prayer. They repeated it after him, and then by themselves.

First of all, the middle stárets learned it, and he repeated it from beginning to end; and the bishop bade him say it again and again, and still again to repeat it: and the others also learned the whole prayer.

It was already beginning to grow dark, and the moon began to come up out of the sea, when the bishop arose to go back to the ship.

The bishop said farewell to the mendicants: they all bowed very low before him. He took them, and kissed each, bade them pray as he had taught them; and he took his seat in the boat, and returned to the ship.

And while the bishop was rowed back to the ship, he heard all the time how the mendicants were repeating the Lord's Prayer at the top of their voices.

They returned to the ship, and here the voices of the mendicants was no longer heard; but they could still see, in the light of the moon, the three old men standing in the very same place on the shore, — one shorter than the rest in the middle, with the tall one on the right, and the other on the left hand.

The bishop returned to the ship, climbed up on deck; the anchor was hoisted; the sails were spread, and bellied with wind; the ship moved off, and they sailed a long way.

The bishop came to the stern, and took a seat there, and kept looking at the little island. At first the mendicants were to be seen; then they were hidden from sight, and only the island was visible; and then the island went out of sight, and only the sea was left playing in the moonlight.

The pilgrims lay down to sleep, and all was quiet on deck. But the bishop cared not to sleep: he sat by himself in the stern, looked out over the sea in the direction where the island had faded from sight, and thought about the good mendicants.

He thought of how they had rejoiced in what they had learned in the prayer; and he thanked God because he had led him to the help of the hermits, in teaching them the word of God.

Thus the bishop is sitting, thinking, looking at the sea in the direction where the little island lay hidden. And his eyes are filled with the moonlight, as it dances here and there on the waves. Suddenly he sees something shining and gleaming white in the track of the moon. Is it a bird, a gull, or a

boat-sail gleaming white? The bishop strains his sight.

“A sail-boat,” he thinks, “is chasing us. Yes, it is catching up with us very rapidly. It was far, far off, but now it is close to us. But, after all, it is not much like a sail-boat. Anyway, something is chasing us, and catching up with us.”

And the bishop cannot decide what it is, — a boat, or not a boat; a bird, or not a bird; a fish, or not a fish. It is like a man, but very great; and a man cannot be in the midst of the sea.

The bishop got up, went to the helmsman.

“Look!” says he, “what is that? what is that, brother? what is it?” says the bishop. But by this time, he himself sees. It is the mendicants running over the sea. Their gray beards gleam white, and shine; and they draw near the ship as though it were stationary.

The helmsman looked. He was scared, dropped the tiller, and cried with a loud voice, —

“Lord! the mendicants are running over the sea as though it were dry land!”

The people hear, spring up, all rush aft. All behold the mendicants running, clinging hand in hand. The end ones swing their arms: they signal to come to. All three run over the water as though it were dry land, and do not move their feet.

It was not possible to bring the ship to before the mendicants overtook it, came on board, raised their heads, and said with one voice, —

“We have forgotten, servant of God, we have forgotten what thou didst teach us. While we were learning it, we remembered it; but when we ceased for an hour to repeat it, one word slipped away; we forgot it;

the whole was lost. We remember none of it: teach it to us again."

The bishop crossed himself, bowed low to the mendicants, and said, —

"Acceptable to God is your prayer, ye hermits. It is not for me to teach you. Pray for us, sinners."

And the bishop bowed before the feet of the mendicants. And the mendicants paused, turned about, and went back over the sea. And in the morning, there was something seen shining in the place where the mendicants had come on board.

POPULAR LEGENDS.

1886.

HOW THE LITTLE DEVIL EARNED A CRUST OF BREAD.

A POOR muzhík was going out to plough, though he had eaten no breakfast; and he took with him, from the house, a crust of bread. The muzhík turned over his plough, unfastened the bar, put it under the bush; and then he left his crust of bread, and covered it with his kaftan. The horse was almost dead, and the muzhík was very hungry. The muzhík turned over the plough, unhitched the horse, gave her something to eat, and went to his kaftan to get a bite for himself. The muzhík picked up his kaftan: the crust was gone. He hunted and hunted; turned his kaftan inside out, shook it: there was no crust. The muzhík was amazed. "This is a marvellous thing," he thinks. "I haven't seen any one, and yet some one has carried off my crust."

But a little devil¹ had stolen the crust while the muzhík was ploughing, and had taken his seat on a shrub to listen how the muzhík would swear, and call him, the devil, by name.

The muzhík was disappointed.

"Well, now,² I am not going to die of starvation.

¹ *Chortyónok.*

¹ *Nu da.*

Of course, the one that took it must have needed it. Let him eat it, and be welcome."

And the muzhík went to the well, got a drink of water, sighed, caught his horse, harnessed her, and began to plough again.

The little devil was vexed because he had not led the muzhík into sin, and he went to tell about it to the biggest of the devils. He came to the bigger one, and told him how he had stolen the crust from the muzhík: instead of getting angry, he had said, "Be welcome." The big devil was angry. "Why," says he, "in this affair the muzhík has got the better of you: thou thyself art to blame for it; thou wert not wise. If," says he, "muzhíks, and next to them babas, were to be caught by any such trick, it wouldn't be of any use for us to be in existence. It's no use arranging the thing that way. Go back to the muzhík," says he, "earn the crust. If within three-years' time thou dost not get the better of the muzhík, I'll give thee a bath in holy water."

The little devil was alarmed; ran back to earth, began to cogitate how he might expiate his fault. He thought and thought, and he thought out a scheme.

The little devil turned himself into a good man, and took service with the poor muzhík. And he advised the muzhík to sow corn during a summer-drought, in a swamp. The muzhík listened to the laborer; sowed in the swamp. The other muzhíks had every thing burned up by the sun; but the poor muzhík had dense, high, full-eared corn. The muzhík had enough to live on till the next year; and even then, much corn remained.

That year, the laborer advised the muzhík on the hill-side. And there came a rainy summer. And the

people had sowed their corn, and sweat over it, and the kernels don't fill out; but the muzhík on the hill-side had a quantity of corn ripen. And the muzhík still had much more corn than he needed. And the muzhík knows not what to do with it.

And the laborer advised the muzhík to grind the corn, and distil whiskey. The muzhík distilled the whiskey; began to drink himself, and gave others to drink. The little devil came to the big one, and began to boast that he had earned the crust. The big one went to investigate.

He came to the muzhík's; sees how the muzhík has invited the rich men, — treated them all to whiskey. The khozyáika offers the whiskey to the guests. As soon as any one made a move to depart, she invited him to the table, filled a glass. The muzhík lost his temper, scolded his wife. “Look you,” says he, “you devilish fool! What makes you slop it so? you are wasting such good whiskey, you bandy-legged [goose]!”

The little devil poked the big one with his elbow. “Just look!” says he, and thinks how now he will not lack for crusts.

The khozyáin was berating his wife: he himself began to pass round the whiskey. A poor peasant came in from his work. He came in without being invited; he sat down; he sees the people drinking whiskey. As he was weary, he also wanted to have a taste of the whiskey. He sat and he sat; he kept swallowing his spittle, but the khozyáin does not offer any to him. He only muttered to himself, “Why must we furnish everybody with whiskey?”

This pleased the big devil; but the little devil brags, “Just wait a little, and see what will come of it.”

The rich muzhíks were drinking: the khozyáin also

drank. They all began to fawn on each other, and flatter each other, and to tell rather buttery and scandalous stories. The big devil listened and listened, and he commended him for this. "If," says he, "such flattery can come from this drunkenness, then they will all be in our hands."

"Just wait," says the little devil, "what more will come of it. There they are going to drink one little glass more. Now, like little foxes, they wag their tails at each other; try to deceive each other; but just see how, in a short time, they will be acting like fierce wolves."

The muzhíks drained their glasses once more, and their talk became louder and rougher. In place of buttery speeches, they began to indulge in abuse: they began to get angry, and tweak each other's nose. The khozyáin also took part in the squabble. Even him they beat unmercifully.

The big devil looked on, and praised him for this also. "This," says he, "is good."

But the little devil says, "Just wait! See what more will happen. Let them take a third drink. Now they are as mad as wolves: but give them time, let them drink once more; they will instantly act like hogs."

The muzhíks drank for the third time. They began to get altogether lazy. They themselves have no idea what they stammer or shriek, and they talk all at once. They started to go home, each in his own way, or in groups of two and three. They all fall in the gutter. The khozyáin went to see his guests out: he fell on his nose in a pool; got all smeared; lies there like a boar, — grunts.

This delights the big devil still more. "Well,"¹

¹ *Nu.*

says he, "this scheme of drunkenness was good. Thou hast earned thy crust. Now tell me," says he, "how didst thou think of this scheme? Thou must have put into it some fox's blood, in the first place; that was what made the muzhík keen: and then some wolf's blood; that was what made him fierce as a wolf: and finally, of course, thou didst add swine's blood; that made him like a hog."

"No," says the little devil, "I did nothing of the sort. I only made it out of all that is useless in corn. This wild blood always exists in it, but has no way of getting out when the corn is properly used. At first he did not grudge his lost crust; but, as soon as he began to have a superfluity of corn, he began to scheme how he might amuse himself. And I taught him the fun, — whiskey-drinking. And as soon as he began to distil God's gift for his fun, the blood of the fox and the wolf and the hog began to show itself. Now all he needs, to be always a beast, is to keep on drinking whiskey."

The chief of the devils forgave him the crust of bread, and made him one of his staff.

THE REPENTANT SINNER.

"And he said unto Jesus, Lord, remember me when thou comest into thy kingdom.

And Jesus said unto him, Verily I say unto thee, To day shalt thou be with me in paradise." — LUKE xxiii. 42, 43.

ONCE there lived on earth a man seventy years old, and he had spent his whole life in sin. And this man fell ill, and did not make confession. And when death came, at the last hour he wept, and cried, "Lord, forgive me as thou didst the thief on the cross." He had barely spoken these words, when his soul fled. And

the sinner's soul loved God, and believed in his mercy, and came to the doors of paradise.

And the sinner began to knock, and ask admission to the kingdom of heaven.

And he heard a voice from within the doors, "What manner of man knocketh at the doors of paradise? and what have been the deeds done by this man in his life?"

And the voice of the accuser replied, and rehearsed all the sinful deeds of this man. And he did not mention one good deed.

And the voice from within the doors replied, "Sinners cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven. Get thee hence!"

And the man said, "Lord, I hear thy voice; but I see not thy face, and I know not thy name."

And the voice replied, "I am Peter the Apostle."

And the sinner said, "Have pity upon me, Peter Apostle! Remember human weakness and God's mercy. Wert thou not one of Christ's disciples? and didst thou not hear from his very lips his teaching? and hast thou not seen the example of his life? And remember, when he was in sorrow, and his soul was cast down, and thrice he asked thee to watch with him and pray, and thou didst sleep, for thy eyes were heavy, and thrice he found thee sleeping. So it was with me.

"And remember, also, how thou didst promise him not to deny him till death, and how thrice thou didst deny him when they took him before Caiaphas. So it was with me.

"And remember, also, how the cock crew, and thou didst go out and weep bitterly. So it is with me. It is impossible for thee not to forgive me."

And the voice from within the doors of paradise was silent.

And, after waiting, the sinner began again to knock, and to demand entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

And a second voice was heard within the doors; and it said, "Who is this man, and how did he live on earth?"

And the voice of the accuser again rehearsed all the sinner's evil deeds, and mentioned no good deeds.

And the voice from within the doors replied, "Get thee gone! sinners like thee cannot live with us in paradise."

And the sinner said, "Lord, I hear thy voice; but I see not thy face, and I know not thy name."

And the voice replied, "I am David, the king and prophet."

And the sinner did not despair, did not depart from the doors of paradise, but began to say, "Have mercy upon me, *tsar* David, and remember human weakness and God's mercy. God loved thee, and magnified thee before the people. Thou hadst every thing,—a kingdom and glory and wealth, and wives and children; and yet thou didst see from thy roof a poor man's wife; and sin came upon thee, and thou didst take Uriah's wife, and thou didst kill him by the sword of the Ammonites. Thou, a rich man, didst take the poor man's lamb, and kill the man himself. This was exactly what I did.

"And remember next how thou didst repent, and say, 'I acknowledge my sin, and am grieved because of my transgressions.' So did I also. It is impossible for thee not to forgive me."

And the voice within the doors was silent.

And after waiting a little, yet again the sinner

knocked, and demanded entrance into the kingdom of heaven.

And a third voice was heard from behind the doors; and it said, "Get thee gone! Sinners cannot enter into the kingdom of heaven."

And the sinner replied, "I hear thy voice; but thy face I see not, and thy name I know not."

And the voice replied, "I am John the theologian, the beloved disciple of Christ."

And the sinner rejoiced, and said, "Now I must surely be forgiven: Peter and David would admit me because they know human weakness and God's mercy. But thou admittest me because thou hast much love. Hast thou not written, John the theologian, in thy book, that God is love, and that whoever doth not love knoweth not God? And didst thou not in thy old age constantly say one single word to people, — 'Brothers, love one another'? How, then, canst thou hate me and reject me? Either deny thy saying, or show love unto me, and let me into the kingdom of heaven."

And the gates of paradise opened; and John received the repentant sinner, and let him come into the kingdom of heaven.

A SEED AS BIG AS A HEN'S EGG.

SOME children once found in a cave something resembling a hen's egg, with a groove about the middle, and like a seed. A passer-by saw the children playing with it, bought it for a p'yatak,¹ took it to the city, and gave it to the tsar as a curiosity.

The tsar summoned his wise men, commanded them to decide what kind of a thing it was, — an egg, or a

¹ A copper piece worth five kopeks.

seed? The wise men cogitated, cogitated — they could not give an answer. This thing was lying in the window; and a hen flew in, began to peck at it, and pecked a hole in it; and all knew that it was a seed. The wise men went to the tsar, and said, “This is — a rye-seed.”

The tsar marvelled. He commanded the wise men to find out where and when this seed grew. The wise men cogitated, cogitated: they hunted in books — they found no explanation. They came to the tsar: they say, “We cannot give an answer. In our books, there is nothing written about this: we must ask the muzhíks whether some one of their elders has not heard tell of when and where such a seed is sowed.”

The tsar sent, and commanded an old stárik¹ of a muzhík to be brought before him. They discovered an old stárik, and brought him to the tsar. The green, toothless stárik came in: he walked with difficulty on two crutches.

The tsar showed him the seed: but the stárik was almost blind, as it were; he judges of it, partly by looking at it, partly by fumbling it in his hands.

The tsar began to ask him questions: “Dost thou not know, dyédushka, where such a seed grows? Hast thou never sowed any such kind of grain in thy field? or didst thou never in thy life purchase any such seed?”

The stárik was stupid: he could barely, barely hear, barely, barely understand. He began to make reply: “No,” says he, “I never sowed any such grain in my field, and I never harvested any such, and I never bought any such. When we bought grain, all such seed was small. But,” says he, “you must ask my bátiushka: maybe he’s heard tell where such seed grew.”

¹ Old man.

The tsar sent for the stárik's father, and bade him to be brought before him. The ancient stárik hobbled in on one crutch. The tsar began to show him the seed. The old man could still see with his eyes. He sees very well. The tsar began to question him: —

“Dost thou not know, my dear old man,¹ where this seed can have grown? Hast thou never sowed such grain in thy field? or didst thou never in thy life purchase such seed anywhere?”

Though the stárik was rather hard of hearing, still he heard better than his son. “No,” says he, “I never sowed such seed in my field, and I never harvested any; and I never bought any, because in my day there wasn't any money anywhere; we all lived on grain; and when it was necessary, we went shares with one another. I don't know where such seed is grown. Though our seed was much larger and more productive than that of nowadays, still, I never saw such as this. But I have heard from my bátiushka, that, in his day, corn grew much higher than it does now, and was fuller, and had larger kernels. You must ask him.”

The tsar sent for this old man's father. And they brought the grandfather also. They brought him to the tsar. The stárik came before the tsar without crutches: he walked easily; his eyes were brilliant; he heard well, and spoke understandingly.

The tsar showed the seed to the old man. The old man looked at it. The old man turned it over and over. “It is long,” says he, “since I have seen such a kernel.” The grandfather bit off a piece: he wanted a little more.

