LEO TOLSTOY

FABLES FOR CHILDREN, STORIES FOR CHILDREN, NATURAL SCIENCE STORIES, POPULAR EDUCATION, DECEMBRISTS, MORAL TALES

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Fables for Children, Stories for Children, Natural Science Stories, Popular Education, Decembrists, Moral Tales

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Содержание

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I. ÆSOP'S FABLES

THE ANT AND THE DOVE

An Ant came down to the brook: he wanted to drink. A wave washed him down and almost drowned him. A Dove was carrying a branch; she saw the Ant was drowning, so she cast the branch down to him in the brook. The Ant got up on the branch and was saved. Then a hunter placed a snare for the Dove, and was on the point of drawing it in. The Ant crawled up to the hunter and bit him on the leg; the hunter groaned and dropped the snare. The Dove fluttered upwards and flew away.

THE TURTLE AND THE EAGLE

A Turtle asked an Eagle to teach her how to fly. The Eagle advised her not to try, as she was not fit for it; but she insisted. The Eagle took her in his claws, raised her up, and dropped her: she fell on stones and broke to pieces.

THE POLECAT

A Polecat entered a smithy and began to lick the filings. Blood began to flow from the Polecat's mouth, but he was glad and continued to lick; he thought that the blood was coming from the iron, and lost his whole tongue.

THE LION AND THE MOUSE

A Lion was sleeping. A Mouse ran over his body. He awoke and caught her. The Mouse besought him; she said:

"Let me go, and I will do you a favour!"

The Lion laughed at the Mouse for promising him a favour, and let her go.

Then the hunters caught the Lion and tied him with a rope to a tree. The Mouse heard the Lion's roar, ran up, gnawed the rope through, and said:

"Do you remember? You laughed, not thinking that I could repay, but now you see that a favour may come also from a Mouse."

THE LIAR

A Boy was watching the sheep and, pretending that he saw a wolf, he began to cry:

"Help! A wolf! A wolf!"

The peasants came running up and saw that it was not so. After doing this for a second and a third time, it happened that a wolf came indeed. The Boy began to cry:

"Come, come, quickly, a wolf!"

The peasants thought that he was deceiving them as usual, and paid no attention to him. The wolf saw there was no reason to be afraid: he leisurely killed the whole flock.

THE ASS AND THE HORSE

A man had an Ass and a Horse. They were walking on the road; the Ass said to the Horse:

"It is heavy for me. – I shall not be able to carry it all; take at least a part of my load."

The Horse paid no attention to him. The Ass fell down from overstraining himself, and died. When the master transferred the Ass's load on the Horse, and added the Ass's hide, the Horse began to complain:

"Oh, woe to me, poor one, woe to me, unfortunate Horse! I did not want to help him even a little, and now I have to carry everything, and his hide, too."

THE JACKDAW AND THE DOVES

A Jackdaw saw that the Doves were well fed, – so she painted herself white and flew into the dove-cot. The Doves thought at first that she was a dove like them, and let her in. But the Jackdaw forgot herself and croaked in jackdaw fashion. Then the Doves began to pick at her and drove her away. The Jackdaw flew back to her friends, but the jackdaws were frightened at her, seeing her white, and themselves drove her away.

THE WOMAN AND THE HEN

A Hen laid an egg each day. The Mistress thought that if she gave her more to eat, she would lay twice as much. So she did. The Hen grew fat and stopped laying.

THE LION, THE BEAR, AND THE FOX

A Lion and a Bear procured some meat and began to fight for it. The Bear did not want to give in, nor did the Lion yield. They fought for so long a time that they both grew feeble and lay down. A Fox saw the meat between them; she grabbed it and ran away with it.

THE DOG, THE COCK, AND THE FOX

A Dog and a Cock went to travel together. At night the Cock fell asleep in a tree, and the Dog fixed a place for himself between the roots of that tree. When the time came, the Cock began to crow. A Fox heard the Cock, ran up to the tree, and began to beg the Cock to come down, as she wanted to give him her respects for such a fine voice.

The Cock said:

"You must first wake up the janitor, – he is sleeping between the roots. Let him open up, and I will come down."

The Fox began to look for the janitor, and started yelping. The Dog sprang out at once and killed the Fox.

THE HORSE AND THE GROOM

A Groom stole the Horse's oats, and sold them, but he cleaned the Horse each day. Said the Horse:

"If you really wish me to be in good condition, do not sell my oats."

THE FROG AND THE LION

A Lion heard a Frog croaking, and thought it was a large beast that was calling so loud. He walked up, and saw a Frog coming out of the swamp. The Lion crushed her with his paw and said:

"There is nothing to look at, and yet I was frightened."

THE GRASSHOPPER AND THE ANTS

In the fall the wheat of the Ants got wet; they were drying it. A hungry Grasshopper asked them for something to eat. The Ants said:

"Why did you not gather food during the summer?"

She said:

"I had no time: I sang songs."

They laughed, and said:

"If you sang in the summer, dance in the winter!"

THE HEN AND THE GOLDEN EGGS

A master had a Hen which laid golden eggs. He wanted more gold at once, and so killed the Hen (he thought that inside of her there was a large lump of gold), but she was just like any other hen.

THE ASS IN THE LION'S SKIN

An Ass put on a lion's skin, and all thought it was a lion. Men and animals ran away from him. A wind sprang up, and the skin was blown aside, and the Ass could be seen. People ran up and beat the Ass.

THE HEN AND THE SWALLOW

A Hen found some snake's eggs and began to sit on them. A Swallow saw it and said:

"Stupid one! You will hatch them out, and, when they grow up, you will be the first one to suffer from them."

THE STAG AND THE FAWN

A Fawn once said to a Stag:

"Father, you are larger and fleeter than the dogs, and, besides, you have huge antlers for defence; why, then, are you so afraid of the dogs?"

The Stag laughed, and said:

"You speak the truth, my child. The trouble is, – the moment I hear the dogs bark, I run before I have time to think."

THE FOX AND THE GRAPES

A Fox saw some ripe bunches of grapes hanging high, and tried to get at them, in order to eat them.

She tried hard, but could not get them. To drown her annoyance she said:

"They are still sour."

THE MAIDS AND THE COCK

A mistress used to wake the Maids at night and, as soon as the cocks crowed, put them to work. The Maids found that hard, and decided to kill the Cock, so that the mistress should not be wakened. They killed him, but now they suffered more than ever: the mistress was afraid that she would sleep past the time and so began to wake the Maids earlier.

THE FISHERMAN AND THE FISH

A Fisherman caught a Fish. Said the Fish:

"Fisherman, let me go into the water; you see I am small: you will have little profit of me. If you let me go, I shall grow up, and then you will catch me when it will be worth while."

But the Fisherman said:

"A fool would be he who should wait for greater profit, and let the lesser slip out of his hands."

THE FOX AND THE GOAT

A Goat wanted to drink. He went down the incline to the well, drank his fill, and gained in weight. He started to get out, but could not do so. He began to bleat. A Fox saw him and said:

"That's it, stupid one! If you had as much sense in your head as there are hairs in your beard, you would have thought of how to get out before you climbed down."

THE DOG AND HER SHADOW

A Dog was crossing the river over a plank, carrying a piece of meat in her teeth. She saw herself in the water and thought that another dog was carrying a piece of meat. She dropped her piece and dashed forward to take away what the other dog had: the other meat was gone, and her own was carried away by the stream.

And thus the Dog was left without anything.

THE CRANE AND THE STORK

A peasant put out his nets to catch the Cranes for tramping down his field. In the nets were caught the Cranes, and with them one Stork.

The Stork said to the peasant:

"Let me go! I am not a Crane, but a Stork; we are most honoured birds; I live on your father's house. You can see by my feathers that I am not a Crane."

The peasant said:

"With the Cranes I have caught you, and with them will I kill you."

THE GARDENER AND HIS SONS

A Gardener wanted his Sons to get used to gardening. As he was dying, he called them up and said to them:

"Children, when I am dead, look for what is hidden in the vineyard."

The Sons thought that it was a treasure, and when their father died, they began to dig there, and dug up the whole ground. They did not find the treasure, but they ploughed the vineyard up so well that it brought forth more fruit than ever.

THE WOLF AND THE CRANE

A Wolf had a bone stuck in his throat, and could not cough it up. He called the Crane, and said to him:

"Crane, you have a long neck. Thrust your head into my throat and draw out the bone! I will reward you."

The Crane stuck his head in, pulled out the bone, and said:

"Give me my reward!"

The Wolf gnashed his teeth and said:

"Is it not enough reward for you that I did not bite off your head when it was between my teeth?"

THE HARES AND THE FROGS

The Hares once got together, and began to complain about their life:

"We perish from men, and from dogs, and from eagles, and from all the other beasts. It would be better to die at once than to live in fright and suffer. Come, let us drown ourselves!"

And the Hares raced away to drown themselves in a lake. The Frogs heard the Hares and plumped into the water. So one of the Hares said:

"Wait, boys! Let us put off the drowning! Evidently the Frogs are having a harder life than we: they are afraid even of us."

THE FATHER AND HIS SONS

A Father told his Sons to live in peace: they paid no attention to him. So he told them to bring the bath broom, and said:

"Break it!"

No matter how much they tried, they could not break it. Then the Father unclosed the broom, and told them to break the rods singly. They broke it.

The Father said:

"So it is with you: if you live in peace, no one will overcome you; but if you quarrel, and are divided, any one will easily ruin you."

THE FOX

A Fox got caught in a trap. She tore off her tail, and got away. She began to contrive how to cover up her shame. She called together the Foxes, and begged them to cut off their tails.

"A tail," she said, "is a useless thing. In vain do we drag along a dead weight."

One of the Foxes said:

"You would not be speaking thus, if you were not tailless!"

The tailless Fox grew silent and went away.

THE WILD ASS AND THE TAME ASS

A Wild Ass saw a Tame Ass. The Wild Ass went up to him and began to praise his life, saying how smooth his body was, and what sweet feed he received. Later, when the Tame Ass was loaded down, and a driver began to goad him with a stick, the Wild Ass said:

"No, brother, I do not envy you: I see that your life is going hard with you."