“It's the very thing,” says he.

“Tell me, dyédushka, where and when this kind of

¹ *Starichók.*

seed grows? Didst thou never sow such grain in thy field? Or didst thou never in thy life buy any such among people?"

And the stárik said, "Such grain as this used to grow everywhere in my day. On such grain as this, I have lived all my life," says he, "and fed my people. This seed I have sowed and reaped, and had ground."

And the tsar asked, saying, "Tell me, dyédushka, didst thou buy such seed anywhere? or didst thou sow it in thy field?"

The stárik laughed.

"In my time," says he, "no one had ever conceived such a sin as to buy and sell grain. And they did not know about money. There was abundance of bread for all."

And the tsar asked, saying, "Tell me, dyédushka, when didst thou sow such grain, and where was thy field?"

And the grandfather said, "My field was — God's earth. Wherever there was tillage, there was my field. The earth was free. There was no such thing as private ownership. They only laid claim to their work."

"Tell me," says the tsar, — "tell me two things more: one thing, Why did such seed used to spring up, and now doesn't? And the second thing, Why does thy grandson walk on two crutches, and thy son on one crutch, but here thou goest with perfect ease — and thy eyes are bright, and thy teeth strong, and thy speech plain and clear? Tell me, dyédushka, why these things are so?"

And the stárik said, "These two things both came about because men have ceased to live by their own

work — and they have begun to hanker after foreign things. We did not live so in old times: in old times we lived for God. We had our own, and did not lust after others'."

DOES A MAN NEED MUCH LAND?

I.

AN elder sister came from the city, to visit her sister in the country. The elder was a city merchant's wife; the younger, a country muzhík's. The two sisters are tea-drinking and talking. The older sister began to boast — to praise up her life in the city: how she lives in a large and elegant mansion, and has her horses, and how she dresses her children, and what rich things she has to eat and drink, and how she goes to drive, and to walk, and to the theatre.

The younger sister felt affronted, and began to depreciate the life of a merchant, and to set forth the advantages of her own, — that of the peasant.

"I wouldn't exchange my life for yours," says she. "Granted that we live coarsely, still we don't know what fear is. You live more elegantly; but you have to sell a great deal, else you find yourselves entirely sold. And the proverb runs, 'Loss is Gain's bigger brother.' It also happens, to-day you're rich, but to-morrow you're a beggar.¹ But our muzhíks' affairs are more reliable; the muzhík's life is meagre, but long; we may not be rich, but we have enough."

The elder sister began to say, "Enough, — I should think so! like pigs and calves! No fine dresses, no good society. How your khozyáin works! how you live in the dung-hill! and so you will die, and it will be the same thing with your children."

¹ Literally, find thyself under the windows.

“Indeed,”¹ says the younger, “our affairs are all right. We live well. We truckle to no one, we stand in fear of no one. But you in the city all live in the midst of temptations: to-day it’s all right; but to-morrow up comes some improper person, I fear, to tempt you, and tempts your *khozyáin* either to cards, or to wine, or to women. And every thing goes to ruin. Isn’t it so?”

Pakhom, the *khozyáin*, was listening on the oven, as the *babas* disputed.

“That’s true,” says he, “the veritable truth.” As our brother from childhood had been turning up the *mátiushka* earth, so folly [stays in] his head, and does not depart. His one trouble is, — so little land. “If I had only as much land as I wanted, I shouldn’t be afraid of any one — even of the Devil.”

The *babas* drank their tea, talked about clothes, put away the dishes, went to bed.

But the Devil was sitting behind the oven: he heard every thing. He was delighted because the peasant-woman induced her husband to boast with her: he had boasted, that, if he had land enough, the Devil could not get him!

“All right,” he thinks: “thou and I’ll have to fight it out. I will give thee a lot of land. I’ll get thee through the land.”

II.

There lived next the *muzhíks* a petty land-owner.² She had one hundred and twenty *desyátins*³ of land. And she used to live peaceably with the *muzhíks* — did not affront them. But a retired soldier engaged himself as her overseer,⁴ and he began to persecute the

¹ *A chto-zh.*

² *Báruinka*, gracious lady.

³ Three hundred and twenty-four acres. ⁴ *Prikáshchík.*

muzhíks with fines. No matter how careful Pakhom was, either his horse would trample down the oats, or his cow would wander into the garden, or his calves would get into the meadows: there was a fine for every thing.

Pakhom pays the fines, and scolds and beats the domestics. And during the summer Pakhom falls into many a sin on account of this prikáshchik. And still he was glad that he had cattle in his dvor: though he was hard up for fodder, he was in no apprehension.

During the winter, the rumor spread that the baruina was going to sell her land, and her dvornik had made arrangements to buy it at a great price.

The muzhíks heard it, and groaned.

“Now,” think they, “the land will belong to the dvornik: he will make us pay worse fines than the baruina did. It is impossible for us to live without this land. All of us around here live on it.”

The muzhíks went to the baruina in a body, began to beg her not to sell the land to the dvornik, but to let them have it. They promised to pay a higher price.

The baruina agreed. The muzhíks tried to arrange as a *mir*, to buy all the land. Once, twice, they collected in meeting, but there was a hitch in affairs. The Devil puts them at variance: they are utterly unable to come to any agreement.

And the muzhíks determined to purchase the land individually, according to the ability of each. And the baruina agreed to this also.

Pakhom heard that a neighbor had bought twenty desyátins¹ from the baruina, and that she had given him a year in which to pay her half of the money. Pakhom was envious. “They will buy all the land,”

¹ Fifty-four acres.

he says to himself, "and I shall be behind them." He began to reason with his wife.

"The people are buying it up," says he. "We must buy ten desyátins too. It's impossible to live this way: the prikáshchik was eating us up with fines."

They cogitated how to buy it. They had laid up a hundred rubles; then they sold a colt, and half their bees; and they apprenticed their son, and they got some more from their sister-in-law; and thus they collected half of the money.

Pakhom gathered up the money, selected fifteen desyátins of land with wood-land on it, and went to the baruina to make the purchase. He bought fifteen desyátins, struck a bargain, and paid down the earnest-money. They went to the city, ratified the purchase; he paid down half of the money; the remainder he binds himself to pay in two years.

And Pakhom now had his land. Pakhom took seed, and sowed the land that he had bought. In a single year he paid up the debt to the baruina and his brother-in-law. And Pakhom became a proprietor.¹ He ploughed all his land, and sowed it; he made hay on his own land; he cut stakes on his own land, and on his own land he pastured cattle. Pakhom rides out over his wide fields to plough, or he takes note of his crops, or he gazes at his meadows. And yet he is not happy. The grass seems to him to be wasted, and the flowers flowering in it seem entirely different. Formerly he used to ride over this land, — the land as land; but now the land began to be absolutely peculiar.

¹ Pomyéshchik.

III.

Thus lives Pakhom, and rejoices. All would have been good, only the muzhíks began to trespass on his grain and meadows. He begged them to refrain: they do not stop it. Now the cow-boys let the cows into the meadow: now the horses escape from the night-guard into his corn-field.

And Pakhom drove them out, and forgave it, and never went to law: then he got tired of it, and tried going to the volost-court.¹ And he knows that the muzhíks do it from carelessness, and not from malice; but he thinks, "It is impossible to overlook it, otherwise they'll always be pasturing their cattle there. We must teach them a lesson."

He thus taught them in court once; he taught them twice: first one was fined, then another. The muzhíks, Pakhom's neighbors, began to harbor spite against him. Once more they began to trespass, and this time on purpose. Some one got into his wood-land by night. They cut down a dozen of his lindens for basts. Pakhom went to his grove, saw [what had been done], turns pale. Some one had been there: the linden-branches lie scattered about, the stumps stand out. Out of the clump he had cut down the last, the rascal had cleaned it all out: only one was left standing.

Pakhom fell into a rage. "Akh!" thinks he, "if I only knew who did that, I would give him a kneading."

He thought, he thought, "Who [could it be]?"

"No one more likely," thinks he, "than Semyón."

He went to Semka's dvor; he found nothing: they only exchanged some quarrelsome words. And Pakhom felt still more certain that Semyón had done it.

¹ The volost is a district including several villages.

He entered a complaint. They took it into court. They had suit after suit. The muzhík was acquitted: no proof. Pakhom was still more affronted: he got incensed at the *starshiná* and at the judges.

“You,” says he, “are on the side of a pack of thieves. If you were decent men, you wouldn’t acquit thieves.”

Pakhom quarrelled, both with the judges and with his neighbors. They began even to threaten him with the “red rooster.”¹ Pakhom had come to live on a broader scale on his farm, but with more constraint in the commune.

And about this time the rumor spread, that the people were going to new places. And Pakhom thinks, “There is no reason for *me* to go from my land; but if any of our [neighbors] should go, it would enable me to branch out more. I would take their land for myself; I would get it around here: life would be much better, for now it is too confined.”

Pakhom is sitting at home one time: a wandering muzhík comes along. They let the muzhík have a night’s lodging; they give him something to eat; they enter into conversation: “Whither, please, is God taking you?”

The muzhík says that he is on his way down from the Volga, where he had been at work. The muzhík relates, a word at a time, how the people had gone colonizing there. He relates how they settled there, made a community, and gave each *soul* ten desyátins of land. “But the land is such,” says he, “that they sowed rye. Such stalks — the horses never saw the like — so thick! five handfuls made a sheaf. One muzhík,” says he, “was perfectly poor — came with

¹ The picturesque Russian metaphor for a conflagration.

his hands alone — and now he has six horses and two cows.”

Pakhom's heart burned within him: he thinks, “Why remain here in straitened circumstances, when it is possible to live well? I will sell my land and dvor here; then with the money that I get, I will start anew, and have a complete establishment. But here in these narrow quarters — it's a sin. Only I must find out for myself.”

He packed up for a year; started. From Samara he sailed down the Volga in a steamboat, then he went on foot four hundred versts. He reached the place. It was just so. The muzhíks live on a generous scale,¹ on farms of ten desyátins each, and they are glad of accessions to their society. “And if any one has a little money, you can buy for three rubles as much of the very best land as you wish, besides his allotment. You can buy just as much as you wish.”

Pakhom made his investigations; in the autumn returned home, began to sell out every thing. He sold his land to advantage, sold his dvor, sold all his cattle, withdrew his name from the Community, waited till spring, and moved with his family to the new place.

IV.

Pakhom came with his family to the new place, enrolled himself in a large village. He treated the elders,² arranged all the papers. Pakhom was accepted: he was allotted, as for five persons, fifty desyátins³ of the land to be distributed, located in different fields, all except the pasturage. Pakhom settled down. He got cattle. He had three times as much land as

¹ *Prostórno*, roomily.

² *Stárikí*.

³ One hundred and thirty-five acres.

he had had before, and the land was fertile. Life was tenfold better than what it had been in the old time; had all the arable land and fodder that he needed. Keep as many cattle as you like.

At first, while he was getting settled, and putting his house in order, Pakhom was well pleased, got to feel at home; then it seemed rather narrow quarters.

The first year Pakhom sowed wheat on one allotment: it came up well. He was anxious to sow wheat; but he had little land for the purpose, and such as he has is of no good. Wheat is sowed there on grass or fallow land. They sow it one year, two years, and let it lie fallow till the grass comes up again. And in such land, there are many sportsmen; but they don't bag game on all.

Quarrels also arose; one was richer than another: they all wanted to sow, but the poorer ones had to resort to merchants for loans.

Pakhom was anxious to sow as much as possible. The next year he went to a merchant: he hired land for a year. He sowed more: it came up well. It was a long way from the village: he had to go fifteen versts. He sees how muzhík-merchants live in fine mansions, and are rich. "That's the thing," thinks Pakhom. "If only I could buy the land, then I would have a mansion. It would all be in one piece."

And Pakhom began to cogitate how he might get a perpetual title.

Thus Pakhom lived three years. He hired land, sowed wheat. The years were good ones, and the wheat grew well, and a store of money was laid away.

As life passed, it became every year irksome to Pakhom to buy land with the men, to waste time over it. Where an estate is pretty good, the muzhíks

instantly fly to it, divide it all up. He was always too late to buy cheap, and he had nothing to sow on. But in the third year, he bought, on shares with a merchant, a pasturage of the muzhíks; and they had already ploughed it. The muzhíks had been at law about it, and so the work was lost. "If I owned the land," he thinks, "I should not truckle to any one; and it would not be a sin."

And Pakhom began to inquire where he might buy land in perpetuity. And he struck upon a muzhík. The muzhík had for sale five hundred desyátins;¹ and, as he was anxious to get rid of it, he sells at a bargain.

Pakhom began to dicker with him. He argues, argues. He agrees to sell for fifteen hundred rubles, half the money on mortgage. They had already come to an agreement, when a pedler happens along, and asks Pakhom to let him have a little something to eat.

They drank a cup of tea: they entered into conversation.

The pedler relates that he is on his way from the distant Bashkirs. "There," says he, "I bought of the Bashkirs fifteen hundred desyátins of land; and I had to pay only a thousand rubles."

Pakhom began to ask questions. The pedler told him [the whole story].

"All I did," says he, "was to satisfy the old men. I distributed some dressing-gowns and carpets, worth a hundred rubles, besides a chest of tea; and I gave a little wine to those who drank. And I got it for twenty kopeks a desyátin." — He exhibited the title-deed. — "The land," says he, "is by a little river, and the steppe is all covered with grass."

¹ Thirteen hundred and fifty acres.

Pakhom began to ask more questions, — How and who?

“The land,” says the merchant, — “you wouldn’t go round it in a year, — it’s all Bashkirian. And the people are as stupid as rams. You could almost get it for nothing.”

“Now,” thinks Pakhom, “why should I spend my thousand rubles for five hundred desyátins, and hang a burden of debt around my neck beside? But there, how much I could get for a thousand rubles!”

V.

Pakhom asked how he went; and, as soon as he said good-by to the pedler, he determined to go. He left his house in his wife’s care, took his man, and started. When they reached the city, he bought a chest of tea, gifts, wine, just as the merchant said. They travelled, travelled: they travelled five hundred versts¹ away. On the seventh day they came to the range of the Bashkirs. It was all just as the merchant had said. They all live in the steppe, along a little river, in felt-covered kibítki. They themselves do not plough: they eat no bread. And their cattle graze along the steppe, and their horses are in droves. Behind the kibítki the colts are tied, and twice a day they bring the mares to them. They milk the mares, and make kumýs out of the milk. The babas churn the kumýs, and make cheese; and the muzhíks only know how to drink kumýs and tea, to eat mutton, and play on the *dúdkí*.² All are polite, jolly: they keep festival all summer. The people are very dark, and can’t speak Russian, but are affable.

As soon as the Bashkirs saw Pakhom, they came

¹ Three hundred and thirty miles.

² Reed-pipes.

forth from their kibítki: they surrounded their guest. The interpreter made his acquaintance. Pakhom told him that he had come to see about land. The Bashkirs were delighted, took him to a fine kibítka, spread rugs, gave him a down-cushion to sit on, sat round him, began to treat him to tea, kumýs. They slaughtered a ram, and gave him mutton.

Pakhom fetched from his tarantás his gifts, began to distribute them among the Bashkirs.

Pakhom gave the Bashkirs his gifts, and divided the tea. The Bashkirs were overjoyed. They jabbered, jabbered together, then commanded the interpreter to speak.

“They bid me tell thee,” says the interpreter, “that they have taken a fancy to thee; and that we have a custom of doing every thing possible to gratify a guest, and repay him for his gifts. Thou hast given to us. Now tell what thou wishest among our possessions, in order that we may give it thee.”

“Above all else that you have,” says Pakhom, “I would like some of your land. In my country,” says he, “there is a scarcity of land. The land is cultivated to death. But you have much land, and good land. I never saw the like.”

The interpreter translated for him. The Bashkirs talked, talked. Pakhom understands not what they say; but he sees that they are good-natured, that they are talking at the top of their voices, laughing. Then they relapsed into silence, look at Pakhom; and the interpreter says, —

“They bid me tell thee, that, in return for thy kindness, they are happy to give thee as much land as thou wishest. Only show us thy hand — it shall be thine.”

They still were talking, and began to dispute angrily.

And Pakhom asked what they were quarrelling about. And the interpreter replied, "Some say that they ought to ask the starshiná, and that without his consent it is impossible. And others say that it can be done without the chief."

VI.

The Bashkirs are quarrelling : suddenly a man comes in a fox-skin shapka.

They become silent, and all stood up. And the interpreter says, "This is the starshiná himself."

Instantly Pakhom got out his best dressing-gown, and gave it to the starshiná, together with five pounds of tea.

The starshiná accepted it, and sat down in the chief place. And immediately the Bashkirs began to tell him all about it.

The starshiná listened, listened ; nodded his head, in sign of silence for all, and began to speak to Pakhom in Russian.¹

"Well," says he, "it can be done. Take it when you please. Plenty of land."

"I shall get as much as I want," thinks Pakhom. "I must secure it right away, else they'll say it's mine, and then take it away."

"I thank you," says he, "for your kind words. I have seen that you have much land, and I need not very much. Only you must let me know what shall be mine. As soon as possible you must have it measured off and secured to me. And it must be as real estate. You good people make the grant, but the time may come when your children will take it away."

"You are right," says the starshiná : "we must secure it."

¹ *Po-Rússki.*

Pakhom began to speak: "I have heard that a merchant was here with you. You also gave him land, and struck a bargain. I should like to do the same."

The starshiná understood perfectly.

"This can all be done," says he. "We have a clerk; and we will go to the city, and will all put on our seals."

"And the price will be, how much?" asks Pakhom.

"We have one price: one thousand rubles¹ a *d'yén*."

Pakhom did not understand. "What is this measure, the *d'yén*? How many desyátins are there in it?"

"We can't reckon it," says he. "But we sell it by the *d'yén*:² all that you can go round in a day, — that is yours; and the price of a *d'yén* is one thousand rubles."

Pakhom was astonished: "Look here," says he. "What I can go round in a day is a good deal of land!"

The starshiná laughed. "It's all yours," says he. "Only one stipulation: if you don't come back within the day to the place from which you start, your money is lost."

"But how," says Pakhom, "can I mark when I am going?"

"Well, we'll stand on the place where it pleases you; we will be standing there: and you shall go and draw the circle, and take with you a hoe, and make a mark wherever you please; at the edges dig a little hole, put some turf in it: and we will go over it, from hole to hole, with the plough. Take whatever you wish for a circuit, only at sunset you must be back at that place from which you set out. All that you encircle is yours."

¹ Eight hundred and sixty dollars.

² Day.

Pakhom was delighted. They agreed to go out all together. They talked it over, drank still more kumýs, ate the mutton, drank some more tea. It approached nightfall. The Bashkirs arranged for Pakhom to sleep in a down-bed, and they separated. They agreed to come together at sunrise the next day, at the sound of the gun-shot.

VII.

Pakhom lies in his down-bed ; and there is no sleeping for him, all on account of thinking of his land.

“ I will go over the whole prairie. I can go over fifty versts in one day. A day now is worth a year. There'll be a good deal of land in a circle of fifty versts. I will sell off the worst parts, or let it to the muzhíks ; and I will pick out what I like, and I will settle on it. I will have a two-ox plough, and I will take two men as laborers. I will plough in fifty desyátins, and I will pasture my cattle on the rest.”

Pakhom did not get a wink of sleep all night. Just before dawn he dropped into a doze. He seems to see himself lying in this very same kibítka, and listening to somebody cackling outside. And it seemed to him that he wanted to see what was the fun ; and he got up, went out of the kibítka, and lo ! that very same Bashkirian starshiná is sitting in front of the kibítka, and is holding his sides, and roaring and cackling about something.

He went out, and asked, “ What are you laughing at ? ” And he sees that it is no longer the starshiná of the Bashkirs, but the pedler who had come to him and told him about the land.

And as soon as he saw that it was the pedler, he asked, “ Have you been here long ? ”

And then it was no longer the pedler, but that muzhík who had come down the Volga so long ago.

And Pakhom sees that it isn't the muzhík either, but the Devil himself, with horns and hoofs, sitting and laughing; and before him is lying a man barefooted, in shirt and drawers. And Pakhom looked more attentively to find out who the man was.

And he sees that the dead man is none other than — himself! Pakhom was frightened, and woke up.

He woke up.

“What was I dreaming about?” he asks himself. He looks around, he peers out of the closed door: it was already getting light, day was beginning to dawn.

“The people must be getting up,” he thinks: “it's time to start.”

Pakhom arose, aroused his man in the tarantás, told him to harness up, and then went to arouse the Bashkirs.

“Time,” says he, “to go out on the steppe, to measure it off.”

The Bashkirs got up, all collected: and the starshiná came forth. The Bashkirs again began by drinking kumýs: they wished Pakhom to treat them to tea, but he was not inclined to delay.

“If we go — time to go now,” says he.

VIII.

The Bashkirs made ready; some were on horseback, some in carts;¹ they started. And Pakhom rode with his man in their *tarantásika*, and took with him a hoe. They rode out into the steppe: the dawn was beginning. They reached a mound — *shikhan* in

¹ *Tarantásui.*

Bashkirian. They descended from their carts, dismounted from their horses, collected in a crowd. The starshiná came to Pakhom, pointed with his hand.

“Here,” says he, “all is ours, as far as you can see. Take what you desire.”

Pakhom’s eyes burn. The whole region is grassy, level as the palm of your hand, black as a pot; and where there was a hollow, it was filled with grass as high as one’s breast.

The starshiná took off his fox-skin cap,¹ laid it on the ground.

“Here,” says he, “is the spot. Start from here, come back here. All that you go round shall be yours.”

Pakhom took out his money, laid it in the shapka; took off his kaftan, stood in his blouse² alone; girded himself around the belly with his sash, pulled it tighter; hung round his neck a little bag with bread, put a little flask with water in his belt, tightened his leg-wrappers, took the hoe from his man, got ready to start.

He pondered and pondered on which side to take it: it was good everywhere.

He thinks, “It’s all one: I will go toward the sunrise.”

He turned his face toward the sun; starts, waits till it rises above the horizon.

He thinks, “I must not waste any time. It’s cool, and easier to walk.”

As soon as the sunlight gushed out over the horizon, he threw his hoe over his shoulder, and started out on the steppe.

Pakhom proceeded neither slow nor fast. He went

¹ Shapka.

² *Poddyóvka*, a sort of half kaftan.

about a verst:¹ he halted, he dug a little pit, piled the turf in it, so that it might attract attention.

He went farther. As he went on, he quickened his pace. As he kept going on, he dug other little pits.

Pakhom looked around. The *shikhan* was still in sight in the sun, and the people are standing on it: the tires on the tarantás-wheels glisten. Pakhom conjectures that he has been five versts. He began to get warm: he took off his blouse, threw it over his shoulder, went on. It grew hot. He looked at the sun.² It was already breakfast-time.

“One stage over,” thinks Pakhom, “and four of them make a day: it’s too early to turn round. Only let me take off my boots.”

He sat down: he took off his boots, put them in his belt, went on. It was easy walking. He thinks, “Let me go five versts farther, then I am going to swing round to the left. This place is very good: it’s too bad to give it up.”

The farther he went, the better it became. He still went straight ahead. He looked round—the *shikhan* was now scarcely visible; and the people, like little ants, make a black spot on it; and something barely glistens.

“Well,” thinks Pakhom, “I have enough in this direction: I must turn round. I am sweaty enough.—I should like a drink.”

He halted, dug a pit, filled it with turf, unfastened his flask, took a drink, and turned sharply to the left. He went—went—the grass was deep, and it was hot.

Pakhom began to feel weary; he looked at the sun; he sees that it is dinner-time.

“Well,” thinks he, “I must have a rest.”

¹ Thirty-five hundred feet.

² Russian, *sólnuishko*, little sun.

Pakhom halted — sat down. He ate his bread and water, but did not try to lie down. He thinks, “If you lie down, you may fall asleep.”

He sat a little while; he started on again; he began to walk easily; his strength was renewed by his meal, but now it began to grow very hot — yes, and the sun began to decline; but he still keeps going. He thinks, “Endure it for an hour, and you have an age to live.”

He still went on, and it made a long distance in this direction. He still meant to turn to the left, but lo! the hollow still continued wet. It was a pity to throw it away. He thinks, “This day has been a good one.”

He still continues straight ahead. He took in the hollow — dug his pit at the hollow — turned the second corner.

Pakhom gazed back in the direction of the shikhan. The heat had caused a haziness, the atmosphere was full of lines; and through the mistiness the people on the shikhan could scarcely be seen.

“Well,” thinks Pakhom, “I have taken long sides: — I must make this one shorter.”

He started on the third side — he began to hasten his pace. He looked at the sun — it was already far down the west, and on the third side he had only gone two versts; and back to the starting-point, there were fifteen versts.

“No,” he thinks, “even though the estate should be uneven, I must hurry back in a straight line. It wouldn't do to take too much: besides, I have already a good deal of land.”

Pakhom dug his little pit in all haste, and headed straight for the shikhan.

IX.

Pakhom goes straight to the shikhan, and now it began to be heavy work for him. He was bathed in sweat; and his bare legs were cut and torn, and began to fail under him. He feels a desire to rest, but it is impossible: he must not stop till sunset. The sun does not delay, but sinks lower and sinks lower.

“Akh!” he says to himself, “can I have made a blunder? can I have taken too much? why don’t you hurry along faster?”

He gazes at the shikhan — it gleams in the sun: it is a long distance yet to the place, and the sun is now not far from the horizon.

Still Pakhom hurries on: it is hard for him, but always he quickens his pace, quickens his pace. He walks, walks — it is still always far off. He took to the double-quick. He threw away his blouse, his boots, his flask. He threw away his shapka, but he helps himself along with his hoe.

“Akh!” he thinks, “I was too greedy; I have ruined the whole business; I shall not get there before sunset.”

And his breath began to fail him all the worse because of his apprehension. Pakhom runs — his shirt and drawers cling to his body by reason of sweat — his mouth is parched. In his breast a pair of blacksmith’s bellows, as it were, are working; and in his heart a mill is beating, and his legs almost break down under him.

It became painful for Pakhom. He thinks, “Suppose I should die from the strain?”

He is afraid of dropping dead, and yet he cannot stop. “I have only been running, but if I were to

stop now, they would call me a fool." He ran, ran. He is now getting near, and he hears the Bashkirs shouting — screaming at him ; and from their screams, his heart pains him more than ever.

Pakhom runs on with the last of his strength, and the sun still hovers on the horizon's edge ; it went into the haze : there was a great glow, red as blood. Now — now it is setting ! The sun is nearly set, but still he is not far from the place. Pakhom still sees it ; and the people on the shikhan gesticulate to him, urge him on. He sees the fox-skin shapka on the ground, even sees the money in it. And he sees the starshiná sitting on the ground, his hands akimbo on his belly. And Pakhom remembered his dream. "Much land," he thinks, "but perhaps God has not willed me to live on it. Ohh ! I have ruined myself," he thinks. "I shall not get it."

Pakhom looked at the sun, but the sun had gone down under the earth : its body was already hidden, and its last segment disappears under the horizon.

Pakhom exerted his last energies, threw himself forward with his body : his legs just kept him from falling.

Just as Pakhom reached the shikhan, it suddenly grew dark. He saw that the sun had gone. Pakhom groaned.

"I have lost my labor," he thinks. He was just about to stop ; but as he still hears the Bashkirs all screaming, he remembered that he was below them, and therefore the sun seemed to have set, although it had not set to those on top of the shikhan. Pakhom took a breath, ran up the shikhan. It was still light on the mound. Pakhom ran, sees the shapka. In front of the shapka sits the chief, and laughs, holding his sides.

Pakhom remembered his dream, groaned “*Akh!*” his legs gave way under him, and he fell forward, reaching out his arms toward the shapka.

“*Ai!* brave lad!” shouted the starshiná. “You have got a good piece of land.”

Pakhom’s man ran to him, attempted to help him to his feet; but from his mouth pours a stream of blood, and he lies dead.

The Bashkirs clucked with their tongues, expressing their sorrow.

Pakhom’s *rabótnik* took the hoe, dug a grave for him, made it just long enough, from head to foot, — three arshíns,¹ — and buried him.

¹ About seven feet.

THE GODSON.

“Ye have heard that it hath been said, An eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth: but I say unto you, That ye resist not evil: but whosoever shall smite thee on thy right cheek, turn to him the other also.” — *MATT. v. 38, 39.*

“Vengeance is mine; I will repay.” — *ROM. xii. 19.*

I.

A SON was born to a poor muzhík. The muzhík was glad; went to invite a neighbor to be one of the godparents. The neighbor declined. People don't incline to stand as godparents to a poor muzhík. The poor muzhík went to another: this one also declined.

He went through all the village: no one will stand as godparent. The muzhík went to the next village. And a passer-by happened to meet him as he was going. The passer-by stopped.

“Good-morning,” says he, “muzhichók: ¹ whither doth God lead you?”

“The Lord,” says the muzhík, “has given me a little child, as a care during infancy, as a consolation for old age, and to pray for my soul when I am dead. But, because I am poor, no one in our village will stand as godparent. I am trying to find a godfather.”

And the passer-by says, “Let me stand as one of the godparents.”

¹ *Little muzhik.*

The muzhík was glad; thanked the passer-by, and says, "Whom now to get for godmother?"

"Well, for godmother," says the passer-by, "invite the store-keeper's daughter. Go into town; on the market-place is a stone house with shops; as you go into the house, ask the merchant to let his daughter be godmother."

The muzhík had some misgivings.

"How, godfather elect," says he, "can I go to a merchant, a rich man? He will scorn me: he won't let his daughter go."

"That's not for you to worry about. Go ask him. Be ready to-morrow morning. I will come to the christening."

The poor muzhík returned home; went to the city, to the merchant's. He reined up his horse in the dvor. The merchant himself comes out.

"What is needed?" says he.

"Look here, lord merchant.¹ The Lord has given me a little child, as a care during infancy, as a consolation for old age, and to pray for my soul when I am dead. Pray, let your daughter be his godmother."

"But when is the christening?"

"To-morrow morning."

"Well; very good. God be with you! she shall come to-morrow to the mass."

On the next day the godmother came; the godfather also came: they christened the child. As soon as they had christened the child, the godfather went off, and they knew not who he was. And they did not see him from that time forth.

¹ *Da vot gospodin kupyéts.*

II.

THE lad began to grow, to the delight of his parents ; and he was strong and industrious, and intelligent and gentle. He reached the age of ten. His parents had him taught to read and write. What others took five years to learn, this lad learned in one year. And there was nothing left for him to learn.

There came one Holy Week. The lad went to his godmother, gave her the usual Easter salutation,¹ returned home, and asks, —

“ Bātiushka and mátushka,² where does my godfather live? I should like to go to him, to give him Easter greetings.”

And the father says to him, “ We know not, my dear little son, where thy godfather lives. We ourselves are sorry about it. We have not seen him since the day when he was at thy christening. And we have not heard of him, and we know not where he lives : we know not whether he is alive.”

The son bowed low to his father, to his mother.

“ Let me go, bātiushka and mátushka, and find my godfather. I wish to go to him and exchange Easter greetings.”

The father and mother let their son go. And the boy set forth to find his godfather.

¹ A kiss, with the words, *Khristos voskrés*. This custom is universal among the peasantry. The person saluted replies, *Voéstinu voskrés* — Risen indeed.

² Little father and mother.

III.

THE lad set forth from home, and walked along the highway. He walked half a day: a passer-by met him. The passer-by halted. "Good-afternoon, lad," says he: "whither does God lead thee?"

And the boy replied, "I went," says he, "to my dear godmother,¹ to give her Easter greetings. I went back home. I asked my father and mother where my godfather lived: I wished to exchange Easter greetings with him. My father and mother said, 'We know not, little son, where thy godfather lives. From the day when he was at thy christening, he has been gone from us; and we know nothing about him, and we know not whether he is alive.' And I had a desire to see my godfather, and so I am on my way to find him."

And the passer-by said, "I am thy godfather."

The *málchik* was delighted, exchanged Easter greetings with his godfather.

"And where," says he, "dear godfather,² art thou preparing to go now? If in our direction, then come to our house; but if to thy own house, then I will go with thee."

And the godfather said, —

"I have not time now to go to thy house: I have business in the villages. But I shall be at home tomorrow. Then come to me."

But how, *bátiushka*, shall I get to thee?"