THE STAG

A Stag went to the brook to quench his thirst. He saw himself in the water, and began to admire his horns, seeing how large and branching they were; and he looked at his feet, and said: "But my feet are unseemly and thin."

Suddenly a Lion sprang out and made for the Stag. The Stag started to run over the open plain. He was getting away, but there came a forest, and his horns caught in the branches, and the lion caught him. As the Stag was dying, he said:

"How foolish I am! That which I thought to be unseemly and thin was saving me, and what I gloried in has been my ruin."

THE DOG AND THE WOLF

A Dog fell asleep back of the yard. A Wolf ran up and wanted to eat him.

Said the Dog:

"Wolf, don't eat me yet: now I am lean and bony. Wait a little, – my master is going to celebrate a wedding; then I shall have plenty to eat; I shall grow fat. It will be better to eat me then."

The Wolf believed her, and went away. Then he came a second time, and saw the Dog lying on the roof. The Wolf said to her:

"Well, have they had the wedding?"

The Dog replied:

"Listen, Wolf! If you catch me again asleep in front of the yard, do not wait for the wedding."

THE GNAT AND THE LION

A Gnat came to a Lion, and said:

"Do you think that you have more strength than I? You are mistaken! What does your strength consist in? Is it that you scratch with your claws, and gnaw with your teeth? That is the way the women quarrel with their husbands. I am stronger than you: if you wish let us fight!"

And the Gnat sounded his horn, and began to bite the Lion on his bare cheeks and his nose. The Lion struck his face with his paws and scratched it with his claws. He tore his face until the blood came, and gave up.

The Gnat trumpeted for joy, and flew away. Then he became entangled in a spider's web, and the spider began to suck him up. The Gnat said:

"I have vanquished the strong beast, the Lion, and now I perish from this nasty spider."

THE HORSE AND HIS MASTERS

A gardener had a Horse. She had much to do, but little to eat; so she began to pray to God to get another master. And so it happened. The gardener sold the Horse to a potter. The Horse was glad, but the potter had even more work for her to do. And again the Horse complained of her lot, and began to pray that she might get a better master. And this prayer, too, was fulfilled. The potter sold the Horse to a tanner. When the Horse saw the skins of horses in the tanner's yard, she began to cry:

"Woe to me, wretched one! It would be better if I could stay with my old masters. It is evident they have sold me now not for work, but for my skin's sake."

THE OLD MAN AND DEATH

An Old Man cut some wood, which he carried away. He had to carry it far. He grew tired, so he put down his bundle, and said:

"Oh, if Death would only come!"

Death came, and said:

"Here I am, what do you want?"

The Old Man was frightened, and said:

"Lift up my bundle!"

THE LION AND THE FOX

A Lion, growing old, was unable to catch the animals, and so intended to live by cunning. He went into a den, lay down there, and pretended that he was sick. The animals came to see him, and he ate up those that went into his den. The Fox guessed the trick. She stood at the entrance of the den, and said:

"Well, Lion, how are you feeling?"

The Lion answered:

"Poorly. Why don't you come in?"

The Fox replied:

"I do not come in because I see by the tracks that many have entered, but none have come out."

THE STAG AND THE VINEYARD

A Stag hid himself from the hunters in a vineyard. When the hunters missed him, the Stag began to nibble at the grape-vine leaves.

The hunters noticed that the leaves were moving, and so they thought, "There must be an animal under those leaves," and fired their guns, and wounded the Stag.

The Stag said, dying:

"It serves me right for wanting to eat the leaves that saved me."

THE CAT AND THE MICE

A house was overrun with Mice. A Cat found his way into the house, and began to catch them. The Mice saw that matters were bad, and said:

"Mice, let us not come down from the ceiling! The Cat cannot get up there."

When the Mice stopped coming down, the Cat decided that he must catch them by a trick. He grasped the ceiling with one leg, hung down from it, and made believe that he was dead.

A Mouse looked out at him, but said:

"No, my friend! Even if you should turn into a bag, I would not go up to you."

THE WOLF AND THE GOAT

A Wolf saw a Goat browsing on a rocky mountain, and he could not get at her; so he said to her:

"Come down lower! The place is more even, and the grass is much sweeter to feed on."

But the Goat answered:

"You are not calling me down for that, Wolf: you are troubling yourself not about my food, but about yours."

THE REEDS AND THE OLIVE-TREE

The Olive-tree and the Reeds quarrelled about who was stronger and sounder. The Olive-tree laughed at the Reeds because they bent in every wind. The Reeds kept silence. A storm came: the Reeds swayed, tossed, bowed to the ground, – and remained unharmed. The Olive-tree strained her branches against the wind, – and broke.

THE TWO COMPANIONS

Two Companions were walking through the forest when a Bear jumped out on them. One started to run, climbed a tree, and hid himself, but the other remained in the road. He had nothing to do, so he fell down on the ground and pretended that he was dead.

The Bear went up to him, and sniffed at him; but he had stopped breathing.

The Bear sniffed at his face; he thought that he was dead, and so went away.

When the Bear was gone, the Companion climbed down from the tree and laughing, said: "What did the Bear whisper in your ear?"

"He told me that those who in danger run away from their companions are bad people."

THE WOLF AND THE LAMB

A Wolf saw a Lamb drinking at a river. The Wolf wanted to eat the Lamb, and so he began to annoy him. He said:

"You are muddling my water and do not let me drink."

The Lamb said:

"How can I muddle your water? I am standing downstream from you; besides, I drink with the tips of my lips."

And the Wolf said:

"Well, why did you call my father names last summer?"

The Lamb said:

"But, Wolf, I was not yet born last summer."

The Wolf got angry, and said:

"It is hard to get the best of you. Besides, my stomach is empty, so I will devour you."

THE LION, THE WOLF, AND THE FOX

An old, sick Lion was lying in his den. All the animals came to see the king, but the Fox kept away. So the Wolf was glad of the chance, and began to slander the Fox before the Lion.

"She does not esteem you in the least," he said, "she has not come once to see the king."

The Fox happened to run by as he was saying these words. She heard what the Wolf had said, and thought:

"Wait, Wolf, I will get my revenge on you."

So the Lion began to roar at the Fox, but she said:

"Do not have me killed, but let me say a word! I did not come to see you because I had no time. And I had no time because I ran over the whole world to ask the doctors for a remedy for you. I have just got it, and so I have come to see you."

The Lion said:

"What is the remedy?"

"It is this: if you flay a live Wolf, and put his warm hide on you – "

When the Lion stretched out the Wolf, the Fox laughed, and said:

"That's it, my friend: masters ought to be led to do good, not evil."

THE LION, THE ASS, AND THE FOX

The Lion, the Ass, and the Fox went out to hunt. They caught a large number of animals, and the Lion told the Ass to divide them up. The Ass divided them into three equal parts and said: "Now, take them!"

The Lion grew angry, ate up the Ass, and told the Fox to divide them up anew. The Fox collected them all into one heap, and left a small bit for herself. The Lion looked at it and said:

"Clever Fox! Who taught you to divide so well?"

She said:

"What about that Ass?"

THE PEASANT AND THE WATER-SPRITE

A Peasant lost his axe in the river; he sat down on the bank in grief, and began to weep.

The Water-sprite heard the Peasant and took pity on him. He brought a gold axe out of the river, and said: "Is this your axe?"

The Peasant said: "No, it is not mine."

The Water-sprite brought another, a silver axe.

Again the Peasant said: "It is not my axe."

Then the Water-sprite brought out the real axe.

The Peasant said: "Now this is my axe."

The Water-sprite made the Peasant a present of all three axes, for having told the truth.

At home the Peasant showed his axes to his friends, and told them what had happened to him.

One of the peasants made up his mind to do the same: he went to the river, purposely threw his axe into the water, sat down on the bank, and began to weep.

The Water-sprite brought out a gold axe, and asked: "Is this your axe?"

The Peasant was glad, and called out: "It is mine, mine!"

The Water-sprite did not give him the gold axe, and did not bring him back his own either, because he had told an untruth.

THE RAVEN AND THE FOX

A Raven got himself a piece of meat, and sat down on a tree. The Fox wanted to get it from him. She went up to him, and said:

"Oh, Raven, as I look at you, – from your size and beauty, – you ought to be a king! And you would certainly be a king, if you had a good voice."

The Raven opened his mouth wide, and began to croak with all his might and main. The meat fell down. The Fox caught it and said:

"Oh, Raven! If you had also sense, you would certainly be a king."

II. ADAPTATIONS AND IMITATIONS OF HINDOO FABLES

THE SNAKE'S HEAD AND TAIL

The Snake's Tail had a quarrel with the Snake's Head about who was to walk in front. The Head said:

"You cannot walk in front, because you have no eyes and no ears."

The Tail said:

"Yes, but I have strength, I move you; if I want to, I can wind myself around a tree, and you cannot get off the spot."

The Head said:

"Let us separate!"

And the Tail tore himself loose from the Head, and crept on; but the moment he got away from the Head, he fell into a hole and was lost.

FINE THREAD

A Man ordered some fine thread from a Spinner. The Spinner spun it for him, but the Man said that the thread was not good, and that he wanted the finest thread he could get. The Spinner said:

"If this is not fine enough, take this!" and she pointed to an empty space.

He said that he did not see any. The Spinner said:

"You do not see it, because it is so fine. I do not see it myself."

The Fool was glad, and ordered some more thread of this kind, and paid her for what he got.

THE PARTITION OF THE INHERITANCE

A Father had two Sons. He said to them: "When I die, divide everything into two equal parts."

When the Father died, the Sons could not divide without quarrelling. They went to a Neighbour to have him settle the matter. The Neighbour asked them how their Father had told them to divide. They said:

"He ordered us to divide everything into two equal parts."

The Neighbour said:

"If so, tear all your garments into two halves, break your dishes into two halves, and cut all your cattle into two halves!"

The Brothers obeyed their Neighbour, and lost everything.

THE MONKEY

A Man went into the woods, cut down a tree, and began to saw it. He raised the end of the tree on a stump, sat astride over it, and began to saw. Then he drove a wedge into the split that he had sawed, and went on sawing; then he took out the wedge and drove it in farther down.