¹ *Mátushka krétnaya.*

² *Bátiushka krétnai.*

“Well, then, go always toward the sunrise, always straight ahead. Thou wilt reach a forest: thou wilt see in the midst of the forest a clearing. Sit down in this clearing, rest, and notice what there may be there. Thou wilt come through the forest: thou wilt see a garden, and in the garden a palace with a golden roof. That is my house. Go up to the gates. I myself will meet thee there.” Thus said the godfather, and disappeared from his godson’s eyes.

IV.

THE lad went as his godfather had bidden him. He went, went: he reaches the forest. He walked into the clearing, and sees in the middle of the meadow a pine-tree, and on the pine-tree a rope fastened to a branch, and on the rope an oaken log weighing three puds.¹ And under the log is a trough with honey. While the boy is pondering why the honey is put there, and why the log is hung, a crackling is heard in the forest, and he sees some bears coming, — a she-bear in advance, behind her a yearling, and then three young cubs. The she-bear stretched out her nose, and marched straight for the trough, and the young bears after her. The she-bear thrust her snout into the honey. She called her cubs: the cubs gambolled up to her, pressed up to the trough. The log swung off a little, came back, jostled the cubs. The she-bear saw it, pushed the log with her paw. The log swung off a little farther, again came back, struck in the midst of the cubs, one on the back, one on the head.

The cubs began to whine, jumped away. The she-bear growled, clutched the log with both paws above her head, pushed it away from her. The log flew high. The yearling bounded up to the trough, thrust his snout into the honey, munches; and the others began to come up again. They had not time to get there, when the log returned, struck the yearling in the head, killed him with the blow.

¹ 108.33 pounds.

The she-bear growled more fiercely than before, clutches the log, and pushes it up with all her might. The log flew higher than the branch: even the rope slackened. The she-bear went to the trough, and all the cubs behind her. The log flew, flew up; stopped, fell back. The lower it falls, the swifter it gets. It gets very swift: it flew back toward the she-bear. It strikes her a tremendous blow on the pate. The she-bear rolled over, stretched out her legs, and breathed her last. The cubs ran away.

V.

THE lad was amazed, and went farther. He comes to a great garden, and in the garden a lofty palace with golden roof. And at the gate stands the godfather; smiles. The godfather greeted his godson, led him through the gate, and brought him into the garden. Never even in dreams had the *málchik* dreamed of such beauty and bliss as there were in this garden.

The godfather led the *málchik* into the palace. The palace was still better. The godfather led the *málchik* through all the apartments. Each was better than the other, each more festive than the other; and he led him to a sealed door.

“Seest thou this door?” says he. “There is no key to it, only a seal. It can be opened, but I forbid thee. Live and roam wherever thou pleasest, and as thou pleasest. Enjoy all these pleasures: only one thing is forbidden thee. Enter not this door. But, if thou shouldst enter, then remember what thou sawest in the forest.”

The godfather said this, and went. The godson was left alone, and began to live. And it was so festive and joyful, that it seemed to him that he had lived there only three hours, whereas he lived there thirty years.

And after thirty years had passed, the godson¹ came to the sealed door, and began to ponder.

¹ *Krésnik*.

“Why did my godfather forbid me to go into this chamber? Let me go, and see what is there.”

He gave the door a push; the seals fell off; the door opened. The *kréstnik* entered, and sees an apartment, larger than the rest, and finer than the rest; and in the midst of the apartment stands a golden throne.

The *kréstnik* walked, walked through the apartment, and came to the throne, mounted the steps, and sat down. He sat down, and he sees a sceptre lying by the throne.

The *kréstnik* took the sceptre into his hands. As soon as he took the sceptre into his hands, instantly all the four walls of the apartment fell away. The *kréstnik* gazed around him, and sees the whole world, and all that men are doing in the world.

He looked straight ahead: he sees the sea, and ships sailing on it. He looked toward the right: he sees foreign, non-Christian nations living. He looked toward the left side: there live Christians, but not Russians. He looked toward the fourth side: there live our Russians.

“Now,” says he, “let me look, and see what is doing at home — if the grain is growing well.”

He looked toward his own field, sees the sheaves standing. He began to count the sheaves [to see] whether there would be much grain; and he sees a *telyéga* driving into the field, and a *muzhík* sitting in it.

The *kréstnik* thought that it was his sire come by night to gather his sheaves. He looks: it is the thief, *Vasíli Kudriáshof*, coming. He went to the sheaves, began to lay hands upon them. The *kréstnik* was provoked. He cried, “*Bátiuskka*, they are stealing sheaves in the field!”

His father woke in the night. "I dreamed," says he, "that they were stealing sheaves. I am going to see." He mounted his horse: he rode off.

He comes to the field; he sees Vasíli; he shouted to the muzhíks. Vasíli was beaten. They took him, carried him off to jail.

The kréstnik looked at the city where his godmother used to live. He sees that she is married to a merchant. And she is in bed, asleep; but her husband is up, has gone to his mistress. The kréstnik shouted to the merchant's wife,¹ "Get up! thy husband is engaged in bad business."

The godmother jumped out of bed, dressed herself, found where her husband was, upbraided him, beat the mistress, and drove her husband from her.

Once more the kréstnik looked toward his mother, and sees that she is lying down in the izbá, and a robber is sneaking in, and begins to break open the chests.

His mother awoke, and screamed. The robber noticed it, seized an axe, brandished it over the mother, was about to kill her.

The kréstnik could not restrain himself, lets fly the sceptre at the robber, strikes him straight in the temple, killed him on the spot.

¹ *Kupchikha.*

VI.

THE instant the kréstnik killed the robber, the walls closed again, the apartment became what it was.

The door opened, the godfather entered. The godfather came to his son, took him by the hand, drew him from the throne, and says, —

“Thou hast not obeyed my command: one evil deed thou hast done, — thou openedst the sealed door; a second evil deed thou hast done, — thou hast mounted the throne, and taken my sceptre into thy hand; a third evil deed thou hast done, — thou hast added much to the wickedness in the world. If thou hadst sat there an hour longer, thou wouldst have ruined half of the people.”

And again the godfather led his son to the throne, took the sceptre in his hands. And again the walls were removed, and all things became visible.

And the godfather said, —

“Look now at what thou hast done to thy father. Vasíli has now been in jail a year; he has learned all the evil that there is; he has become perfectly desperate. Look! now he has stolen two of thy father’s horses, and thou seest how he sets fire to the dvor. This is what thou hast done to thy father.”

As soon as the kréstnik saw that his father’s house was on fire, his godfather shut it from him, commanded him to look on the other side.

“Here,” says he, “it has been a year since thy

godmother's husband deserted his wife ; he gads about with others, all astray : and she, out of grief, has taken to drink ; and his former mistress has gone wholly to the bad. This is what thou hast done to thy godmother."

The godfather also hid this, pointed to his house. And he saw his mother : she is weeping over her sins ; she repents, says, " Better had it been for the robber to have killed me, for then I should not have fallen into such sins."

" This is what thou hast done to thy mother."

The godfather hid this also, and pointed down. And the kréstnik saw the robber : two guards hold the robber before the prison.

And the godfather said, " This man has taken nine lives. He ought himself to have atoned for his sins. But thou hast killed him : thou hast taken all his sins upon thyself. This is what thou hast done unto thyself. The she-bear pushed the log once, it disturbed her cubs ; she pushed it a second time, it killed her yearling ; but the third time that she pushed it, it killed herself. So has it been with thee. I give thee now thirty years' grace. Go out into the world, atone for the robber's sins. If thou dost not atone for them, thou must go in his place."

And the kréstnik said, " How shall I atone for his sins? "

And the godfather said, " When thou hast undone as much evil as thou hast done in the world, then thou wilt have atoned for thy sins, and the sins of the robber."

And the kréstnik asked, " How undo the evil that is in the world? "

The godfather said, " Go straight toward the sun-

rise. Thou wilt reach a field, men in it. Notice what the men are doing, and teach them what thou knowest. Then go farther, notice what thou seest: thou wilt come on the fourth day to a forest; in the forest is a cell, in the cell lives a mendicant;¹ tell him all that has taken place. He will instruct thee. When thou hast done all that the mendicant commands thee, then thou wilt have atoned for thy sins, and the sins of the robber.”

Thus spoke the godfather, and let the kréstnik out of the gate.

¹ Stárets.

VII.

THE kréstnik went on his way. He walks, and thinks, "How can I undo evil in the world? Is evil destroyed in the world by banishing men into banishment, by putting them in prison, by executing them? How can I go to work to destroy evil, to say nothing of taking on one the sins of others?"

The kréstnik thought, thought, could not think it out. He went, went: he comes to a field. In the field the grain has come up good and thick, and it is harvest-time. The kréstnik sees that a little heifer has strayed into this grain, and the men have mounted their horses, and are hunting the little heifer through the grain, from one side to the other. Just as soon as the little heifer tries to escape from the grain, some one would ride up: the little heifer would be frightened back into the grain again. And again they gallop after it through the grain. And on one side stands a baba, weeping. "They are running my little heifer," she says.

And the kréstnik began to ask the muzhíks, "Why do you so? All of you ride out of the grain! Let the khozyáika herself call out the heifer."

The men obeyed. The baba went to the edge, began to call, "Co', boss, co', boss."¹

The little heifer pricked up her ears, listened, listened; ran to her mistress, thrust her nose under her skirt,

¹ *Tpriusi, tpriusi, buryónochka, tpriusi, tpriusi!* Buryónochka is the diminutive of a word meaning nut-brown cow.

almost knocked her off her legs. And the muzhíks were glad, and the baba was glad, and the little heifer was glad.

The kréstnik went farther, and thinks, —

“Now I see that evil is increased by evil. The more men chase evil, the more evil they make. It is impossible, of course, to destroy evil by evil. But how destroy it? I know not. It was good, the way the little heifer listened to its khozyáika. But suppose it hadn't listened, how would they have got it out?”

The kréstnik pondered, could think of nothing, went farther.

VIII.

HE went, went. He comes to a village. He asked for a night's lodging at the last izbá. The khozyáika consented. In the izbá was no one, only the khozyáika, [who] is washing up.

The kréstnik went in, climbed on top of the oven, and began to watch what the khozyáika is doing: he sees, — the khozyáika was scrubbing the izbá; she began to rub the table, she scrubbed the table; she contrived to wipe it with a dirty towel. She is ready to wipe off one side — but the table is not cleaned. Streaks of dirt are left on the table from the dirty towel. She is ready to wipe it on the other side: while she destroys some streaks, she makes others. She begins again to rub it from end to end. Again the same. She daubs it with the dirty towel. She destroys one spot, she sticks another on. The kréstnik watched, watched; says, —

“What is this that thou art doing, *khozyáïushka?*”

“Why, dost not see?” says she: “I am cleaning up for Easter. But here, I can't clean my table: it's all dirty. I'm all spent.”

“If thou wouldst rinse out the towel,” says he, “then thou couldst wipe it off.”

The khozyáika did so: she quickly cleaned off the table.

“Thank thee,” says she, “for telling me how.”

In the morning the kréstnik bade good-by to the

khozyáika, walked farther. He went, went; came to a forest. He sees muzhíks bending hoops. The kréstnik came up, sees the muzhíks; but the hoop does not stay bent.

The kréstnik looked, sees the muzhíks' block is loose. There is no support in it. The kréstnik looked on, and says, —

“What are you doing, brothers?”

“We are bending hoops; and twice we have steamed them: we are all spent; they will not bend.”

“Well, now, brothers, just fasten your block: then you will make it stay bent.”

The muzhíks heeded what he said, fastened the block, and their work went in tune.

The kréstnik spent the night with them; went farther. All day and all night he walked: about dawn he met some drovers. He lay down near them, and he sees, — the drovers have halted the cattle, and are struggling with a fire. They have taken dry twigs, lighted them: they did not allow them to get well started, but piled the fire with wet brush-wood. The brush-wood began to hiss: the fire went out. The drovers took more dry stuff, kindled it, again piled on the wet brush-wood. Again they put it out. They struggled long; could not kindle the fire.

And the kréstnik said, “Don't be in such a hurry to put on the brush-wood, but first start a nice little fire. When it burns up briskly, then pile on.”

Thus the drovers did. They started a powerful fire, laid on the brush-wood. The brush-wood caught, the pile burned. The kréstnik staid a little while with them, and went farther. The kréstnik pondered, pondered, for what purpose he had seen these three things: he could not tell.

IX.

THE kréstnik went, went. A day went by. He comes to a forest: in the forest is a cell. The kréstnik comes to the cell, knocks. A voice from the cell asks, —

“Who is there?”

“A great sinner: I come to atone for the sins of another.”

The hermit¹ came forth, and asks, “What are these sins that thou bearest for another?”

The kréstnik told him all, — about his godfather, and about the she-bear and her cubs, and about the throne in the sealed apartment, and about his godfather’s prohibition; and how he had seen the muzhíks in the field, how they trampled down all the grain, and how the little heifer came of her own accord to her khoz-yáika.

“I understood,” says he, “that it is impossible to destroy evil by evil; but I cannot understand how to destroy it. Teach me.”

And the hermit said, —

“But tell me what more thou hast seen on thy way.”

The kréstnik told him about the peasant-woman, — how she scrubbed; and about the muzhíks, — how they made hoops; and about the herdsmen, — how they lighted the fire.

¹ *Stárets.*

The hermit listened, returned to his cell, brought out a dull hatchet.

“Come with me,” says he.

The hermit went to a clearing away from the cell, pointed to a tree.

“Cut it down,” says he.

The kréstnik cut it down: the tree fell.

“Now cut it in three lengths.”

The kréstnik cut it in three lengths. The hermit returned to the cell again, brought some fire.

“Burn,” says he, “these three logs.”

The kréstnik made a fire, burns the three logs. There remained three firebrands.

“Half bury them in the earth. This way.”

The kréstnik buried them.

“Thou seest the river at the foot of the mountain: bring hither water in thy mouth, water them. Water this firebrand just as thou didst teach the baba; water this one as thou didst instruct the hoop-makers; and water this one as thou didst instruct the herdsmen. When all three shall have sprouted, and three apple-trees sprung from the firebrands, then wilt thou know how evil is destroyed in men: then thou shalt atone for thy sins.”

The hermit said this, and returned to his cell. The kréstnik pondered, pondered: he cannot comprehend the meaning of what the hermit had said. But he decided to do what he had commanded him.

X.

THE kréstnik went to the river, "took prisoner" a mouthful of water, poured it on the firebrand. He went again and again. He also watered the other two. The kréstnik grew weary, wanted something to eat. He went to the hermit's cell to ask for food. He opened the door, and the hermit is lying dead on a bench. The kréstnik looked round, found some biscuits, and ate them. He found also a spade, and began to dig a grave for the hermit. At night he brought water, waters the brands, and by day he dug the grave. As soon as he had dug the grave, he was anxious to bury the hermit: people came from the village, bringing food for the hermit.

The people learned how the hermit had died, and had ordained the kréstnik to take his place. The people helped bury the hermit, they left bread for the kréstnik: they promised to bring more, and departed.

And the kréstnik remained to live in the hermit's place. The kréstnik lives there, subsisting on what people bring him, and he fulfils what was told him,—brings water in his mouth from the river, waters the brands.

Thus lived the kréstnik for a year, and many people began to come to him. The fame of him went forth, that there is living in the forest a holy man, that he is working out his salvation by bringing water in his mouth from the river under the mountain, that he is

watering the burned stumps. Many people began to come to him. And rich merchants began to come, brought him gifts. The kréstnik took nothing for himself, save what was necessary; but whatever was given him, he distributed among the poor.

And thus the kréstnik continued to live: half of the day he brings water in his mouth, waters the brands; and the other half he sighs, and receives the people.

And the kréstnik began to think that thus he had been commanded to live, and that thus he would destroy sin, and atone for his sins.

Thus the kréstnik lived a second year, and he never let a single day pass without watering; but as yet not a single brand had sprouted.

One time he is sitting in his cell he hears riding past a man on horseback, and singing songs.¹ The kréstnik went out to see what kind of a man it was. He sees a strong young man. His clothes are good, and his horse and the saddle on which he sat were rich.

The kréstnik stopped him, and asked who this man was, and whence he came.

The man halted.

“I,” says he, “am a robber. I ride along the highways, I kill men: the more men I kill, the gayer songs I sing.”