A Monkey was sitting on a tree and watching him. When the Man lay down to sleep, the Monkey seated herself astride the tree, and wanted to do the same; but when she took out the wedge, the tree sprang back and caught her tail. She began to tug and to cry. The Man woke up, beat the Monkey, and tied a rope to her.

THE MONKEY AND THE PEASE

A Monkey was carrying both her hands full of pease. A pea dropped on the ground; the Monkey wanted to pick it up, and dropped twenty peas. She rushed to pick them up and lost all the rest. Then she flew into a rage, swept away all the pease and ran off.

THE MILCH COW

A Man had a Cow; she gave each day a pot full of milk. The Man invited a number of guests. To have as much milk as possible, he did not milk the Cow for ten days. He thought that on the tenth day the Cow would give him ten pitchers of milk.

But the Cow's milk went back, and she gave less milk than before.

THE DUCK AND THE MOON

A Duck was swimming in the pond, trying to find some fish, but she did not find one in a whole day. When night came, she saw the Moon in the water; she thought that it was a fish, and plunged in to catch the Moon. The other ducks saw her do it and laughed at her.

That made the Duck feel so ashamed and bashful that when she saw a fish under the Water, she did not try to catch it, and so died of hunger.

THE WOLF IN THE DUST

A Wolf wanted to pick a sheep out of a flock, and stepped into the wind, so that the dust of the flock might blow on him.

The Sheep Dog saw him, and said:

"There is no sense, Wolf, in your walking in the dust: it will make your eyes ache."

But the Wolf said:

"The trouble is, Doggy, that my eyes have been aching for quite awhile, and I have been told that the dust from a flock of sheep will cure the eyes."

THE MOUSE UNDER THE GRANARY

A Mouse was living under the granary. In the floor of the granary there was a little hole, and the grain fell down through it. The Mouse had an easy life of it, but she wanted to brag of her ease: she gnawed a larger hole in the floor, and invited other mice.

"Come to a feast with me," said she; "there will be plenty to eat for everybody."

When she brought the mice, she saw there was no hole. The peasant had noticed the big hole in the floor, and had stopped it up.

THE BEST PEARS

A master sent his Servant to buy the best-tasting pears. The Servant came to the shop and asked for pears. The dealer gave him some; but the Servant said:

"No, give me the best!"

The dealer said:

"Try one; you will see that they taste good."

"How shall I know," said the Servant, "that they all taste good, if I try one only?"

He bit off a piece from each pear, and brought them to his master. Then his master sent him away.

THE FALCON AND THE COCK

The Falcon was used to the master, and came to his hand when he was called; the Cock ran away from his master and cried when people went up to him. So the Falcon said to the Cock:

"In you Cocks there is no gratitude; one can see that you are of a common breed. You go to your masters only when you are hungry. It is different with us wild birds. We have much strength, and we can fly faster than anybody; still we do not fly away from people, but of our own accord go to their hands when we are called. We remember that they feed us."

Then the Cock said:

"You do not run away from people because you have never seen a roast Falcon, but we, you know, see roast Cocks."

THE JACKALS AND THE ELEPHANT

The Jackals had eaten up all the carrion in the woods, and had nothing to eat. So an old Jackal was thinking how to find something to feed on. He went to an Elephant, and said:

"We had a king, but he became overweening: he told us to do things that nobody could do; we want to choose another king, and my people have sent me to ask you to be our king. You will have an easy life with us. Whatever you will order us to do, we will do, and we will honour you in everything. Come to our kingdom!"

The Elephant consented, and followed the Jackal. The Jackal brought him to a swamp. When the Elephant stuck fast in it, the Jackal said:

"Now command! Whatever you command, we will do."

The Elephant said:

"I command you to pull me out from here."

The Jackal began to laugh, and said:

"Take hold of my tail with your trunk, and I will pull you out at once."

The Elephant said:

"Can I be pulled out by a tail?"

But the Jackal said to him:

"Why, then, do you command us to do what is impossible? Did we not drive away our first king for telling us to do what could not be done?"

When the Elephant died in the swamp the Jackals came and ate him up.

THE HERON, THE FISHES, AND THE CRAB

A Heron was living near a pond. She grew old, and had no strength left with which to catch the fish. She began to contrive how to live by cunning. So she said to the Fishes:

"You Fishes do not know that a calamity is in store for you: I have heard the people say that they are going to let off the pond, and catch every one of you. I know of a nice little pond back of the mountain. I should like to help you, but I am old, and it is hard for me to fly."

The Fishes begged the Heron to help them. So the Heron said:

"All right, I will do what I can for you, and will carry you over: only I cannot do it at once, – I will take you there one after another."

And the Fishes were happy; they kept begging her: "Carry me over! Carry me over!"

And the Heron started carrying them. She would take one up, would carry her into the field, and would eat her up. And thus she ate a large number of Fishes.

In the pond there lived an old Crab. When the Heron began to take out the Fishes, he saw what was up, and said:

"Now, Heron, take me to the new abode!"

The Heron took the Crab and carried him off. When she flew out on the field, she wanted to throw the Crab down. But the Crab

saw the fish-bones on the ground, and so squeezed the Heron's neck with his claws, and choked her to death. Then he crawled back to the pond, and told the Fishes.

THE WATER-SPRITE AND THE PEARL

A Man was rowing in a boat, and dropped a costly pearl into the sea. The Man returned to the shore, took a pail, and began to draw up the water and to pour it out on the land. He drew the water and poured it out for three days without stopping.

On the fourth day the Water-sprite came out of the sea, and asked:

"Why are you drawing the water?"

The Man said:

"I am drawing it because I have dropped a pearl into it."

The Water-sprite asked him:

"Will you stop soon?"

The Man said:

"I will stop when I dry up the sea."

Then the Water-sprite returned to the sea, brought back that pearl, and gave it to the Man.

THE BLIND MAN AND THE MILK

A Man born blind asked a Seeing Man:

"Of what colour is milk?"

The Seeing Man said: "The colour of milk is the same as that of white paper."

The Blind Man asked: "Well, does that colour rustle in your hands like paper?"

The Seeing Man said: "No, it is as white as white flour."

The Blind Man asked: "Well, is it as soft and as powdery as flour?"

The Seeing Man said: "No, it is simply as white as a white hare."

The Blind Man asked: "Well, is it as fluffy and soft as a hare?"

The Seeing Man said: "No, it is as white as snow."

The Blind Man asked: "Well, is it as cold as snow?"

And no matter how many examples the Seeing Man gave, the Blind Man was unable to understand what the white colour of milk was like.

THE WOLF AND THE BOW

A hunter went out to hunt with bow and arrows. He killed a goat. He threw her on his shoulders and carried her along. On his way he saw a boar. He threw down the goat, and shot at the boar and wounded him. The boar rushed against the hunter and butted him to death, and himself died on the spot. A Wolf scented the blood, and came to the place where lay the goat, the boar, the man, and his bow. The Wolf was glad, and said:

"Now I shall have enough to eat for a long time; only I will not eat everything at once, but little by little, so that nothing may be lost: first I will eat the tougher things, and then I will lunch on what is soft and sweet."

The Wolf sniffed at the goat, the boar, and the man, and said:

"This is all soft food, so I will eat it later; let me first start on these sinews of the bow."

And he began to gnaw the sinews of the bow. When he bit through the string, the bow sprang back and hit him on his belly. He died on the spot, and other wolves ate up the man, the goat, the boar, and the Wolf.

THE BIRDS IN THE NET

A Hunter set out a net near a lake and caught a number of birds. The birds were large, and they raised the net and flew away with it. The Hunter ran after them. A Peasant saw the Hunter running, and said:

"Where are you running? How can you catch up with the birds, while you are on foot?"

The Hunter said:

"If it were one bird, I should not catch it, but now I shall."

And so it happened. When evening came, the birds began to pull for the night each in a different direction: one to the woods, another to the swamp, a third to the field; and all fell with the net to the ground, and the Hunter caught them.

THE KING AND THE FALCON

A certain King let his favourite Falcon loose on a hare, and galloped after him.

The Falcon caught the hare. The King took him away, and began to look for some water to drink. The King found it on a knoll, but it came only drop by drop. The King fetched his cup from the saddle, and placed it under the water. The Water flowed in drops, and when the cup was filled, the King raised it to his mouth and wanted to drink it. Suddenly the Falcon fluttered on the King's arm and spilled the water. The King placed the cup once more under the drops. He waited for a long time for the cup to be filled even with the brim, and again, as he carried it to his mouth, the Falcon flapped his wings and spilled the water.

When the King filled his cup for the third time and began to carry it to his mouth, the Falcon again spilled it. The King flew into a rage and killed him by flinging him against a stone with all his force. Just then the King's servants rode up, and one of them ran up-hill to the spring, to find as much water as possible, and to fill the cup. But the servant did not bring the water; he returned with the empty cup, and said:

"You cannot drink that water; there is a snake in the spring, and she has let her venom into the water. It is fortunate that the Falcon has spilled the water. If you had drunk it, you would have died."

The King said:

"How badly I have repaid the Falcon! He has saved my life, and I killed him."

THE KING AND THE ELEPHANTS

An Indian King ordered all the Blind People to be assembled, and when they came, he ordered that all the Elephants be shown to them. The Blind Men went to the stable and began to feel the Elephants. One felt a leg, another a tail, a third the stump of a tail, a fourth a belly, a fifth a back, a sixth the ears, a seventh the tusks, and an eighth a trunk.

Then the King called the Blind Men, and asked them: "What are my Elephants like?"

One Blind Man said: "Your Elephants are like posts." He had felt the legs.

Another Blind Man said: "They are like bath brooms." He had felt the end of the tail.

A third said: "They are like branches." He had felt the tail stump.

The one who had touched a belly said: "The Elephants are like a clod of earth."

The one who had touched the sides said: "They are like a wall."

The one who had touched a back said: "They are like a mound."

The one who had touched the ears said: "They are like a mortar."

The one who had touched the tusks said: "They are like horns."

The one who had touched the trunk said that they were like

a stout rope.