The kréstnik was alarmed; asks himself, “How destroy the evil in this man? It is good for me to speak to those who come to me and repent. But this man boasts of his wickedness.”

The kréstnik said nothing, started to go off, but thought, “Now, how to act? If this cut-throat is in the habit of riding by this way, he will frighten everybody: people will cease coming to me. And there will

¹ *P'yésni.*

be no advantage to them, — yes, and then how shall I live?”

And the kréstnik stopped. And he spoke to the cut-throat, —

“Here,” says he, “people come to me, not to boast of their wickedness, but to repent, and put their sins away through prayer. Repent thou also, if thou fearest God; but if thou dost not desire to repent, then get thee hence, and never return, trouble me not, and frighten not the people from coming to me. And if thou dost not obey, God will punish thee.”

The cut-throat jeered, —

“I am neither afraid of God, nor will I obey thee. Thou art not my master.¹ Thou,” says he, “livest by thy piety, and I live by robbery. We must all get a living. Teach thou the babas that come to thee, but read me no lecture. And in reply to what thou rubbest into me about God, to-morrow I will kill two men. And I would kill thee to-day, but I do not wish to soil my hands. But henceforth don't come into my way.”

Thus swaggered the cut-throat, and rode off. But the cut-throat came by no more, and the kréstnik lived in his former style comfortably for eight years.

¹ *Khozyáin.*

XI.

ONE night the kréstnik went out to water his brands : he returned to his cell to rest, and he sits watching the road, if any people should soon be coming. And on this day not a soul came. The kréstnik sat alone by his door ; and it seemed lonesome, and he began to think about his life. He remembered how the cut-throat had reproached him for getting his living by his piety, and the kréstnik reviewed his life : “ I am not living,” he thinks, “ as the hermit commanded me to live. The hermit imposed a penance upon me, and I am getting from it bread and popular glory ; and so led away have I been by it, that I am lonesome when people do not come to me. And when the people come, then my only joy consists in the fact that they praise my holiness. It is not right to live so. I have been entangled by popular glory. I have not atoned for my former sins, but I have incurred fresh ones. I will go into the forest, to another place, so that the people may not come to me. I will live alone, so as to atone for my former sins, and not incur new ones.”

Thus reasoned the kréstnik ; and he took a little bag of biscuits and his spade, and went away from the cell into a cave, so as to dig for himself a hut in a gloomy place, to hide from the people.

The kréstnik walks along with his little bag and his spade. The cut-throat rides up to him. The kréstnik was frightened, tried to run, but the cut-throat over-

took him. "Where art going?" says he. The kréstnik told him that he wanted to go away from people, to such a place that no one would find him.

The cut-throat marvelled.

"How wilt thou live now, when people no longer come to thee?"

The kréstnik had not thought of this before; but when the cut-throat asked him, he began to think about his sustenance.

"On what God will give," says he.

The cut-throat said nothing, rode on.

"Why!" thinks the kréstnik, "I said nothing to him about his life. Perhaps now he is repentant. To-day he seemed more subdued, and did not threaten to kill me."

And the kréstnik shouted to the cut-throat, —

"But it is needful for thee to repent. Thou wilt not escape from God."

The cut-throat wheeled his horse around. He drew a knife from his belt, shook it at the kréstnik. The kréstnik was frightened: he ran into the forest.

The cut-throat did not attempt to follow him, only shouted, "Twice I have let thee off: fall not in my hands a third time, else I will kill thee!"

He said this, and rode off.

The kréstnik went at eventide to water his brands: behold! one has put forth sprouts. An apple-tree is growing from it.

XII.

THE kréstnik hid from the people, and began to live alone. His biscuits were used up.

“Well,” he says to himself, “now I will seek for roots.”

As he began his search, he sees, hanging on a bough, a little bag of biscuits. The kréstnik took it, and began to eat.

As soon as his biscuits were gone, again another little bag came, on the same branch. And thus the kréstnik lived. He had only one grievance: he was afraid of the cut-throat. As soon as he heard the cut-throat, he would hide himself: he would think, “He will kill me, and I shall not have time to atone for my sins.”

Thus he lived for ten years more. One apple-tree grew, and thus there remained two firebrands as firebrands.

The kréstnik once arose betimes, started to fulfil his task: he soaked the earth around the firebrands, became weary, and sat down to rest.

He sits: he gets rested, and thinks, “I have done wrong [because] I have been afraid of death. If it please God, I may thus atone by death for my sins.”

Even while these thoughts were passing through his mind, suddenly he hears the cut-throat coming: he is cursing.

The kréstnik listened; and he thinks, "Without God, no evil, no good, can come to me from any one."

And he went out to meet the cut-throat. He sees the cut-throat is not riding alone, but has a man behind him on the saddle. And the man's hands and mouth are tied up. The man is silent, but the cut-throat is cursing him.

The kréstnik went out to the cut-throat, stood in front of the horse.

"Where," says he, "art thou taking this man?"

"I am taking him into the forest. This is a merchant's son. He will not tell where his father's money is hidden. I am going to thrash him until he will tell."

And the cut-throat started to ride on. But the kréstnik did not allow it: he seized the horse by the bridle. "Let this man go," says he.

The cut-throat was wroth with the kréstnik, threatened him.

"Dost thou desire this?" says he. "I promise thee I will kill thee. Out of the way!"

The kréstnik was not intimidated.

"I will not get out of thy way," says he. "I fear thee not. I fear God only. And God bids me not let thee go. Unloose the man."

The cut-throat scowled, drew out his knife, cut the cords, let the merchant's son go free.

"Off with you," says he, "both of you! and don't cross my path a second time."

The merchant's son jumped down, made off. The cut-throat started to ride on, but the kréstnik still detained him. He began to urge him to reform his evil

life. The cut-throat stood still, heard every word, made no reply, and rode off.

The next morning the kréstnik went to water his firebrands. Behold! the second one had sprouted—another apple-tree is growing.

XIII.

PASSED ten years more. One time the kréstnik is sitting down, no one comes to see him: he has no fear, and his heart is glad within him. And the kréstnik thinks to himself, "What blessings men receive from God! but they torment themselves in vain. They ought to live and enjoy their lives."

And he remembered all the wickedness of men — how they torment themselves. And he felt sorry for men.

"Here I am," he thinks, "living idly. I must go out and tell people what I know."

Even while he was pondering, he listens — the cut-throat is coming. He was about to let him pass; and he thinks, —

"Whatever I say to him, he will not accept."

This was his first thought; but then he reconsidered it, went out on the road. The cut-throat is riding by in moody silence: his eyes are on the ground.

The kréstnik gazed at him, and he felt sorry for him: he drew near to him, seized him by the knee.

"Dear brother,"¹ says he, "have pity on thine own soul. Lo! the Spirit of God is in thee. Thou tormentest thyself, and others thou tormentest; and thou wilt be tormented still more grievously. But God loves thee so! With what bounty has he blessed thee! Ruin not thyself, brother!² change thy life."

The cut-throat frowned: he turned away.

¹ *Brat milul.*

² *Brátets.*

“Out of my way!” says he.

The kréstnik clutched the cut-throat’s knee more firmly, and burst into tears.

The cut-throat fastened his eyes on the kréstnik. He looked, he looked, dismounted from his horse, and fell on his knees before the kréstnik.

“Thou hast conquered me, old man,”¹ he cries. “Twenty years have I struggled with thee. Thou hast won me over. I have henceforth no power over thee. Do with me as it seems to thee good. When thou speakest to me the first time,” says he, “I only did the more evil. And thy words made an impression on me, only when thou wentest away from men, and I learned that thou didst gain no advantage from men.”

And the kréstnik remembered that the baba succeeded in cleaning her table when she had rinsed out her towel. When he ceased to think about himself, his heart was purified, and he began to purify the hearts of others.

And the cut-throat said, —

“But my heart was changed within me, only when thou didst cease to fear death.”

And the kréstnik remembered that the hoopmakers² only succeeded in bending their hoops after they had fastened their block: when he ceased to be afraid of death, he had fastened his life in God, and a disobedient heart became obedient.

And the cut-throat said, —

“But my heart melted entirely, only when thou didst pity me, and weep before me.”

The kréstnik was overjoyed: he led the cut-throat to the place where the firebrands had been.

¹ *Stárik.*

² *Obodchiki*, from *óbod*, a felloe, or hoop.

They came to it, but out of the last firebrand also an apple-tree had sprung!

And the kréstnik remembered that the drovers' damp wood had kindled only when a great fire was built: when his own heart was well on fire, another's took fire from it.

And the kréstnik was glad because now he had atoned for all his sins.

He told all this to the cut-throat, and died. The cut-throat buried him, began to live as the kréstnik bade him, and thus taught men.

THE LONG EXILE.

“God sees the truth, but bides his time.”

ONCE upon a time there lived in the city of Vladímir a young merchant named Aksénof. He had two shops and a house.

Aksénof himself had a ruddy complexion and curly hair; he was a very jolly fellow and a good singer. When he was young he used to drink too much, and when he was tipsy he was turbulent; but after his marriage he ceased drinking, and only occasionally had a spree.

One time in summer Aksénof was going to Nízхни* to the great Fair. As he was about to bid his family good by, his wife said to him:—

“Iván Dmítievitch, do not go to-day; I had a dream, and dreamed that some misfortune befell you.”

* Nízхни Nóvgorod: it means Lower New Town.

Aksénof laughed at her, and said: "You are always afraid that I shall go on a spree at the Fair."

His wife said: "I myself know not what I am afraid of, but I had such a strange dream: you seemed to be coming home from town, and you took off your hat, and I looked, and your head was all gray."

Aksénof laughed. "That means good luck. See, I am going now. I will bring you some rich remembrances."

And he bade his family farewell and set off.

When he had gone half his journey, he fell in with a merchant of his acquaintance, and the two stopped together at the same tavern for the night. They took tea together, and went to sleep in two adjoining rooms.

Aksénof did not care to sleep long; he awoke in the middle of the night, and in order that he might get a good start while it was cool he aroused his driver and bade him harness up, went down into the smoky hut, settled his account with the landlord, and started on his way.

After he had driven forty versts,* he again stopped to get something to eat; he rested in the vestibule of the inn, and when it was noon, he went to the doorstep and ordered the samovár † got ready; then he took out his guitar and began to play.

Suddenly a troïka ‡ with a bell dashed up to the inn, and from the equipage leaped an official with two soldiers; he comes directly up to Aksénof and asks: "Who are you? Where did you come from?"

Aksénof answers without hesitation, and asks him if he would not have a glass of tea with him.

But the official keeps on with his questions: "Where did you spend last night? Were you alone or with a merchant? Have you seen the merchant this morning? Why did you leave so early this morning?"

Aksénof wondered why he was questioned so closely; but he told everything just as it

* Nearly twenty-six and a half miles.

† Water-boiler for making Russian tea.

‡ A team of three horses harnessed abreast: the outside two gallop; the shaft horse trots.

was, and he asks: "Why do you ask me so many questions? I am not a thief or a murderer. I am on my own business; there is nothing to question me about."

Then the official called up the soldiers, and said: "I am the police inspector, and I have made these inquiries of you because the merchant with whom you spent last night has been stabbed. Show me your things, and you men search him."

They went into the tavern, brought in the trunk and bag, and began to open and search them. Suddenly the police inspector pulled out from the bag a knife, and demanded, "Whose knife is this?"

Aksénof looked and saw a knife covered with blood taken from his bag, and he was frightened.

"And whose blood is that on the knife?"

Aksénof tried to answer, but he could not articulate his words:—

"I . . . I . . . don't . . . know . . . I . . . That knife . . . it is . . . not mine . . ."

Then the police inspector said: "This morning the merchant was found stabbed to death

in his bed. No one except you could have done it. The tavern was locked on the inside, and there was no one in the tavern except yourself. And here is the bloody knife in your bag, and your guilt is evident in your face. Tell me how you killed him and how much money you took from him." Aksénof swore that he had not done it, that he had not seen the merchant after he had drunken tea with him, that the only money that he had with him — eight thousand rubles — was his own, and that the knife was not his.

But his voice trembled, his face was pale, and he was all quivering with fright, like a guilty person.

The police inspector called the soldiers, commanded them to bind Aksénof and take him to the wagon.

When they took him to the wagon with his feet tied, Aksénof crossed himself and burst into tears.

They confiscated Aksénof's possessions and his money, and took him to the next city and threw him into prison.

They sent to Vladímir to make inquiries

about Aksénof's character, and all the merchants and citizens of Vladímir declared that Aksénof, when he was young, used to drink and was wild, but that now he was a worthy man. Then he was brought up for judgment. He was sentenced for having killed the merchant and for having robbed him of twenty thousand rubles.

Aksénof's wife was dumfounded by the event, and did not know what to think. Her children were still small, and there was one at the breast. She took them all with her and journeyed to the city where her husband was imprisoned.

At first they would not grant her admittance, but afterwards she got permission from the chief, and was taken to her husband.

When she saw him in his prison garb, in chains together with murderers, she fell to the floor, and it was a long time before she recovered from her swoon. Then she placed her children around her, sat down amid them, and began to tell him about their domestic affairs, and to ask him about everything that had happened to him.

He told her the whole story.

She asked, "What is to be the result of it?"

He said: "We must petition the Tsar. It is impossible that an innocent man should be condemned."

The wife said that she had already sent in a petition to the Tsar, but that the petition had not been granted. Aksénof said nothing, but was evidently very much downcast.

Then his wife said: "You see the dream that I had, when I dreamed that you had become gray-headed, meant something, after all. Already your hair has begun to turn gray with trouble. You ought to have stayed at home that time."

And she began to tear her hair, and she said: "Ványa,* my dearest husband, tell your wife the truth: Did you commit that crime or not?"

Aksénof said: "So you, too, have no faith in me!" And he wrung his hands and wept.

Then a soldier came and said that it was time for the wife and children to go. And

* Diminutive of Iván, John.

Aksénof for the last time bade farewell to his family.

When his wife was gone, Aksénof began to think over all that they had said. When he remembered that his wife had also distrusted him, and had asked him if he had murdered the merchant, he said to himself: "It is evident that no one but God can know the truth of the matter, and He is the only one to ask for mercy, and He is the only one from whom to expect it."

And from that time Aksénof ceased to send in petitions, ceased to hope, and only prayed to God. Aksénof was sentenced to be knouted, and then to exile with hard labor.

And so it was done.

He was flogged with the knout, and then, when the wounds from the knout were healed, he was sent with other exiles to Siberia.

Aksénof lived twenty-six years in the mines. The hair on his head had become white as snow, and his beard had grown long, thin, and gray. All his gayety had vanished. He was bent, his gait was slow, he spoke little, he never laughed, and he spent much of his time in prayer.

Aksénof had learned while in prison to make boots, and with the money that he earned he bought the "Book of Martyrs,"* and used to read it when it was light enough in prison, and on holidays he would go to the prison church, read the Gospels, and sing in the choir, for his voice was still strong and good.

The authorities liked Aksénof for his submissiveness, and his prison associates respected him and called him "Grandfather" and the "man of God." Whenever they had petitions to be presented, Aksénof was always chosen to carry them to the authorities; and when quarrels arose among the prisoners, they always came to Aksénof as umpire.

Aksénof never received any letters from home, and he knew not whether his wife and children were alive.

One time some new convicts came to the prison. In the evening all the old convicts gathered around the newcomers, and began to ply them with questions as to the cities or villages from which this one or that had come, and what their crimes were.

* Chetyá Minyéi.

At this time Aksénof was sitting on his bunk, near the strangers, and, with bowed head, was listening to what was said.

One of the new convicts was a tall, healthy-looking old man of sixty years, with a close-cropped gray beard. He was telling why he had been arrested. He said:—

“And so, brothers, I was sent here for nothing. I unharnessed a horse from a postboy’s sledge, and they caught me in it, and insisted that I was stealing it. ‘But,’ says I, ‘I only wanted to go a little faster, so I whipped up the horse. And besides, the driver was a friend of mine. It’s all right,’ says I. ‘No,’ say they; ‘you were stealing it.’ But they did not know what and where I had stolen. I have done things which long ago would have sent me here, but I was not found out; and now they have sent me here without any justice in it. But what’s the use of grumbling? I have been in Siberia before. They did not keep me here very long though . . .”

“Where did you come from?” asked one of the convicts.