And all the Blind Men began to dispute and to quarrel.

WHY THERE IS EVIL IN THE WORLD

A Hermit was living in the forest, and the animals were not afraid of him. He and the animals talked together and understood each other.

Once the Hermit lay down under a tree, and a Raven a Dove, a Stag, and a Snake gathered in the same place, to pass the night. The animals began to discuss why there was evil in the world.

The Raven said:

"All the evil in the world comes from hunger. When I eat my fill, I sit down on a branch and croak a little, and it is all jolly and good, and everything gives me pleasure; but let me just go without eating a day or two, and everything palls on me so that I do not feel like looking at God's world. And something draws me on, and I fly from place to place, and have no rest. When I catch a glimpse of some meat, it makes me only feel sicker than ever, and I make for it without much thinking. At times they throw sticks and stones at me, and the wolves and dogs grab me, but I do not give in. Oh, how many of my brothers are perishing through hunger! All evil comes from hunger."

The Dove said:

"According to my opinion, the evil does not come from hunger, but from love. If we lived singly, the trouble would not be so bad. One head is not poor, and if it is, it is only one. But here

we live in pairs. And you come to like your mate so much that you have no rest: you keep thinking of her all the time, wondering whether she has had enough to eat, and whether she is warm. And when your mate flies away from you, you feel entirely lost, and you keep thinking that a hawk may have carried her off, or men may have caught her; and you start out to find her, and fly to your ruin, – either into the hawk's claws, or into a snare. And when your mate is lost, nothing gives you any joy. You do not eat or drink, and all the time search and weep. Oh, so many of us perish in this way! All the evil is not from hunger, but from love."

The Snake said:

"No, the evil is not from hunger, nor from love, but from rage. If we lived peacefully, without getting into a rage, everything would be nice for us. But, as it is, whenever a thing does not go exactly right, we get angry, and then nothing pleases us. All we think about is how to revenge ourselves on some one. Then we forget ourselves, and only hiss, and creep, and try to find some one to bite. And we do not spare a soul, – we even bite our own father and mother. We feel as though we could eat ourselves up. And we rage until we perish. All the evil in the World comes from rage."

The Stag said:

"No, not from rage, or from love, or from hunger does all the evil in the world come, but from terror. If it were possible not to be afraid, everything would be well. We have swift feet and much strength: against a small animal we defend ourselves with

our horns, and from a large one we flee. But how can I help becoming frightened? Let a branch crackle in the forest, or a leaf rustle, and I am all atremble with fear, and my heart flutters as though it wanted to jump out, and I fly as fast as I can. Again, let a hare run by, or a bird flap its wings, or a dry twig break off, and you think that it is a beast, and you run straight up against him. Or you run away from a dog and run into the hands of a man. Frequently you get frightened and run, not knowing whither, and at full speed rush down a steep hill, and get killed. We have no rest. All the evil comes from terror."

Then the Hermit said:

"Not from hunger, not from love, not from rage, not from terror are all our sufferings, but from our bodies comes all the evil in the world. From them come hunger, and love, and rage, and terror."

THE WOLF AND THE HUNTERS

A Wolf devoured a sheep. The Hunters caught the Wolf and began to beat him. The Wolf said:

"In vain do you beat me: it is not my fault that I am gray, – God has made me so."

But the Hunters said:

"We do not beat the Wolf for being gray, but for eating the sheep."

THE TWO PEASANTS

Once upon a time two Peasants drove toward each other and caught in each other's sleighs. One cried:

"Get out of my way, – I am hurrying to town."

But the other said:

"Get out of my way, I am hurrying home."

They quarrelled for some time. A third Peasant saw them and said:

"If you are in a hurry, back up!"

THE PEASANT AND THE HORSE

A Peasant went to town to fetch some oats for his Horse. He had barely left the village, when the Horse began to turn around, toward the house. The Peasant struck the Horse with his whip. She went on, and kept thinking about the Peasant:

"Whither is that fool driving me? He had better go home."

Before reaching town, the Peasant saw that the Horse trudged along through the mud with difficulty, so he turned her on the pavement; but the Horse began to turn back from the street. The Peasant gave the Horse the whip, and jerked at the reins; she went on the pavement, and thought:

"Why has he turned me on the pavement? It will only break my hoofs. It is rough underfoot."

The Peasant went to the shop, bought the oats, and drove home. When he came home, he gave the Horse some oats. The Horse ate them and thought:

"How stupid men are! They are fond of exercising their wits on us, but they have less sense than we. What did he trouble himself about? He drove me somewhere. No matter how far we went, we came home in the end. So it would have been better if we had remained at home from the start: he could have been sitting on the oven, and I eating oats."

THE TWO HORSES

Two Horses were drawing their carts. The Front Horse pulled well, but the Hind Horse kept stopping all the time. The load of the Hind Horse was transferred to the front cart; when all was transferred, the Hind Horse went along with ease, and said to the Front Horse:

"Work hard and sweat! The more you try, the harder they will make you work."

When they arrived at the tavern, their master said:

"Why should I feed two Horses, and haul with one only? I shall do better to give one plenty to eat, and to kill the other: I shall at least have her hide."

So he did.

THE AXE AND THE SAW

Two Peasants went to the forest to cut wood. One of them had an axe, and the other a saw. They picked out a tree, and began to dispute. One said that the tree had to be chopped, while the other said that it had to be sawed down.

A third Peasant said:

"I will easily make peace between you: if the axe is sharp, you had better chop it; but if the saw is sharp you had better saw it."

He took the axe, and began to chop it; but the axe was so dull that it was not possible to cut with it. Then he took the saw; the saw was worthless, and did not saw. So he said:

"Stop quarrelling awhile; the axe does not chop, and the saw does not saw. First grind your axe and file your saw, and then quarrel."

But the Peasants grew angrier still at one another, because one had a dull axe, and the other a dull saw. And they came to blows.

THE DOGS AND THE COOK

A Cook was preparing a dinner. The Dogs were lying at the kitchen door. The Cook killed a calf and threw the guts out into the yard. The Dogs picked them up and ate them, and said:

"He is a good Cook: he cooks well."

After awhile the Cook began to clean pease, turnips, and onions, and threw out the refuse. The Dogs made for it; but they turned their noses up, and said:

"Our Cook has grown worse: he used to cook well, but now he is no longer any good."

But the Cook paid no attention to the Dogs, and continued to fix the dinner in his own way. The family, and not the Dogs, ate the dinner, and praised it.

THE HARE AND THE HARRIER

A Hare once said to a Harrier:

"Why do you bark when you run after us? You would catch us easier, if you ran after us in silence. With your bark you only drive us against the hunter: he hears where we are running; and he rushes out with his gun and kills us, and does not give you anything."

The Harrier said:

"That is not the reason why I bark. I bark because, when I scent your odour, I am angry, and happy because I am about to catch you; I do not know why, but I cannot keep from barking."

THE OAK AND THE HAZELBUSH

An old Oak dropped an acorn under a Hazelbush. The Hazelbush said to the Oak:

"Have you not enough space under your own branches? Drop your acorns in an open space. Here I am myself crowded by my shoots, and I do not drop my nuts to the ground, but give them to men."

"I have lived for two hundred years," said the Oak, "and the Oakling which will sprout from that acorn will live just as long."

Then the Hazelbush flew into a rage, and said:

"If so, I will choke your Oakling, and he will not live for three days."

The Oak made no reply, but told his son to sprout out of that acorn. The acorn got wet and burst, and clung to the ground with his crooked rootlet, and sent up a sprout.

The Hazelbush tried to choke him, and gave him no sun. But the Oakling spread upwards and grew stronger in the shade of the Hazelbush. A hundred years passed. The Hazelbush had long ago dried up, but the Oak from that acorn towered to the sky and spread his tent in all directions.

THE HEN AND THE CHICKS

A Hen hatched some Chicks, but did not know how to take care of them. So she said to them:

"Creep back into your shells! When you are inside your shells, I will sit on you as before, and will take care of you."

The Chicks did as they were ordered and tried to creep into their shells, but were unable to do so, and only crushed their wings. Then one of the Chicks said to his mother:

"If we are to stay all the time in our shells, you ought never to have hatched us."

THE CORN-CRAKE AND HIS MATE

A Corn-crake had made a nest in the meadow late in the year, and at mowing time his Mate was still sitting on her eggs. Early in the morning the peasants came to the meadow, took off the coats, whetted their scythes, and started one after another to mow down the grass and to put it down in rows. The Corn-crake flew up to see what the mowers were doing. When he saw a peasant swing his scythe and cut a snake in two, he rejoiced and flew back to his Mate and said:

"Don't fear the peasants! They have come to cut the snakes to pieces; they have given us no rest for quite awhile."

But his Mate said:

"The peasants are cutting the grass, and with the grass they are cutting everything which is in their way, – the snakes, and the Corn-crake's nest, and the Corn-crake's head. My heart forebodes nothing good: but I cannot carry away the eggs, nor fly from the nest, for fear of chilling them."

When the mowers came to the nest of the Corn-crake, one of the peasants swung his scythe and cut off the head of the Corn-crake's Mate, and put the eggs in his bosom and gave them to his children to play with.

THE COW AND THE BILLY GOAT

An old woman had a Cow and a Billy Goat. The two pastured together. At milking the Cow was restless. The old woman brought out some bread and salt, and gave it to the Cow, and said:

"Stand still, motherkin; take it, take it! I will bring you some more, only stand still."

On the next evening the Goat came home from the field before the Cow, and spread his legs, and stood in front of the old woman. The old woman wanted to strike him with the towel, but he stood still, and did not stir. He remembered that the woman had promised the Cow some bread if she would stand still. When the woman saw that he would not budge, she picked up a stick, and beat him with it.

When the Goat went away, the woman began once more to feed the Cow with bread, and to talk to her.

"There is no honesty in men," thought the Goat. "I stood still better than the Cow, and was beaten for it."

He stepped aside, took a run, hit against the milk-pail, spilled the milk, and hurt the old woman.

THE FOX'S TAIL

A Man caught a Fox, and asked her:

"Who has taught you Foxes to cheat the dogs with your tails?"