“Well, we came from the city of Vladímir;

we are citizens of that place. My name is Makár, and my father's name was Semyón."

Aksénof raised his head and asked : —

"Tell me, Semyónitch,* have you ever heard of the Aksénofs, merchants in Vladímir city? . . . Are they alive?"

"Indeed, I have heard of them! They are rich merchants, though their father is in Siberia. It seems he was just like any of the rest of us sinners. . . . And now tell me, Grandfather, what you were sent here for?"

Aksénof did not like to speak of his misfortunes; he sighed, and said : —

"Twenty-six years ago I was condemned to hard labor on account of my sins."

Makár Semyónof said : —

"But what was your crime?"

Aksénof replied, "I must, therefore, have deserved this."

But he would not tell or give any further particulars; the other convicts, however, related why Aksénof had been sent to Siberia. They told how on the road some one had killed a merchant, and put the knife into Aksénof's

* Son of Semyón.

luggage, and how he had been unjustly punished for this.

When Makár heard this, he glanced at Aksénof, clasped his hands round his knees and said:—

“Well, now, that’s wonderful! You have been growing old, Grandfather!”

They began to ask him what he thought was wonderful, and where he had seen Aksénof. But Makár did not answer; he only repeated:—

“A miracle, boys! how wonderful that we should meet again!”

And when he said these words, it came over Aksénof that perhaps this man might know who it was that had killed the merchant. And he said:—

“Did you ever hear of that crime, Semyónitch, or did you ever see me before?”

“Of course I heard of it! The country was full of it. But it happened a long time ago. And I have forgotten what I heard,” said Makár.

“Perhaps you heard who killed the merchant?” asked Aksénof.

Makár laughed, and said:—

“Why, of course the man who had the knife in his bag killed him. If any one put the knife in your things and was not caught doing it — it would have been impossible. For how could they have put the knife in your bag? Was it not standing close by your head? And you would have heard it, wouldn't you?”

As soon as Aksénof heard these words he felt convinced that this was the very man who had killed the merchant.

He stood up and walked away. All that night he was unable to sleep. Deep melancholy came upon him, and he began to call back the past in his imagination.

He imagined his wife as she had been when for the last time she had come to see him in the prison. She seemed to stand before him exactly as though she were alive, and he saw her face and her eyes, and he seemed to hear her words and her laugh.

Then his imagination brought up his children before him; one a little boy in a little fur coat, and the other on his mother's breast.

And he imagined himself as he was at that time, young and happy. He remembered how

he had sat on the steps of the tavern when they arrested him, and how his soul was full of joy as he played on his guitar.

And he remembered the place of execution where they had knouted him, and the knoutsmen, and the people standing around, and the chains and the convicts, and all his twenty-six years of prison life, and he remembered his old age. And such melancholy came upon Aksénof that he was tempted to put an end to himself.

“And all on account of this criminal!” said Aksénof to himself.

And then he began to feel such anger against Makár Semyónof that he almost fell upon him, and was crazy with desire to pay off the load of vengeance. He repeated prayers all night, but could not recover his calm. When day came, he walked by Makár and did not look at him.

Thus passed two weeks. Aksénof was not able to sleep, and such melancholy had come over him that he did not know what to do.

One time during the night, as he happened to be passing through the prison, he saw that the soil was disturbed under one of the

bunks. He stopped to examine it. Suddenly Makár crept from under the bunk and looked at Aksénof with a startled face.

Aksénof was about to pass on so as not to see him, but Makár seized his arm, and told him how he had been digging a passage under the wall, and how every day he carried the dirt out in his boot-legs and emptied it in the street when they went out to work. He said: —

“If you only keep quiet, old man, I will get you out too. But if you tell on me, they will flog me; but afterwards I will make it hot for you. I will kill you.”

When Aksénof saw his enemy, he trembled all over with rage, twitched away his arm, and said: “I have no reason to make my escape, and to kill me would do no harm; you killed me long ago. But as to telling on you or not, I shall do as God sees fit to have me.”

On the next day, when they took the convicts out to work, the soldiers discovered where Makár had been digging in the ground; they began to make a search and found the hole. The chief came into the prison and asked everyone, “Who was digging that hole?”

All denied it. Those who knew did not name Makár, because they were aware that he would be flogged half to death for such an attempt.

Then the chief came to Aksénof. He knew that Aksénof was a truthful man, and he said: "Old man, you are truthful; tell me before God who did this."

Makár was standing near, in great excitement, and did not dare to look at Aksénof.

Aksénof's hands and lips trembled, and it was some time before he could speak a word. He said to himself: "If I shield him — But why should I forgive him when he has been my ruin? Let him suffer for my sufferings! But shall I tell on him? They will surely flog him? But what difference does it make what I think of him? Will it be any the easier for me?"

Once more the chief demanded: "Well, old man, tell the truth! Who dug the hole?"

Aksénof glanced at Makár, and then said: —

"I cannot tell, your Honor. God does not bid me tell. I will not tell. Do with me as you please; I am in your power."

In spite of all the chief's efforts, Aksénof

would say nothing more. And so they failed to find out who dug the hole.

On the next night as Aksénof was lying on his bunk, and almost asleep, he heard some one come along and sit down at his feet.

He peered through the darkness and saw that it was Makár. Aksénof asked: —

“What do you wish of me? What are you doing here?”

Makár remained silent. Aksénof arose, and said: —

“What do you want? Go away, or else I will call the guard.”

Makár went up close to Aksénof, and said in a whisper: —

“Iván Dmítritch,* forgive me!”

Aksénof said: “What have I to forgive you?”

“It was I who killed the merchant and put the knife in your bag. And I was going to kill you too, but there was a noise in the yard; I thrust the knife in your bag and slipped out of the window.”

Aksénof said nothing, and he did not know

* Son of Dmitry (or Dmítrievitch; see page 1).

what to say. Makár got down from the bunk, knelt on the ground, and said: —

“Iván Dmítritch, forgive me, forgive me for Christ’s sake. I will confess that I killed the merchant — they will pardon you. You will be able to go home.” Aksénof said: —

“It is easy for you to say that, but how could I endure it? Where should I go now? . . . My wife is dead! my children have forgotten me. . . . I have nowhere to go. . . .”

Makár did not rise; he beat his head on the ground, and said: —

“Iván Dmítritch, forgive me! When they flogged me with the knout, it was easier to bear than it is now to look at you. . . . And you had pity on me after all this . . . you did not tell on me. . . . Forgive me for Christ’s sake! Forgive me though I am a cursed villain!”

And the man began to sob.

When Aksénof heard Makár Semyónof sobbing, he himself burst into tears, and said: —

“God will forgive you; maybe I am a hundred times worse than you are!”

And suddenly he felt a wonderful peace in his soul. And he ceased to mourn for his

home, and had no desire to leave the prison, but only thought of his last hour.

Makár would not listen to Aksénof, and confessed his crime.

When they came to let Aksénof go home, he was dead.

WHAT MEN LIVE BY.

We know that we have passed out of death into life, because we love the brethren. He that loveth not abideth in death. (I. Epistle of St. John, iii. 14.)

But whoso hath the world's goods, and beholdeth his brother in need, and shutteth up his compassion from him, how doth the love of God abide in him ?

My little children, let us not love in word, neither with the tongue, but in deed and truth. (iii. 17, 18.)

Love is of God; and every one that loveth is begotten of God and knoweth God.

He that loveth not knoweth not God; for God is love. (iv. 7, 8.)

No man hath beheld God at any time: if we love one another, God abideth in us. (iv. 12.)

God is love; and he that abideth in love abideth in God, and God abideth in him. (iv. 16.)

If a man say, I love God, and hateth his brother, he is a liar: for he that loveth not his brother whom he hath seen cannot love God whom he hath not seen. (iv. 20.)

I.

A COBBLER and his wife and children had lodgings with a peasant. He owned neither house nor land, and he supported himself and his family by shoemaking.

Bread was dear and labor poorly paid, and whatever he earned went for food.

The cobbler and his wife had one shuba* between them, and this had come to tatters, and for two years the cobbler had been hoarding in order to buy skeepskins for a new shuba.

When autumn came, the cobbler's hoard had grown; three paper rubles† lay in his wife's box, and five rubles and twenty kopeks more were due the cobbler from his customers.

One morning the cobbler betook himself to the village to get his new shuba. He put on his wife's wadded nankeen jacket over his shirt, and outside of all a woollen kaftan. He put the three ruble notes in his pocket, broke off a staff, and after breakfast he set forth.

He said to himself, "I will get my five rubles from the peasant, and that with these three will buy pelts for my shuba."

The cobbler reached the village and went to one peasant's; he was not at home, but his wife promised to send her husband with the

* Fur or sheepskin outside garment.

† The paper ruble is worth about forty-two cents; a ruble contains 100 kopeks.

money the next week, but she could not give him any money. He went to another, and this peasant swore that he had no money at all; but he paid him twenty kopeks for cobbling his boots.

The cobbler made up his mind to get the pelts on credit. But the fur-dealer refused to sell on credit. "Bring the money," says he; "then you can make your choice: but we know how hard it is to get what is one's due."

And so the cobbler did not do his errand, but he had the twenty kopeks for cobbling the boots, and he took from a peasant an old pair of felt boots to mend with leather.

At first the cobbler was vexed at heart; then he spent the twenty kopeks for vodka, and started to go home. In the morning he had felt cold, but after having drunken the vodka he was warm enough even without the shuba.

The cobbler was walking along the road, striking the frozen ground with the staff that he had in one hand, and swinging the felt boots in the other, and thus he talked to himself: —

"I," says he, "am warm even without a

shuba. I drank a glass, and it dances through all my veins. And so I don't need a sheepskin coat. I walk along, and all my vexation is forgotten. That is just like me! What do I need? I can get along without the shuba. I don't need it at all. There's one thing: the wife will feel bad. Indeed, it is too bad; here I have been working for it, and now to have missed it! You just wait now! if you don't bring the money, I will take your hat, I vow I will! What a way of doing things! He pays me twenty kopeks at a time! Now what can you do with twenty kopeks? Get a drink; that's all! You say, 'I am poor!' But if you are poor, how is it with me? You have a house and cattle and everything; I have nothing but my own hands. You raise your own grain, but I have to buy mine, when I can, and it costs me three rubles a week for food alone. When I get home now, we shall be out of bread. Another ruble and a half of out-go! So you must give me what you owe me."

By this time the cobbler had reached the chapel at the cross-roads, and he saw something white behind the chapel.

It was already twilight, and the cobbler strained his eyes, but he could not make out what the object was.

“There never was any such stone there,” he said to himself. “A cow? But it does not look like a cow! The head is like a man’s; but what is that white? And why should there be any man there?”

He went nearer. Now he could see plainly. What a strange thing! It is indeed a man, but is he alive or dead? sitting there stark naked, leaning against the chapel, and not moving.

The cobbler was frightened. He thinks to himself: “Some one has killed that man, stripped him, and flung him down there. If I go near, I may get into trouble.”

And the cobbler hurried by.

In passing the chapel he could no longer see the man; but after he was fairly beyond it, he looked back, and saw that the man was no longer leaning against the chapel, but was moving, and apparently looking after him.

The cobbler was still more scared by this, and he thinks to himself: “Shall I go to him

or go on? If I go to him, there might something unpleasant happen; who knows what sort of a man he is? He can't have gone there for any good purpose? If I went to him, he might spring on me and choke me, and I could not get away from him; and even if he did not choke me, why should I try to make his acquaintance? What could be done with him, naked as he is? I can't take him with me, and give him my own clothes! That would be absurd."

And the cobbler hastened his steps. He had already gone some distance beyond the chapel, when his conscience began to prick him.

He stopped short.

"What is this that you are doing, Semyón?" he asked himself. "A man is perishing of cold, and you are frightened, and hurry by! Are you so very rich? Are you afraid of losing your money? Aï, Sema! That is not right!"

Semyón turned and went to the man.

II.

Semyón went back to the man, looked at him, and saw that it was a young man in the

prime of life; there are no bruises visible on him, but he is evidently freezing and afraid; he is sitting there, leaning back, and does not look at Semyón; apparently he is so weak that he cannot lift his eyes.

Semyón went up close to him, and suddenly the man seemed to revive; he lifted his head and fastened his eyes on Semyón.

And by this glance the man won Semyón's heart.

He threw the felt boots down on the ground, took off his belt and laid it on the boots, and pulled off his kaftan.

"There's nothing to be said," he exclaimed. "Put these on! There now!"

Semyón put his hand under the man's elbow, to help him, and tried to lift him. The man got up.

And Semyón sees that his body is graceful and clean, that his hands and feet are comely, and that his face is agreeable. Semyón threw the kaftan over his shoulders. He could not get his arms into the sleeves. Semyón found the place for him, pulled the coat up, wrapped it around him, and fastened the belt.

He took off his tattered cap, and was going to give it to the stranger, but his head felt cold, and he thinks: "The whole top of my head is bald, but he has long curly hair."

So he put his hat on again. "I had better let him put on my boots."

He made him sit down and put on the felt boots.

After the cobbler had thus dressed him, he says: "There now, brother, just stir about, and you will get warmed up. All these things are in other hands than ours. Can you walk?"

The man stands up, looks affectionately at Semyón, but is unable to speak a word.

"Why don't you say something? We can't spend the winter here. We must get to shelter. Now, then, lean on my stick, if you don't feel strong enough. Bestir yourself!"

And the man started to move. And he walked easily, and did not lag behind. As they walked along the road Semyón said: "Where are you from, if I may ask?"

"I do not belong hereabouts."

"No; I know all the people of this region.

How did you happen to come here and get to that chapel?"

"I cannot tell you."

"Some one must have treated you outrageously?"

"No one has treated me outrageously. God has punished me."

"God does all things, but you must have been on the road to somewhere? Where do you want to go?"

"It makes no difference to me."

Semyón was surprised. The man did not look like a malefactor, and his speech was gentle, but he seemed reticent about himself.

And Semyón says to himself, "Such things as this do not happen every day." And he says to the man, "Well, come to my house, though you will find it very narrow quarters."

As Semyón approached the yard, the stranger did not lag behind, but walked abreast of him. The wind had arisen, and searched under Semyón's shirt, and as the effect of the wine had now passed away, he began to be chilled to the bone. He walked along, and began to snuffie, and he muffled his wife's jacket closer around

him, and he thinks: "That's the way you get a shuba! You go after a shuba, and you come home without your kaftan! yes, and you bring with you a naked man — besides, Matrióna won't take kindly to it!"

And as soon as the thought of Matrióna occurred to him, he began to feel downhearted.

But as soon as his eyes fell on the stranger, he remembered what a look he had given him behind the chapel, and his heart danced with joy.

III.

Semyón's wife finished her work early. She had chopped wood, brought water, fed the children, taken her own supper, and was now deliberating when it would be best to mix some bread, "to-day or to-morrow?"

A large crust was still left. She thinks: "If Semyón gets something to eat in town, he won't care for much supper, and the bread will last till to-morrow."

Matrióna contemplated the crust for some time, and said to herself: "I am not going to mix any bread. There's just enough flour to

make one more loaf. We shall get along till Friday.”

Matrióna put away the bread, and sat down at the table to sew a patch on her husband's shirt.

She sews, and thinks how her husband will be buying pelts for the shuba.

“I hope the fur-dealer will not cheat him. For he is as simple as he can be. He, himself, would not cheat anybody, but a baby could lead him by the nose. Eight rubles is no small sum. You can get a fine shuba with it. Perhaps not one tanned, but still a good one. How we suffered last winter without any shuba! Could not go to the river nor anywhere! And whenever he went out-doors, he put on all the clothes, and I hadn't anything to wear. He is late in getting home. He ought to be here by this time. I hope my sweetheart has not got drunk.”

Just as these thoughts were passing through her mind the doorsteps creaked; some one was at the door. Matrióna stuck in the needle, went to the entry. There she sees that two men had come in, — Semyón, and with him a

strange peasant, without a cap and in felt boots.

Matrióna perceived immediately that her husband's breath smelt of wine. "Now," she thinks, "he has gone and got drunk."

And when she saw that he had not his kaftan on, and wore only her jacket, and had nothing in his hands, and said nothing, but only simpered, Matrióna's heart failed within her.

"He has drunk up the money, he has been on a spree with this miserable beggar; and, worse than all, he has gone and brought him home!"

Matrióna let them pass by her into the cottage; then she herself went in: she saw that the stranger was young, and that he had on their kaftan. There was no shirt to be seen under the kaftan; and he wore no cap.

As soon as he went in, he paused, and did not move and did not raise his eyes.

And Matrióna thinks: "He is not a good man; his conscience troubles him."

Matrióna scowled, went to the oven, and watched to see what they would do.

Semyón took off his cap and sat down on the

bench good-naturedly. "Well," says he, "Matrióna, can't you get us something to eat?"

Matrióna muttered something under her breath.

She did not offer to move, but as she stood by the oven she looked from one to the other and kept shaking her head.

Semyón saw that his wife was out of sorts and would not do anything, but he pretended not to notice it and took the stranger by the arm.

"Sit down, brother," says he; "we'll have some supper."

The stranger sat down on the bench.

"Well," says Semyón, "haven't you cooked anything?"

Matrióna's anger blazed out. "I cooked," says she, "but not for you. You are a fine man! I see you have been drinking! You went to get a shuba, and you have come home without your kaftan. And, then, you have brought home this naked vagabond with you. I haven't any supper for such drunkards as you are!"

"That'll do, Matrióna; what is the use of

letting your tongue run on so? If you had only asked first: 'What kind of a man. . .?'"

"You just tell me what you have done with the money!"

Semyón went to his kaftan, took out the bills, spread them out on the table.

"Here's the money, but Trífonof did not pay me ; he promised it to-morrow."

Matrióna grew still more angry.

"You didn't buy the new shuba, and you have given away your only kaftan to this naked vagabond whom you have brought home!"

She snatched the money from the table, and went off to hide it away, saying:—

"I haven't any supper. I can't feed all your drunken beggars!"

"Hey there! Matrióna, just hold your tongue! First you listen to what I have to say. . ."

"Much sense should I hear from a drunken fool! Good reason I had for not wanting to marry such a drunkard as you are. Mother gave me linen, and you have wasted it in drink; you went to get a shuba, and you spent it for drink."

Semyón was going to assure his wife that he

had spent only twenty kopeks for drink; he was going to tell her where he had found the man, but Matrióna would not give him a chance to speak a word; it was perfectly marvellous, but she managed to speak two words at once! Things that had taken place ten years before — she called them all up.

Matrióna scolded and scolded; then she sprang at Semyón and seized him by the sleeve.

“Give me back my jacket! It’s the only one I have, and you took it from me and put it on yourself. Give it here, you miserable dog! bestir yourself, you villain!”

Semyón began to strip off the jacket. As he was pulling his arms out of the sleeves, his wife gave it a twitch and split the jacket up the seams. Matrióna snatched the garment away, threw it over her head, and started for the door. She intended to go out, but she paused, and her heart was pulled in two directions, — she wanted to vent her spite, and she wanted to find what kind of a man the stranger was.

IV.

Matrióna paused, and said:—

“If he were a good man, then he would not have been naked; why, even now, he hasn’t any shirt on; if he had been engaged in decent business, you would have told where you discovered such an elegant fellow!”

“Well, I was going to tell you. I was walking along, and there behind the chapel, this man was sitting, stark naked, and half frozen to death. It is not summer, mind you, for a naked man! God brought me to him, else he would have perished. Now what could I do? Such things don’t happen every day. I took and dressed him, and brought him home with me. Calm your anger. It’s a sin, Matrióna; we must all die.”

Matrióna was about to make a surly reply, but her eyes fell on the stranger, and she held her peace.

The stranger was sitting motionless on the edge of the bench, just as he had sat down. His hands were folded on his knees, his head was bent on his breast, his eyes were shut, and

he kept frowning, as though something stifled him.

Matrióna made no reply.

Semyón went on to say, "Matrióna, can it be that God is not in you?"

Matrióna heard his words, and glanced again at the stranger, and suddenly her anger vanished. She turned from the door, went to the corner where the oven was, and brought the supper.

She set a bowl on the table, poured out the kvas,* and put on the last of the crust. She gave them the knife and the spoons.

"Have some victuals," she said.

Semyón touched the stranger. "Draw up, young man," says he.

Semyón cut the bread, crumbled it into the bowl, and they began to eat their supper. And Matrióna sat at the end of the table, leaned on her hand, and gazed at the stranger. And Matrióna began to feel sorry for him, and she conceived affection for him.

And suddenly the stranger brightened up,

* Fermented drink made of rye meal or soaked bread crumbs.

ceased to frown, lifted his eyes to Matrióna and smiled.

After they had finished their supper, the woman cleared off the things, and began to question the stranger:—

“Where are you from?”

“I do not belong hereabouts.”

“How did you happen to get into this road?”

“I cannot tell you.”

“Who maltreated you?”

“God punished me.”

“And you were lying there stripped?”

“Yes; there I was lying all naked, freezing to death, when Semyón saw me, had compassion on me, took off his kaftan, put it on me, and bade me come home with him. And here you have fed me, given me something to eat and to drink, and have taken pity on me. May the Lord requite you!”

Matrióna got up, took from the window Semyón's old shirt which she had been patching, and gave it to the stranger; then she found a pair of drawers and gave them also to him.

“There now,” says she, “I see that you have no shirt. Put these things on, and then lie down wherever you please, in the loft or on the oven.”

The stranger took off the kaftan, put on the shirt, and went to bed in the loft. Matrióna put out the light, took the kaftan, and lay down beside her husband.

Matrióna covered herself up with the skirt of the kaftan, but she lay without sleeping: she could not get the thought of the stranger out of her mind.

When she remembered that he had eaten her last crust, and that there was no bread for the morrow, when she remembered that she had given him the shirt and the drawers, she felt disturbed; but then came the thought of how he had smiled at her, and her heart leaped within her.

Matrióna lay long without falling asleep, and when she heard that Semyón was also awake, she pulled up the kaftan, and said:—

“Semyón!”

“Ha?”

“You ate up the last of the bread, and I

did not mix any more. I don't know how we shall get along to-morrow. Perhaps I might borrow some of neighbor Malánya."

"We shall get along; we shall have enough."

The wife lay without speaking. Then she said:—

"Well, he seems like a good man; but why doesn't he tell us about himself?"

"It must be because he can't."

"Sióm!"*

"Ha?"

"We are always giving; why doesn't some one give to us?"

Semyón did not know what reply to make. Saying, "You have talked enough!" he turned over and went to sleep.

V.

In the morning Semyón woke up.

His children were still asleep; his wife had gone to a neighbor's to get some bread. The stranger of the evening before, dressed in the old shirt and drawers, was sitting alone on the bench, looking up. And his face was brighter

* Diminutive of Semyón, or Simon.

than it had been the evening before. And Semyón said:—

“Well, my dear, the belly asks for bread, and the naked body for clothes. You must earn your own living. What do you know how to do?”

“There is nothing that I know how to do.”

Semyón was amazed, and he said:—

“If one has only the mind to, men can learn anything.”

“Men work, and I will work.”

“What is your name?”

“Mikháïla.”

“Well, Mikháïla, if you aren't willing to tell about yourself, that is your affair; but you must earn your own living. If you will work as I shall show you, I will keep you.”

“The Lord requite you! I am willing to learn; only show me what to do.”

Semyón took a thread, drew it through his fingers, and showed him how to make a waxed end.

“It does not take much skill—look . . .”

Mikháïla looked, also twisted the thread between his fingers: he instantly imitated him, and finished the point.

Semyón showed him how to make the welt. This also Mikháïla immediately understood. The shoemaker likewise showed him how to twist the bristle into the thread, and how to use the awl; and these things also Mikháïla immediately learned to do.

Whatever part of the work Semyón showed him he imitated him in, and in two days he was able to work as though he had been all his life a cobbler. He worked without relaxation, he ate little, and when his work was done he would sit silent, looking up. He did not go on the street, he spoke no more than was absolutely necessary, he never jested, he never laughed.

The only time that he was seen to smile was on the first evening when the woman got him his supper.

VI.

Day after day, week after week rolled by for a whole year.

Mikháïla lived on in the same way, working for Semyón. And the fame of Semyón's apprentice went abroad; no one, it was said, could make such neat, strong boots as Semyón's ap-

prentice Mikháïla. And from all around people came to Semyón to have boots made, and Semyón began to lay up money.

One winter's day, as Semyón and Mikháïla were sitting at their work, a sleigh drawn by a troïka drove up to the cottage, with a jingling of bells.

They looked out of the window: the sleigh stopped in front of the cottage; a footman jumped down from the box and opened the door. A bárin* in a fur coat got out of the sleigh, walked up to Semyón's cottage, and mounted the steps. Matrióna hurried to throw the door wide open.

The bárin bent his head and entered the cottage; when he drew himself up to his full height, his head almost touched the ceiling; he seemed to take up nearly all the room.

Semyón rose and bowed; he was surprised to see the bárin. He had never before seen such a man.

Semyón himself was thin, the stranger was spare, and Matrióna was like a dry twig; but this man seemed to be from a different world.

* The ordinary title of any landowner or noble.

His face was ruddy and full, his neck was like a bull's; it seemed as though he were made out of cast iron.

The b́arin got his breath, took off his shuba, sat down on the bench, and said: —

“Which is the master-shoemaker?”

Semyón stepped out. Says he, “I, your Honor.”

The b́arin shouted to his footman: “Hey, Fedka,* bring me the leather.”

The young fellow ran out and brought back a parcel. The b́arin took the parcel and laid it on the table.

“Open it,” said he. The footman opened it.

The b́arin touched the leather with his finger, and said to Semyón: —

“Now listen, shoemaker. Do you see this leather?”

“I see it, your Honor,” says he.

“Well, do you appreciate what kind of leather it is?”

Semyón felt of the leather, and said, “Fine leather.”

“Indeed it's fine! Fool that you are! you

* Diminutive of Feódor, Theodore.

never in your life saw such before! German leather. It cost twenty rubles."

Semyón was startled. He said: —

"Where, indeed, could we have seen anything like it?"

"Well, that's all right. Can you make from this leather a pair of boots that will fit me?"

"I can, your Honor."

The b́arin shouted at him: —

— "Can' is a good word. Now just realize whom you are making those boots for, and out of what kind of leather. You must make a pair of boots, so that when the year is gone they won't have got out of shape, or ripped. If you can, then take the job and cut the leather; but if you can't, then don't take it and don't cut the leather. I will tell you beforehand, if the boots rip or wear out of shape before the year is out, I will have you locked up; but if they don't rip or get out of shape before the end of the year, then I will give you ten rubles for your work."

Semyón was frightened, and was at a loss what to say.

He glanced at Mikháila. He nudged him

with his elbow, and whispered, "Had I better take it?"

Mikháïla nodded his head, meaning, "You had better take the job."

Semyón took Mikháïla's advice: he agreed to make a pair of boots that would not rip or wear out of shape before the year was over.

The bárin shouted to his footman, ordered him to take the boot from his left foot; then he stretched out his leg.

"Take the measure!"

Semyón cut off a piece of paper seventeen inches * long, smoothed it out, knelt down, wiped his hands nicely on his apron so as not to soil the bárin's stockings, and began to take the measure.

Semyón took the measure of the sole, he took the measure of the instep; then he started to measure the calf of the leg, but the paper was not long enough. The leg at the calf was as thick as a beam.

"Look out; don't make it too tight around the calf!"

Semyón was going to cut another piece of

* Ten vershóks, equivalent to 17.50 inches.

paper. The b́arin sat there, rubbing his toes together in his stockings, and looking at the inmates of the cottage: he caught sight of Mikháïla.

“Who is that yonder?” he demanded; “does he belong to you?”

“He is my workman. He will make the boots.”

“Look here,” says the b́arin to Mikháïla, “remember that they are to be made so as to last a whole year.”

Semyón also looked at Mikháïla; he saw that Mikháïla was paying no attention, but was standing in the corner, as though he saw some one there behind the b́arin. Mikháïla gazed and gazed, and suddenly smiled, and his whole face lighted up.

“What a fool you are, showing your teeth that way! You had better see to it that the boots are ready in time.”

And Mikháïla replied, “They will be ready as soon as they are needed.”

“Very well.”

The b́arin drew on his boot, buttoned up his shuba, and went to the door. But he for-

got to stoop, and so struck his head against the lintel.

The bárin stormed and rubbed his head; then he climbed into his sleigh and drove off. After the bárin was gone Semyón said: —

“Well, he’s as solid as a rock! You could not kill him with a mallet. His head almost broke the door-post, but it did not seem to hurt him much.”

And Matrióna said: “How can they help getting fat, living as they do? Even death does not carry off such a nail as he is.”

And Semyón says to Mikháïla: “Now, you see, we have taken this work, and we must do it as well as we can. The leather is costly, and the bárin gruff. We must not make any blunder. Now, your eye has become quicker, and your hand is more skilful than mine; there’s the measure. Cut out the leather, and I will be finishing up those vamps.”

Mikháïla did not fail to do as he was told; he took the bárin’s leather, stretched it out on the table, doubled it over, took the knife, and began to cut.

Matrióna came and watched Mikháïla as he

cut, and she was amazed to see what he was doing. For she was used to cobbler's work, and she looks and sees that Mikháïla is not cutting the leather for boots, but in rounded fashion.

Matrióna wanted to speak, but she thought in her own mind: "Of course I can't be expected to understand how to make boots for gentlemen; Mikháïla must understand it better than I do; I will not interfere."

After he had cut out the work, he took his waxed ends and began to sew, not as one does in making boots, with double threads, but with one thread, just as slippers are made.

Matrióna wondered at this also, but still she did not like to interfere. And Mikháïla kept on steadily with his work.

It came time for the nooning; Semyón got up, looked, and saw that Mikháïla had been making slippers out of the bárin's leather. Semyón groaned.

"How is this?" he asks himself. "Mikháïla has lived with me a whole year, and never made a mistake, and now he has made such a blunder! The bárin ordered thick-soled boots,

and he has been making slippers without soles ! He has ruined the leather. How can I make it right with the b́arin ? You can't find such leather."

And he said to Mikháïla : —

"What is this you have been doing? . . . My dear fellow, you have ruined me ! You know the b́arin ordered boots, and what have you made?"

He was right in the midst of his talk with Mikháïla when a knock came at the rapper ; some one was at the door. They looked out of the window ; some one had come on horseback, and was fastening the horse. They opened the door. The same b́arin's footman came walking in.

"Good day."

"Good day to you ; what is it?"

"My mistress sent me in regard to a pair of boots."

"What about the boots?"

"It is this. My b́arin does not need the boots ; he isn't alive any more."

"What is that you say?"

"He did not live to get home from your

house; he died in the sleigh. When the sleigh reached home, we went to help him out, but there he had fallen over like a bag, and there he lay stone-dead, and it took all our strength to lift him out of the sleigh. And his lady has sent me, saying: 'Tell the shoemaker of whom your b́arin just ordered boots from leather which he left with him — tell him that the boots are not needed, and that he is to make a pair of slippers for the corpse out of that leather just as quick as possible.' And I was to wait till they were made, and take them home with me. And so I have come."

Mikháïla took the rest of the leather from the table and rolled it up; he also took the slippers, which were all done, slapped them together, wiped them with his apron, and gave them to the young man. The young man took them.

"Good by, friends! Good luck to you!"

VII.

Still another year, and then two more passed by, and Mikháïla had now been living five years with Semyón. He lived in just the

same way as before. He never went anywhere, he kept his own counsels, and in all that time he smiled only twice,—once when Matrióna gave him something to eat; and the other time when he smiled on the b́arin.

Semyón was more than contented with his apprenticeship, and he no longer asked him where he came from; his only fear was lest he should leave him.

One time they were all at home. The mother was putting the iron kettles on the oven, and the children were playing on the benches and looking out of the window. Semyón was pegging away at one window, and Mikháïla at the other was putting lifts on a heel.

One of the boys ran along the bench toward Mikháïla, leaned over his shoulder, and looked out of the window.

“Uncle Mikháïla, just look! a merchant’s wife is coming to our house with some little girls. And one of the little girls is a cripple.”

The words were scarcely out of the boy’s mouth before Mikháïla threw down his work, leaned over toward the window, and looked out of doors. And Semyón was surprised.

Never before had Mikháïla cared to look out, but now his face seemed soldered to the window; he was looking at something very intently.