The Fox asked: "How do you mean, to cheat? We do not cheat the dogs, but simply run from them as fast as we can."

The Man said:

"Yes, you do cheat them with your tails. When the dogs catch up with you and are about to clutch you, you turn your tails to one side; the dogs turn sharply after the tail, and then you run in the opposite direction."

The Fox laughed, and said:

"We do not do so in order to cheat the dogs, but in order to turn around; when a dog is after us, and we see that we cannot get away straight ahead, we turn to one side, and in order to do that suddenly, we have to swing the tail to the other side, just as you do with your arms, when you have to turn around. That is not our invention; God himself invented it when He created us, so that the dogs might not be able to catch all the Foxes."

THE FOUNDLING

A poor woman had a daughter by the name of Másha. Másha went in the morning to fetch water, and saw at the door something wrapped in rags. When she touched the rags, there came from it the sound of "Ooah, ooah, ooah!" Másha bent down and saw that it was a tiny, red-skinned baby. It was crying aloud: "Ooah, ooah!"

Másha took it into her arms and carried it into the house, and gave it milk with a spoon. Her mother said:

"What have you brought?"

"A baby. I found it at our door."

The mother said:

"We are poor as it is; we have nothing to feed the baby with; I will go to the chief and tell him to take the baby."

Másha began to cry, and said:

"Mother, the child will not eat much; leave it here! See what red, wrinkled little hands and fingers it has!"

Her mother looked at them, and she felt pity for the child. She did not take the baby away. Másha fed and swathed the child, and sang songs to it, when it went to sleep.

THE PEASANT AND THE CUCUMBERS

A peasant once went to the gardener's, to steal cucumbers. He crept up to the cucumbers, and thought:

"I will carry off a bag of cucumbers, which I will sell; with the money I will buy a hen. The hen will lay eggs, hatch them, and raise a lot of chicks. I will feed the chicks and sell them; then I will buy me a young sow, and she will bear a lot of pigs. I will sell the pigs, and buy me a mare; the mare will foal me some colts. I will raise the colts, and sell them. I will buy me a house, and start a garden. In the garden I will sow cucumbers, and will not let them be stolen, but will keep a sharp watch on them. I will hire watchmen, and put them in the cucumber patch, while I myself will come on them, unawares, and shout: 'Oh, there, keep a sharp lookout!'"

And this he shouted as loud as he could. The watchmen heard it, and they rushed out and beat the peasant.

THE FIRE

During harvest-time the men and women went out to work. In the village were left only the old and the very young. In one hut there remained a grandmother with her three grandchildren.

The grandmother made a fire in the oven, and lay down to rest herself. Flies kept alighting on her and biting her. She covered her head with a towel and fell asleep. One of the grandchildren, Másha (she was three years old), opened the oven, scraped some coals into a potsherd, and went into the vestibule. In the vestibule lay sheaves: the women were getting them bound.

Másha brought the coals, put them under the sheaves, and began to blow. When the straw caught fire, she was glad; she went into the hut and took her brother Kiryúsha by the arm (he was a year and a half old, and had just learned to walk), and brought him out, and said to him:

"See, Kiryúsha, what a fire I have kindled."

The sheaves were already burning and crackling. When the vestibule was filled with smoke, Másha became frightened and ran back into the house. Kiryúsha fell over the threshold, hurt his nose, and began to cry; Másha pulled him into the house, and both hid under a bench.

The grandmother heard nothing, and did not wake. The elder boy, Ványa (he was eight years old), was in the street. When he saw the smoke rolling out of the vestibule, he ran to the door,

made his way through the smoke into the house, and began to waken his grandmother; but she was dazed from her sleep, and, forgetting the children, rushed out and ran to the farmyards to call the people.

In the meantime Másha was sitting under the bench and keeping quiet; but the little boy cried, because he had hurt his nose badly. Ványa heard his cry, looked under the bench, and called out to Másha:

"Run, you will burn!"

Másha ran to the vestibule, but could not pass for the smoke and fire. She turned back. Then Ványa raised a window and told her to climb through it. When she got through, Ványa picked up his brother and dragged him along. But the child was heavy and did not let his brother take him. He cried and pushed Ványa. Ványa fell down twice, and when he dragged him up to the window, the door of the hut was already burning. Ványa thrust the child's head through the window and wanted to push him through; but the child took hold of him with both his hands (he was very much frightened) and would not let them take him out. Then Ványa cried to Másha:

"Pull him by the head!" while he himself pushed him behind.

And thus they pulled him through the window and into the street.

THE OLD HORSE

In our village there was an old, old man, Pímen Timoféich. He was ninety years old. He was living at the house of his grandson, doing no work. His back was bent: he walked with a cane and moved his feet slowly.

He had no teeth at all, and his face was wrinkled. His nether lip trembled; when he walked and when he talked, his lips smacked, and one could not understand what he was saying.

We were four brothers, and we were fond of riding. But we had no gentle riding-horses. We were allowed to ride only on one horse, – the name of that horse was Raven.

One day mamma allowed us to ride, and all of us went with the valet to the stable. The coachman saddled Raven for us, and my eldest brother was the first to take a ride. He rode for a long time; he rode to the threshing-floor and around the garden, and when he came back, we shouted:

"Now gallop past us!"

My elder brother began to strike Raven with his feet and with the whip, and Raven galloped past us.

After him, my second brother mounted the horse. He, too, rode for quite awhile, and he, too, urged Raven on with the whip and galloped up the hill. He wanted to ride longer, but my third brother begged him to let him ride at once.

My third brother rode to the threshing-floor, and around the

garden, and down the village, and raced up-hill to the stable. When he rode up to us Raven was panting, and his neck and shoulders were dark from sweat.

When my turn came, I wanted to surprise my brothers and to show them how well I could ride, so I began to drive Raven with all my might, but he did not want to get away from the stable. And no matter how much I beat him, he would not run, but only shied and turned back. I grew angry at the horse, and struck him as hard as I could with my feet and with the whip. I tried to strike him in places where it would hurt most; I broke the whip and began to strike his head with what was left of the whip. But Raven would not run. Then I turned back, rode up to the valet, and asked him for a stout switch. But the valet said to me:

"Don't ride any more, sir! Get down! What use is there in torturing the horse?"

I felt offended, and said:

"But I have not had a ride yet. Just watch me gallop! Please, give me a good-sized switch! I will heat him up."

Then the valet shook his head, and said:

"Oh, sir, you have no pity; why should you heat him up? He is twenty years old. The horse is worn out; he can barely breathe, and is old. He is so very old! Just like Pímen Timoféich. You might just as well sit down on Timoféich's back and urge him on with a switch. Well, would you not pity him?"

I thought of Pímen, and listened to the valet's words. I climbed down from the horse and, when I saw how his sweaty sides hung

down, how he breathed heavily through his nostrils, and how he switched his bald tail, I understood that it was hard for the horse. Before that I used to think that it was as much fun for him as for me. I felt so sorry for Raven that I began to kiss his sweaty neck and to beg his forgiveness for having beaten him.

Since then I have grown to be a big man, and I always am careful with the horses, and always think of Raven and of Pímen Timoféitch whenever I see anybody torture a horse.

HOW I LEARNED TO RIDE

When I was a little fellow, we used to study every day, and only on Sundays and holidays went out and played with our brothers. Once my father said:

"The children must learn to ride. Send them to the riding-school!"

I was the youngest of the brothers, and I asked:

"May I, too, learn to ride?"

My father said:

"You will fall down."

I began to beg him to let me learn, and almost cried. My father said:

"All right, you may go, too. Only look out! Don't cry when you fall off. He who does not once fall down from a horse will not learn to ride."

When Wednesday came, all three of us were taken to the riding-school. We entered by a large porch, and from the large porch went to a smaller one. Beyond the porch was a very large room: instead of a floor it had sand. And in this room were gentlemen and ladies and just such boys as we. That was the riding-school. The riding-school was not very light, and there was a smell of horses, and you could hear them snap whips and call to the horses, and the horses strike their hoofs against the wooden walls. At first I was frightened and could not see things

well. Then our valet called the riding-master, and said:

"Give these boys some horses: they are going to learn how to ride."

The master said:

"All right!"

Then he looked at me, and said:

"He is very small, yet."

But the valet said:

"He promised not to cry when he falls down."

The master laughed and went away.

Then they brought three saddled horses, and we took off our cloaks and walked down a staircase to the riding-school. The master was holding a horse by a cord, and my brothers rode around him. At first they rode at a slow pace, and later at a trot. Then they brought a pony. It was a red horse, and his tail was cut off. He was called Ruddy. The master laughed, and said to me:

"Well, young gentleman, get on your horse!"

I was both happy and afraid, and tried to act in such a manner as not to be noticed by anybody. For a long time I tried to get my foot into the stirrup, but could not do it because I was too small. Then the master raised me up in his hands and put me on the saddle. He said:

"The young master is not heavy, – about two pounds in weight, that is all."

At first he held me by my hand, but I saw that my brothers were not held, and so I begged him to let go of me. He said:

"Are you not afraid?"

I was very much afraid, but I said that I was not. I was so much afraid because Ruddy kept dropping his ears. I thought he was angry at me. The master said:

"Look out, don't fall down!" and let go of me. At first Ruddy went at a slow pace, and I sat up straight. But the saddle was sleek, and I was afraid I would slip off. The master asked me:

"Well, are you fast in the saddle?"

I said:

"Yes, I am."

"If so, go at a slow trot!" and the master clicked his tongue.

Ruddy started at a slow trot, and began to jog me. But I kept silent, and tried not to slip to one side. The master praised me:

"Oh, a fine young gentleman, indeed!"

I was very glad to hear it.

Just then the master's friend went up to him and began to talk with him, and the master stopped looking at me.

Suddenly I felt that I had slipped a little to one side on my saddle. I wanted to straighten myself up, but was unable to do so. I wanted to call out to the master to stop the horse, but I thought it would be a disgrace if I did it, and so kept silence. The master was not looking at me and Ruddy ran at a trot, and I slipped still more to one side. I looked at the master and thought that he would help me, but he was still talking with his friend, and without looking at me kept repeating:

"Well done, young gentleman!"