Semyón also looked out of the window: he sees a woman coming straight through his yard; she is neatly dressed; she has two little girls by the hand; they wear shubkas,* and kerchiefs over their heads. The little girls looked so much alike that it was hard to tell them apart, except that one of the little girls was lame in her foot: she limped as she walked.

The woman came into the entry, felt about in the dark, lifted the latch, and opened the door. She let the two little girls go before her into the cottage, and then she followed.

“How do you do, friends?”

“Welcome! What can we do for you?”

The woman sat down by the table; the two little girls clung to her knee: they were bashful.

“These little girls need to have some goat-skin shoes made for the spring.”

“Well, it can be done. We don’t generally

* Little fur garments.

make such small ones; but it's perfectly easy, either with welts or lined with linen. This here is Mikháïla; he's my workman."

Semyón glanced at Mikháïla, and sees that he has thrown down his work, and is sitting with his eyes fastened on the little girls.

And Semyón was amazed at Mikháïla. To be sure the little girls were pretty: they had dark eyes, they were plump and rosy, and they wore handsome shubkas and kerchiefs; but still Semyón cannot understand why he gazes so intently at them, as though they were friends of his.

Semyón was amazed, and got up, and began to talk with the woman, and to make his bargain. After he had made his bargain, he began to take the measures. The woman lifted on her lap the little cripple, and said: "Take two measures from this one; make one little shoe from the twisted foot, and three from the well one. Their feet are alike; they are twins."

Semyón took his tape, and said in reference to the little cripple: "How did this happen to her? She is such a pretty little girl. Was she born so?"

“No; her mother crushed it.”

Matrióna joined the conversation; she was anxious to learn who the woman and children were, and so she said:—

“Then you aren't their mother?”

“No; I am not their mother; I am no relation to them, good wife, and they are no relation to me at all: I adopted them.”

“If they are not your children, you take good care of them.”

“Why shouldn't I take good care of them? I nursed them both at my own breast. I had a baby of my own, but God took him. I did not take such good care of him as I do of these.”

“Whose children are they?”

VIII.

The woman became confidential, and began to tell them about it.

“Six years ago,” said she, “these little ones were left orphans in one week: the father was buried on Tuesday, and the mother died on Friday. Three days these little ones remained without their father, and then their mother followed him. At that time I was living with

my husband in the country: we were neighbors; we lived on adjoining farms. Their father was a peasant, and worked in the forest at wood-cutting. And they were felling a tree, and it caught him across the body. It hurt him all inside. As soon as they got him out, he gave his soul to God, and that same week his wife gave birth to twins—these are the little girls here. There they were, poor and alone, no one to take care of them, either grandmother or sister.

“She must have died soon after the children were born. For when I went in the morning to look after my neighbor, as soon as I entered the cottage, I found the poor thing dead and cold. And when she died she must have rolled over on this little girl . . . That’s the way she crushed it, and spoiled this foot.

“The people got together, they washed and laid out the body, they had a coffin made, and buried her. The people were always kind. But the two little ones were left alone. What was to be done with them? Now I was the only one of the women who had a baby. For eight weeks I had been nursing my first-born,

a boy. So I took them for the time being. The peasants got together; they planned and planned what to do with them, and they said to me:—

“‘You, Márya, just keep the little girls for a while, and give us a chance to decide.’”

“So I nursed the well one, but did not think it worth while to nurse the deformed one. I did not expect that she was going to live. And, then, I thought to myself, why should the little angel’s soul pass away? and I felt sorry for it. I tried to nurse her, and so I had my own and these two besides; yes, I had three children at the breast. But I was young and strong, and I had good food! And God gave me so much milk in my breasts that I had enough and to spare. I used to nurse two at once and let the third one wait. When one was through, I would take up the third. And so God let me nurse all three; but when my boy was in his third year, I lost him. And God never gave me any more children. But we began to make money. And now we are living with the merchant at the mill. We get good wages and live well. But no children.

And how lonely it would be, if it were not for these two little girls! How could I help loving them? They are to me like the wax in the candle!”

And the woman pressed the little lame girl to her with one arm, and with the other hand she tried to wipe the tears from her cheeks.

And Matrióna sighed, and said: “The old saw isn’t far wrong, ‘Men can live without father and mother, but without God one cannot live.’”

While they were thus talking together suddenly a flash of lightning seemed to irradiate from that corner of the cottage where Mikháïla was sitting. All look at him; and behold! Mikháïla is sitting there with his hands folded in his lap, and looking up and smiling.

IX.

The woman went away with the children, and Mikháïla arose from the bench and laid down his work; he took off his apron, made a low bow to the shoemaker and his wife, and said:—

“Farewell, friends; God has forgiven me. Do you also forgive me?”

And Semyón and Matrióna perceived that it was from Mikháïla that the light had flashed. And Semyón arose, bowed low before Mikháïla, and said to him: —

“I see, Mikháïla, that you are not a mere man, and I have no right to detain you nor to ask questions of you. But tell me one thing: when I had found you and brought you home, you were sad; but when my wife gave you something to eat, you smiled upon her, and after that you became more cheerful. And then when the bárin ordered the boots, why did you smile a second time, and after that become still more cheerful; and now when this woman brought these two little girls, why did you smile for the third time and become radiant? Tell me, Mikháïla, why was it that such a light streamed from you, and why you smiled three times?”

And Mikháïla said: —

“The light blazed from me because I had been punished, but now God has forgiven me. And I smiled the three times because it was

required of me to learn three of God's truths, and I have now learned the three truths of God. One truth I learned when your wife had pity on me, and so I smiled; the second truth I learned when the rich man ordered the boots, and I smiled for the second time; and now that I have seen the little girls, I have learned the third and last truth, and I smiled for the third time."

And Semyón said:—

"Tell me, Mikháïla, why God punished you, and what were the truths of God, that I, too, may know them."

And Mikháïla said:—

"God punished me because I disobeyed Him. I was an angel in heaven, and I was disobedient to God. I was an angel in heaven, and the Lord sent me to require a woman's soul. I flew down to earth; I see the woman lying alone—she is sick—she has just borne twins, two little girls. The little ones are sprawling about near their mother, but their mother is unable to lift them to her breast. The mother saw me; she perceived that God had sent me after her soul; she burst into tears, and said:—

“ ‘Angel of God, I have just buried my husband; a tree fell on him in the forest and killed him. I have no sister, nor aunt, nor mother to take care of my little ones; do not carry off my soul *; let me bring up my children myself, and nurse them and put them on their feet. It is impossible for children to live without father or mother.’

“ And I heeded what the mother said; I put one child to her breast, and laid the other in its mother’s arms, and I returned to the Lord in heaven. I flew back to the Lord, and I said: —

“ ‘I cannot take the mother’s soul. The father has been killed by a tree, the mother has given birth to twins, and begs me not to take her soul; she says: —

“ ‘ ‘ ‘Let me bring up my little ones; let me nurse them and put them on their feet. It is impossible for children to live without father and mother.’ I did not take the mother’s soul.’

“ And the Lord said: —

“ ‘Go and take the mother’s soul, and thou

* *Dúshenka*, little soul, in the original.

shalt learn three lessons: Thou shalt learn *what is in men*, and *what is not given unto men*, and *what men live by*. When thou shalt have learned these three lessons, then return to heaven.'

“And I flew down to earth and took the mother's soul. The little ones fell from her bosom. The dead body rolled over on the bed, fell upon one of the little girls and crushed her foot. I rose above the village and was going to give the soul to God, when a wind seized me, my wings ceased to move and fell off, and the soul arose alone to God, and I fell back to earth.”

X.

And Semyón and Matrióna now knew whom they had clothed and fed, and who it was that had been living with them, and they burst into tears of dismay and joy; and the angel said:—

“I was there in the field naked, and alone. Hitherto I had never known what human poverty was; I had known neither cold nor hunger, and now I was a man. I was famished, I was freezing, and I knew not what to do. And I

saw across the field a chapel made for God's service. I went to God's chapel, thinking to get shelter in it. But the chapel was locked, and I could not enter. And I crouched down behind the chapel, so as to get shelter from the wind. Evening came; I was hungry and chill, and ached all over. Suddenly I hear a man walking along the road, with a pair of boots in his hand, and talking to himself. I now saw for the first time since I had become a man the face of a human being, and this man's face was deathly, and it filled me with dismay, and I tried to hide from him. And I heard this man asking himself how he should protect himself from cold during the winter, and how get food for his wife and children. And I thought:—

“‘I am perishing with cold and hunger, and here is a man whose sole thought is to get a shuba for himself and his wife and to furnish bread for their sustenance. It is impossible for him to help me.’

“The man saw me and scowled; he seemed even more terrible than before; then he passed on. And I was in despair. Suddenly I heard

the man coming back. I looked up, and did not recognize that it was the same man as before: then there was death in his face, but now it had suddenly become alive, and I saw that God was in his face. He came to me, put clothes upon me, and took me home with him.

“When I reached his house, a woman came out to meet us, and she began to scold. The woman was even more terrible to me than the man: a dead soul seemed to proceed forth from her mouth, and I was suffocated by the breath of death. She wanted to drive me out into the cold, and I knew that she would die if she drove me out. And suddenly her husband reminded her of God. And instantly a change came over the woman. And when she had prepared something for me to eat, and looked kindly upon me, I looked at her, and there was no longer anything like death about her; she was now alive, and in her also I recognized God.

“And I remembered God’s first lesson: ‘*Thou shalt learn what is in men.*’

“And I perceived that LOVE was in men. And I was glad because God had begun to

fulfil His promise to me, and I smiled for the first time. But I was not yet ready to know the whole. I could not understand what was not given to men, and what men live by.

“I began to live in your house, and after I had lived with you a year the man came to order the boots which should be strong enough to last him a year without ripping or wearing out of shape. And I looked at him, and suddenly perceived behind his back my comrade, the Angel of Death. No one besides myself saw this angel; but I knew him, and I knew that before the sun should go down, he would take the rich man’s soul. And I said to myself: ‘This man is laying his plans to live another year, and he knoweth not that ere evening comes he will be dead.’

“And I realized suddenly the second saying of God: ‘*Thou shalt know what is not given unto men.*’

“And now I knew what was in men. And now I knew also what was not given unto men. It is not given unto men to know what is needed for their bodies. And I smiled for the second time. I was glad because I saw

my comrade, the angel, and because God had revealed unto me the second truth.

“But I could not yet understand all. I could not understand what men live by, and so I lived on, and waited until God should reveal to me the third truth also. And now in the sixth year the little twin girls have come with the woman, and I recognized the little ones, and I remembered how they had been left. And after I had recognized them, I thought:—

“‘The mother besought me in behalf of her children, because she thought that it would be impossible for children to live without father and mother, but a stranger nursed them and brought them up.’

“And when the woman caressed the children that were not her own, and wept over them, then I saw in her THE LIVING GOD, and knew *what people live by*. And I knew that God had revealed to me the last truth, and had pardoned me, and I smiled for the last time.”

XI.

And the angel's body became manifest, and he was clad with light so bright that the eyes could not endure to look upon him, and he spoke in clearer accents, as though the voice proceeded not from him, but came from heaven.

And the angel said:—

“I have learned that every man lives not through care of himself, but by love.

“It was not given to the mother to know what her children needed to keep them alive. It was not given the rich man to know what he himself needed, and it is not given to any man to know whether he will need boots for daily living, or slippers for his burial.

“When I became a man, I was kept alive, not by what thought I took for myself, but because a stranger and his wife had love in their hearts, and pitied and loved me. The orphans were kept alive, not because other people deliberated about what was to be done with them, but because a strange woman had love for them in her heart, and pitied them and loved them. And all men are kept alive, not by their own

forethought, but because there is LOVE IN MEN.

“I knew before that God gave life to men, and desired them to live; but now I know something above and beyond that.

“I have learned that God does not wish men to live each for himself, and therefore He has not revealed to them what they each need for themselves, but He wishes them to live in union, and therefore He has revealed to them what is necessary for each and for all together.

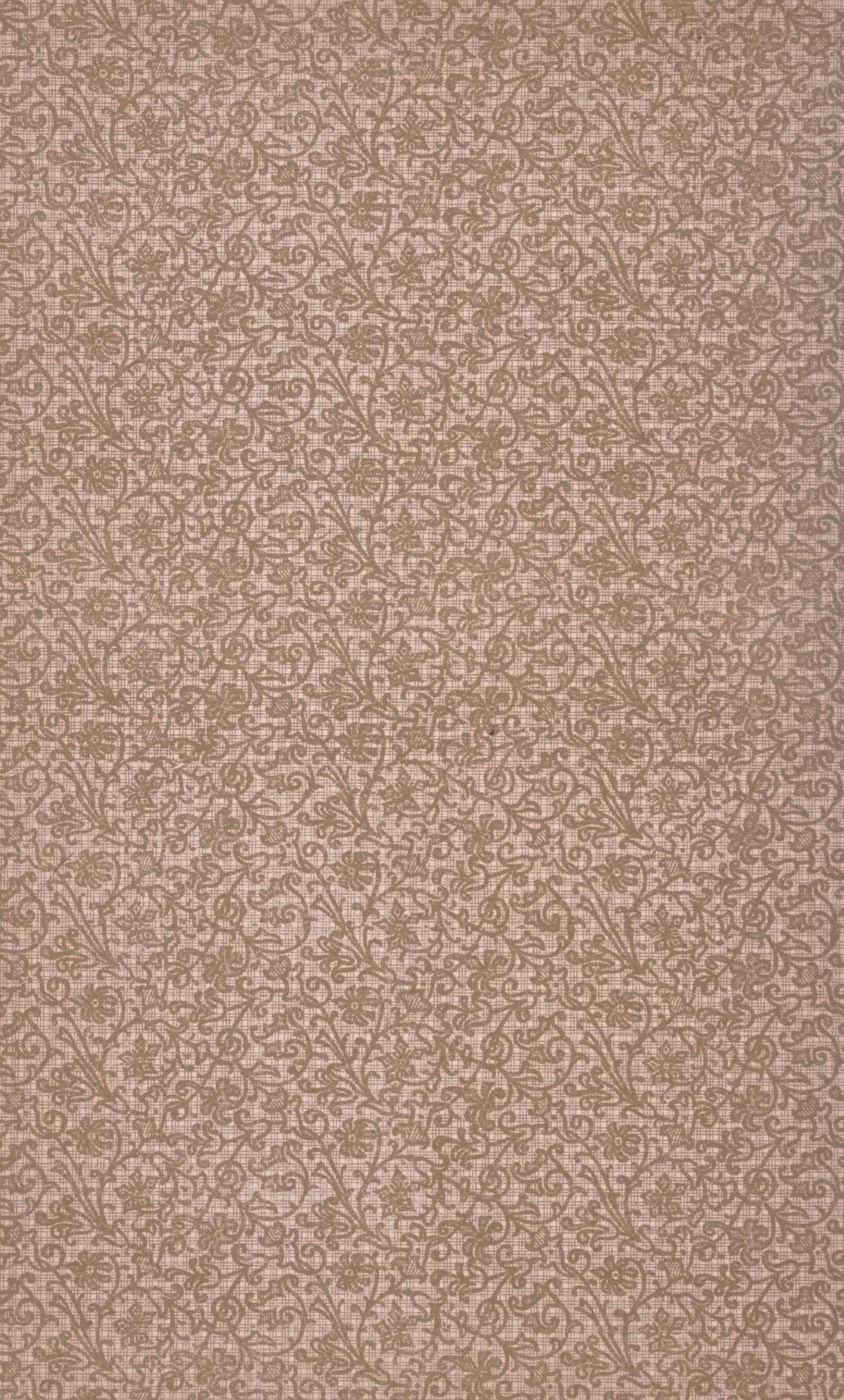
“I have now learned that it is only in appearance that they are kept alive through care for themselves, but that in reality they are kept alive through love. *He who dwelleth in love dwelleth in God, and God in him, for God is love.*”

And the angel sang a hymn of praise to God, and the cottage shook with the sound of his voice.

And the ceiling parted, and a column of fire reached from earth to heaven. And Semyón and his wife and children fell prostrate on the ground. And pinions appeared upon the angel's shoulders, and he soared away to heaven.

And when Semyón opened his eyes, the cottage was the same as it had ever been, and there was no one in it save himself and his family.







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