I was now altogether to one side, and was very much frightened. I thought that I was lost; but I felt ashamed to cry. Ruddy shook me up once more, and I slipped off entirely and fell to the ground. Then Ruddy stopped, and the master looked at the horse and saw that I was not on him. He said:

"I declare, my young gentleman has dropped off!" and walked over to me.

When I told him that I was not hurt, he laughed and said:

"A child's body is soft."

I felt like crying. I asked him to put me again on the horse, and I was lifted on the horse. After that I did not fall down again.

Thus we rode twice a week in the riding-school, and I soon learned to ride well, and was not afraid of anything.

THE WILLOW

During Easter week a peasant went out to see whether the ground was all thawed out.

He went into the garden and touched the soil with a stick. The earth was soft. The peasant went into the woods; here the catkins were already swelling on the willows. The peasant thought:

"I will fence my garden with willows; they will grow up and will make a good hedge!"

He took his axe, cut down a dozen willows, sharpened them at the end, and stuck them in the ground.

All the willows sent up sprouts with leaves, and underground let out just such sprouts for roots; and some of them took hold of the ground and grew, and others did not hold well to the ground with their roots, and died and fell down.

In the fall the peasant was glad at the sight of his willows: six of them had taken root. The following spring the sheep killed two willows by gnawing at them, and only two were left. Next spring the sheep nibbled at these also. One of them was completely ruined, and the other came to, took root, and grew to be a tree. In the spring the bees just buzzed in the willow. In swarming time the swarms were often put out on the willow, and the peasants brushed them in. The men and women frequently ate and slept under the willow, and the children climbed on it and broke off rods from it.

The peasant that had set out the willow was long dead, and still it grew. His eldest son twice cut down its branches and used them for fire-wood. The willow kept growing. They trimmed it all around, and cut it down to a stump, but in the spring it again sent out twigs, thinner ones than before, but twice as many as ever, as is the case with a colt's forelock.

And the eldest son quit farming, and the village was given up, but the willow grew in the open field. Other peasants came there, and chopped the willow, but still it grew. The lightning struck it; but it sent forth side branches, and it grew and blossomed. A peasant wanted to cut it down for a block, but he gave it up, it was too rotten. It leaned sidewise, and held on with one side only; and still it grew, and every year the bees came there to gather the pollen.

One day, early in the spring, the boys gathered under the willow, to watch the horses. They felt cold, so they started a fire. They gathered stubbles, wormwood, and sticks. One of them climbed on the willow and broke off a lot of twigs. They put it all in the hollow of the willow and set fire to it. The tree began to hiss and its sap to boil, and the smoke rose and the tree burned; its whole inside was smudged. The young shoots dried up, the blossoms withered.

The children drove the horses home. The scorched willow was left all alone in the field. A black raven flew by, and he sat down on it, and cried:

"So you are dead, old smudge! You ought to have died long

ago!"

BÚLKA

I had a small bulldog. He was called Búlka. He was black; only the tips of his front feet were white. All bulldogs have their lower jaws longer than the upper, and the upper teeth come down behind the nether teeth, but Búlka's lower jaw protruded so much that I could put my finger between the two rows of teeth. His face was broad, his eyes large, black, and sparkling; and his teeth and incisors stood out prominently. He was as black as a negro. He was gentle and did not bite, but he was strong and stubborn. If he took hold of a thing, he clenched his teeth and clung to it like a rag, and it was not possible to tear him off, any more than as though he were a lobster.

Once he was let loose on a bear, and he got hold of the bear's ear and stuck to him like a leech. The bear struck him with his paws and squeezed him, and shook him from side to side, but could not tear himself loose from him, and so he fell down on his head, in order to crush Búlka; but Búlka held on to him until they poured cold water over him.

I got him as a puppy, and raised him myself. When I went to the Caucasus, I did not want to take him along, and so went away from him quietly, ordering him to be shut up. At the first station I was about to change the relay, when suddenly I saw something black and shining coming down the road. It was Búlka in his brass collar. He was flying at full speed toward the station. He rushed

up to me, licked my hand, and stretched himself out in the shade under the cart. His tongue stuck out a whole hand's length. He now drew it in to swallow the spittle, and now stuck it out again a whole hand's length. He tried to breathe fast, but could not do so, and his sides just shook. He turned from one side to the other, and struck his tail against the ground.

I learned later that after I had left he had broken a pane, jumped out of the window, and followed my track along the road, and thus raced twenty versts through the greatest heat.

BÚLKA AND THE WILD BOAR

Once we went into the Caucasus to hunt the wild boar, and Búlka went with me. The moment the hounds started, Búlka rushed after them, following their sound, and disappeared in the forest. That was in the month of November; the boars and sows are then very fat.

In the Caucasus there are many edible fruits in the forests where the boars live: wild grapes, cones, apples, pears, blackberries, acorns, wild plums. And when all these fruits get ripe and are touched by the frost, the boars eat them and grow fat.

At that time a boar gets so fat that he cannot run from the dogs. When they chase him for about two hours, he makes for the thicket and there stops. Then the hunters run up to the place where he stands, and shoot him. They can tell by the bark of the hounds whether the boar has stopped, or is running. If he is running, the hounds yelp, as though they were beaten; but when he stops, they bark as though at a man, with a howling sound.

During that chase I ran for a long time through the forest, but not once did I cross a boar track. Finally I heard the long-drawn bark and howl of the hounds, and ran up to that place. I was already near the boar. I could hear the crashing in the thicket. The boar was turning around on the dogs, but I could not tell by the bark that they were not catching him, but only circling around him. Suddenly I heard something rustle behind me, and I saw that

it was Búlka. He had evidently strayed from the hounds in the forest and had lost his way, and now was hearing their barking and making for them, like me, as fast as he could. He ran across a clearing through the high grass, and all I could see of him was his black head and his tongue clinched between his white teeth. I called him back, but he did not look around, and ran past me and disappeared in the thicket. I ran after him, but the farther I went, the more and more dense did the forest grow. The branches kept knocking off my cap and struck me in the face, and the thorns caught in my garments. I was near to the barking, but could not see anything.

Suddenly I heard the dogs bark louder, and something crashed loudly, and the boar began to puff and snort. I immediately made up my mind that Búlka had got up to him and was busy with him. I ran with all my might through the thicket to that place. In the densest part of the thicket I saw a dappled hound. She was barking and howling in one spot, and within three steps from her something black could be seen moving around.

When I came nearer, I could make out the boar, and I heard Búlka whining shrilly. The boar grunted and made for the hound; the hound took her tail between her legs and leaped away. I could see the boar's side and head. I aimed at his side and fired. I saw that I had hit him. The boar grunted and crashed through the thicket away from me. The dogs whimpered and barked in his track; I tried to follow them through the undergrowth. Suddenly I saw and heard something almost under my feet. It was Búlka.

He was lying on his side and whining. Under him there was a puddle of blood. I thought the dog was lost; but I had no time to look after him, I continued to make my way through the thicket. Soon I saw the boar. The dogs were trying to catch him from behind, and he kept turning, now to one side, and now to another. When the boar saw me, he moved toward me. I fired a second time, almost resting the barrel against him, so that his bristles caught fire, and the boar groaned and tottered, and with his whole cadaver dropped heavily on the ground.

When I came up, the boar was dead, and only here and there did his body jerk and twitch. Some of the dogs, with bristling hair, were tearing his belly and legs, while the others were lapping the blood from his wound.

Then I thought of Búlka, and went back to find him. He was crawling toward me and groaning. I went up to him and looked at his wound. His belly was ripped open, and a whole piece of his guts was sticking out of his body and dragging on the dry leaves. When my companions came up to me, we put the guts back and sewed up his belly. While we were sewing him up and sticking the needle through his skin, he kept licking my hand.

The boar was tied up to the horse's tail, to pull him out of the forest, and Búlka was put on the horse, and thus taken home. Búlka was sick for about six weeks, and got well again.

PHEASANTS

Wild fowls are called pheasants in the Caucasus. There are so many of them that they are cheaper there than tame chickens. Pheasants are hunted with the "hobby," by scaring up, and from under dogs. This is the way they are hunted with the "hobby." They take a piece of canvas and stretch it over a frame, and in the middle of the frame they make a cross piece. They cut a hole in the canvas. This frame with the canvas is called a hobby. With this hobby and with the gun they start out at dawn to the forest. The hobby is carried in front, and through the hole they look out for the pheasants. The pheasants feed at daybreak in the clearings. At times it is a whole brood, – a hen with all her chicks, and at others a cock with his hen, or several cocks together.

The pheasants do not see the man, and they are not afraid of the canvas and let the hunter come close to them. Then the hunter puts down the hobby, sticks his gun through the rent, and shoots at whichever bird he pleases.

This is the way they hunt by scaring up. They let a watch-dog into the forest and follow him. When the dog finds a pheasant, he rushes for it. The pheasant flies on a tree, and then the dog begins to bark at it. The hunter follows up the barking and shoots the pheasant in the tree. This chase would be easy, if the pheasant alighted on a tree in an open place, or if it sat still, so that it might be seen. But they always alight on dense trees, in the thicket, and

when they see the hunter they hide themselves in the branches. And it is hard to make one's way through the thicket to the tree on which a pheasant is sitting, and hard to see it. So long as the dog alone barks at it, it is not afraid: it sits on a branch and preens and flaps its wings at the dog. But the moment it sees a man, it immediately stretches itself out along a bough, so that only an experienced hunter can tell it, while an inexperienced one will stand near by and see nothing.

When the Cossacks steal up to the pheasants, they pull their caps over their faces and do not look up, because a pheasant is afraid of a man with his gun, but more still of his eyes.

This is the way they hunt from under dogs. They take a setter and follow him to the forest. The dog scents the place where the pheasants have been feeding at daybreak, and begins to make out their tracks. No matter how the pheasants may have mixed them up, a good dog will always find the last track, that takes them out from the spot where they have been feeding. The farther the dog follows the track, the stronger will the scent be, and thus he will reach the place where the pheasant sits or walks about in the grass in the daytime. When he comes near to where the bird is, he thinks that it is right before him, and starts walking more cautiously so as not to frighten it, and will stop now and then, ready to jump and catch it. When the dog comes up very near to the pheasant, it flies up, and the hunter shoots it.

MILTON AND BÚLKA

I bought me a setter to hunt pheasants with. The name of the dog was Milton. He was a big, thin, gray, spotted dog, with long lips and ears, and he was very strong and intelligent. He did not fight with Búlka. No dog ever tried to get into a fight with Búlka. He needed only to show his teeth, and the dogs would take their tails between their legs and slink away.

Once I went with Milton to hunt pheasants. Suddenly Búlka ran after me to the forest. I wanted to drive him back, but could not do so; and it was too far for me to take him home. I thought he would not be in my way, and so walked on; but the moment Milton scented a pheasant in the grass and began to search for it, Búlka rushed forward and tossed from side to side. He tried to scare up the pheasant before Milton. He heard something in the grass, and jumped and whirled around; but he had a poor scent and could not find the track himself, but watched Milton, to see where he was running. The moment Milton started on the trail, Búlka ran ahead of him. I called Búlka back and beat him, but could not do a thing with him. The moment Milton began to search, he darted forward and interfered with him.

I was already on the point of going home, because I thought that the chase was spoiled; but Milton found a better way of cheating Búlka. This is what he did: the moment Búlka rushed ahead of him, he gave up the trail and turned in another direction,

pretending that he was searching there. Búlka rushed there where Milton was, and Milton looked at me and wagged his tail and went back to the right trail. Búlka again ran up to Milton and rushed past him, and again Milton took some ten steps to one side and cheated Búlka, and again led me straight; and so he cheated Búlka all the way and did not let him spoil the chase.

THE TURTLE

Once I went with Milton to the chase. Near the forest he began to search. He straightened out his tail, pricked his ears, and began to sniff. I fixed the gun and followed him. I thought that he was looking for a partridge, hare, or pheasant. But Milton did not make for the forest, but for the field. I followed him and looked ahead of me. Suddenly I saw what he was searching for. In front of him was running a small turtle, of the size of a cap. Its bare, dark gray head on a long neck was stretched out like a pestle; the turtle in walking stretched its bare legs far out, and its back was all covered with bark.

When it saw the dog, it hid its legs and head and let itself down on the grass so that only its shell could be seen. Milton grabbed it and began to bite at it, but could not bite through it, because the turtle has just such a shell on its belly as it has on its back, and has only openings in front, at the back, and at the sides, where it puts forth its head, its legs, and its tail.

I took the turtle away from Milton, and tried to see how its back was painted, and what kind of a shell it had, and how it hid itself. When you hold it in your hands and look between the shell, you can see something black and alive inside, as though in a cellar. I threw away the turtle, and walked on, but Milton would not leave it, and carried it in his teeth behind me. Suddenly Milton whimpered and dropped it. The turtle had put forth its

foot inside of his mouth, and had scratched it. That made him so angry that he began to bark; he grasped it once more and carried it behind me. I ordered Milton to throw it away, but he paid no attention to me. Then I took the turtle from him and threw it away. But he did not leave it. He hurriedly dug a hole near it; when the hole was dug, he threw the turtle into it and covered it up with dirt.

The turtles live on land and in the water, like snakes and frogs. They breed their young from eggs. These eggs they lay on the ground, and they do not hatch them, but the eggs burst themselves, like fish spawn, and the turtles crawl out of them. There are small turtles, not larger than a saucer, and large ones, seven feet in length and weighing seven hundredweights. The large turtles live in the sea.

One turtle lays in the spring hundreds of eggs. The turtle's shells are its ribs. Men and other animals have each rib separate, while the turtle's ribs are all grown together into a shell. But the main thing is that with all the animals the ribs are inside the flesh, while the turtle has the ribs on the outside, and the flesh beneath them.

BÚLKA AND THE WOLF

When I left the Caucasus, they were still fighting there, and in the night it was dangerous to travel without a guard.

I wanted to leave as early as possible, and so did not lie down to sleep.

My friend came to see me off, and we sat the whole evening and night in the village street, in front of my cabin.

It was a moonlit night with a mist, and so bright that one could read, though the moon was not to be seen.

In the middle of the night we suddenly heard a pig squealing in the yard across the street. One of us cried: "A wolf is choking the pig!"

I ran into the house, grasped a loaded gun, and ran into the street. They were all standing at the gate of the yard where the pig was squealing, and cried to me: "Here!" Milton rushed after me, – no doubt he thought that I was going out to hunt with the gun; but Búlka pricked his short ears, and tossed from side to side, as though to ask me whom he was to clutch. When I ran up to the wicker fence, I saw a beast running straight toward me from the other side of the yard. That was the wolf. He ran up to the fence and jumped on it. I stepped aside and fixed my gun. The moment the wolf jumped down from the fence to my side, I aimed, almost touching him with the gun, and pulled the trigger; but my gun made "Click" and did not go off. The Wolf did not

stop, but ran across the street.

Milton and Búlka made for him. Milton was near to the wolf, but was afraid to take hold of him; and no matter how fast Búlka ran on his short legs, he could not keep up with him. We ran as fast as we could after the wolf, but both the wolf and the dogs disappeared from sight. Only at the ditch, at the end of the village, did we hear a low barking and whimpering, and saw the dust rise in the mist of the moon and the dogs busy with the wolf. When we ran up to the ditch, the wolf was no longer there, and both dogs returned to us with raised tails and angry faces. Búlka snarled and pushed me with his head: evidently he wanted to tell me something, but did not know how.

We examined the dogs, and found a small wound on Búlka's head. He had evidently caught up with the wolf before he got to the ditch, but had not had a chance to get hold of him, while the wolf snapped at him and ran away. It was a small wound, so there was no danger.

We returned to the cabin, and sat down and talked about what had happened. I was angry because the gun had missed fire, and thought of how the wolf would have remained on the spot, if the gun had shot. My friend wondered how the wolf could have crept into the yard. An old Cossack said that there was nothing remarkable about it, because that was not a wolf, but a witch who had charmed my gun. Thus we sat and kept talking. Suddenly the dogs darted off, and we saw the same wolf in the middle of the street; but this time he ran so fast when he heard our shout that

the dogs could not catch up with him.

After that the old Cossack was fully convinced that it was not a wolf, but a witch; but I thought that it was a mad wolf, because I had never seen or heard of such a thing as a wolf's coming back toward the people, after it had been driven away.

In any case I poured some powder on Búlka's wound, and set it on fire. The powder flashed up and burned out the sore spot.

I burned out the sore with powder, in order to burn away the poisonous saliva, if it had not yet entered the blood. But if the saliva had already entered the blood, I knew that the blood would carry it through the whole body, and then it would not be possible to cure him.

WHAT HAPPENED TO BÚLKA IN PYATIGÓRSK

From the Cossack village I did not travel directly to Russia, but first to Pyatigórsk, where I stayed two months. Milton I gave away to a Cossack hunter, and Búlka I took along with me to Pyatigórsk.

Pyatigórsk [in English, Five-Mountains] is called so because it is situated on Mount Besh-tau. And besh means in Tartar "five," and tau "mountain." From this mountain flows a hot sulphur stream. It is as hot as boiling water, and over the spot where the water flows from the mountain there is always a steam as from a samovár.

The whole place, on which the city stands, is very cheerful. From the mountain flow the hot springs, and at the foot of the mountain is the river Podkúmok. On the slopes of the mountain are forests; all around the city are fields, and in the distance are seen the mountains of the Caucasus. On these the snow never melts, and they are always as white as sugar. One large mountain, Elbrus, is like a white loaf of sugar; it can be seen from everywhere when the weather is clear. People come to the hot springs to be cured, and over them there are arbours and awnings, and all around them are gardens with walks. In the morning the music plays, and people drink the water, or bathe, or stroll about.

The city itself is on the mountain, but at the foot of it there is a suburb. I lived in that suburb in a small house. The house stood in a yard, and before the windows was a small garden, and in the garden stood the landlord's beehives, not in hollow stems, as in Russia, but in round, plaited baskets. The bees are there so gentle that in the morning I used to sit with Búlka in that garden, amongst the beehives.

Búlka walked about between the hives, and sniffed, and listened to the bees' buzzing; he walked so softly among them that he did not interfere with them, and they did not bother him.

One morning I returned home from the waters, and sat down in the garden to drink coffee. Búlka began to scratch himself behind his ears, and made a grating noise with his collar. The noise worried the bees, and so I took the collar off. A little while later I heard a strange and terrible noise coming from the city. The dogs barked, howled, and whimpered, people shouted, and the noise descended lower from the mountain and came nearer and nearer to our suburb.

Búlka stopped scratching himself, put his broad head with its white teeth between his fore legs, stuck out his tongue as he wished, and lay quietly by my side. When he heard the noise he seemed to understand what it was. He pricked his ears, showed his teeth, jumped up, and began to snarl. The noise came nearer. It sounded as though all the dogs of the city were howling, whimpering, and barking. I went to the gate to see what it was, and my landlady came out, too. I asked her:

"What is this?"

She said:

"The prisoners of the jail are coming down to kill the dogs. The dogs have been breeding so much that the city authorities have ordered all the dogs in the city to be killed."

"So they would kill Búlka, too, if they caught him?"

"No, they are not allowed to kill dogs with collars."

Just as I was speaking, the prisoners were coming up to our house. In front walked the soldiers, and behind them four prisoners in chains. Two of the prisoners had in their hands long iron hooks, and two had clubs. In front of our house, one of the prisoners caught a watch-dog with his hook and pulled it up to the middle of the street, and another began to strike it with the club.

The little dog whined dreadfully, but the prisoners shouted and laughed. The prisoner with the hook turned over the dog, and when he saw that it was dead, he pulled out the hook and looked around for other dogs.

Just then Búlka rushed headlong at that prisoner, as though he were a bear. I happened to think that he was without his collar, so I shouted: "Búlka, back!" and told the prisoners not to strike the dog. But the prisoner laughed when he saw Búlka, and with his hook nimbly struck him and caught him by his thigh. Búlka tried to get away; but the prisoner pulled him up toward him and told the other prisoner to strike him. The other raised his club, and Búlka would have been killed, but he jerked, and broke the skin at the thigh and, taking his tail between his legs, flew, with

the red sore on his body, through the gate and into the house, and hid himself under my bed.

He was saved because the skin had broken in the spot where the hook was.

BÚLKA'S AND MILTON'S END

Búlka and Milton died at the same time. The old Cossack did not know how to get along with Milton. Instead of taking him out only for birds, he went with him to hunt wild boars. And that same fall a tusky boar ripped him open. Nobody knew how to sew him up, and so he died.

Búlka, too, did not live long after the prisoners had caught him. Soon after his salvation from the prisoners he began to feel unhappy, and started to lick everything that he saw. He licked my hands, but not as formerly when he fawned. He licked for a long time, and pressed his tongue against me, and then began to snap. Evidently he felt like biting my hand, but did not want to do so. I did not give him my hand. Then he licked my boot and the foot of a table, and then he began to snap at these things. That lasted about two days, and on the third he disappeared, and no one saw him or heard of him.

He could not have been stolen or run away from me. This happened six weeks after the wolf had bitten him. Evidently the wolf had been mad. Búlka had gone mad, and so went away. He had what hunters call the rabies. They say that this madness consists in this, that the mad animal gets cramps in its throat. It wants to drink and cannot, because the water makes the cramps worse. And so it gets beside itself from pain and thirst, and begins to bite. Evidently Búlka was beginning to have these cramps

when he started to lick and then to bite my hand and the foot of the table.

I went everywhere in the neighbourhood and asked about Búlka, but could not find out what had become of him, or how he had died. If he had been running about and biting, as mad dogs do, I should have heard of him. No doubt he ran somewhere into a thicket and there died by himself.

The hunters say that when an intelligent dog gets the rabies, he runs to the fields and forests, and there tries to find the herb which he needs, and rolls in the dew, and gets cured. Evidently Búlka never got cured. He never came back.

THE GRAY HARE

A gray hare was living in the winter near the village. When night came, he pricked one ear and listened; then he pricked his second ear, moved his whiskers, sniffed, and sat down on his hind legs. Then he took a leap or two over the deep snow, and again sat down on his hind legs, and looked around him. Nothing could be seen but snow. The snow lay in waves and glistened like sugar. Over the hare's head hovered a frost vapour, and through this vapour could be seen the large, bright stars.

The hare had to cross the highway, in order to come to a threshing-floor he knew of. On the highway the runners could be heard squeaking, and the horses snorting, and seats creaking in the sleighs.

The hare again stopped near the road. Peasants were walking beside the sleighs, and the collars of their caftans were raised. Their faces were scarcely visible. Their beards, moustaches, and eyelashes were white. Steam rose from their mouths and noses. Their horses were sweaty, and the hoarfrost clung to the sweat. The horses jostled under their arches, and dived in and out of snow-drifts. The peasants ran behind the horses and in front of them, and beat them with their whips. Two peasants walked beside each other, and one of them told the other how a horse of his had once been stolen.

When the carts passed by, the hare leaped across the road and

softly made for the threshing-floor. A dog saw the hare from a cart. He began to bark and darted after the hare. The hare leaped toward the threshing-floor over the snow-drifts, which held him back; but the dog stuck fast in the snow after the tenth leap, and stopped. Then the hare, too, stopped and sat up on his hind legs, and then softly went on to the threshing-floor.

On his way he met two other hares on the sowed winter field. They were feeding and playing. The hare played awhile with his companions, dug away the frosty snow with them, ate the wintergreen, and went on.

In the village everything was quiet; the fires were out. All one could hear was a baby's cry in a hut and the crackling of the frost in the logs of the cabins. The hare went to the threshing-floor, and there found some companions. He played awhile with them on the cleared floor, ate some oats from the open granary, climbed on the kiln over the snow-covered roof, and across the wicker fence started back to his ravine.

The dawn was glimmering in the east; the stars grew less, and the frost vapours rose more densely from the earth. In the near-by village the women got up, and went to fetch water; the peasants brought the feed from the barn; the children shouted and cried. There were still more carts going down the road, and the peasants talked aloud to each other.

The hare leaped across the road, went up to his old lair, picked out a high place, dug away the snow, lay with his back in his new lair, dropped his ears on his back, and fell asleep with open eyes.

GOD SEES THE TRUTH, BUT DOES NOT TELL AT ONCE

In the city of Vladímir there lived a young merchant, Aksénov by name. He had two shops and a house.

Aksénov was a light-complexioned, curly-headed, fine-looking man and a very jolly fellow and good singer. In his youth Aksénov had drunk much, and when he was drunk he used to become riotous, but when he married he gave up drinking, and that now happened very rarely with him.

One day in the summer Aksénov went to the Nízhni-Nóvgorod fair. As he bade his family good-bye, his wife said to him:

"Iván Dmítrievich, do not start to-day! I have had a bad dream about you."

Aksénov laughed, and said:

"Are you afraid that I might go on a spree at the fair?"

His wife said:

"I do not know what I am afraid of, but I had a bad dream: I dreamed that you came to town, and when you took off your cap I saw that your head was all gray."

Aksénov laughed.

"That means that I shall make some profit. If I strike a good bargain, you will see me bring you some costly presents."

And he bade his family farewell, and started.

In the middle of his journey he met a merchant whom he knew, and they stopped together in a hostelry for the night. They drank their tea together, and lay down to sleep in two adjoining rooms. Aksénov did not like to sleep long; he awoke in the middle of the night and, as it was easier to travel when it was cool, wakened his driver and told him to hitch the horses. Then he went to the "black" hut, paid his bill, and went away.

When he had gone about forty versts, he again stopped to feed the horses and to rest in the vestibule of a hostelry. At dinner-time he came out on the porch, and ordered the samovár to be prepared for him. He took out his guitar and began to play. Suddenly a tróyka with bells drove up to the hostelry, and from the cart leaped an officer with two soldiers, and he went up to Aksénov, and asked him who he was and where he came from.

Aksénov told him everything as it was, and said:

"Would you not like to drink tea with me?"

But the officer kept asking him questions:

"Where did you stay last night? Were you alone, or with a merchant? Did you see the merchant in the morning? Why did you leave so early in the morning?"

Aksénov wondered why they asked him about all that; he told them everything as it was, and said:

"Why do you ask me this? I am not a thief, nor a robber. I am travelling on business of my own, and you have nothing to ask me about."

Then the officer called the soldiers, and said:

"I am the chief of the rural police, and I ask you this, because the merchant with whom you passed last night has been found with his throat cut. Show me your things, and you look through them!"

They entered the house, took his valise and bag, and opened them and began to look through them. Suddenly the chief took a knife out of the bag, and cried out:

"Whose knife is this?"

Aksénov looked, and saw that they had taken out a blood-stained knife from his bag, and he was frightened "How did the blood get on the knife?"

Aksénov wanted to answer, but could not pronounce a word.

"I – I do not know – I – the knife – is not mine!"

Then the chief said:

"In the morning the merchant was found in his bed with his throat cut. No one but you could have done it. The house was locked from within, and there was no one in the house but you. Here is the bloody knife in your bag, and your face shows your guilt. Tell me, how did you kill him, and how much money did you rob him of?"

Aksénov swore that he had not done it; that he had not seen the merchant after drinking tea with him; that he had with him his own eight thousand; that the knife was not his. But his voice faltered, his face was pale, and he trembled from fear, as though he were guilty.

The chief called in the soldiers, told them to bind him and to take him to the cart. When he was rolled into the cart with his legs tied, he made the sign of the cross and began to cry. They took away his money and things, and sent him to jail to the nearest town. They sent to Vladímir to find out what kind of a man Aksénov was, and all the merchants and inhabitants of Vladímir testified to the fact that Aksénov had drunk and caroused when he was young, but that he was a good man. Then they began to try him. He was tried for having killed the Ryazán merchant and having robbed him of twenty thousand roubles.

The wife was grieving for her husband and did not know what to think. Her children were still young, and one was still at the breast. She took them all and went with them to the town where her husband was kept in prison. At first she was not admitted, but later she implored the authorities, and she was taken to her husband. When she saw him in prison garb and in chains, together with murderers, she fell to the ground and could not come to for a long time. Then she placed her children about her, sat down beside him, and began to tell him about house matters, and to ask him about everything which had happened. He told her everything. She said:

"What shall I do?"

He said:

"We must petition the Tsar. An innocent man cannot be allowed to perish."

His wife said that she had already petitioned the Tsar, but that

the petition had not reached him. Aksénov said nothing, and only lowered his head. Then his wife said:

"You remember the dream I had about your getting gray. Indeed, you have grown gray from sorrow. If you had only not started then!"

And she looked over his hair, and said:

"Iván, my darling, tell your wife the truth: did you not do it?"

Aksénov said, "And you, too, suspect me!" and covered his face with his hands, and began to weep.

Then a soldier came, and told his wife that she must leave with her children. And Aksénov for the last time bade his family farewell.

When his wife had left, Aksénov thought about what they had been talking of. When he recalled that his wife had also suspected him and had asked him whether he had killed the merchant, he said to himself: "Evidently none but God can know the truth, and He alone must be asked, and from Him alone can I expect mercy." And from that time on Aksénov no longer handed in petitions and stopped hoping, but only prayed to God.

Aksénov was sentenced to be beaten with the knout, and to be sent to hard labour. And it was done.

He was beaten with the knout, and later, when the knout sores healed over, he was driven with other convicts to Siberia.

In Siberia, Aksénov passed twenty-six years at hard labour. His hair turned white like snow, and his beard grew long, narrow, and gray. All his mirth went away. He stooped, began to walk

softly, spoke little, never laughed, and frequently prayed to God.

In the prison Aksénov learned to make boots, and with the money which he earned he bought himself the "Legends of the Holy Martyrs," and read them while it was light in the prison; on holidays he went to the prison church and read the Epistles, and sang in the choir, – his voice was still good. The authorities were fond of Aksénov for his gentleness, and his prison comrades respected him and called him "grandfather" and "God's man." When there were any requests to be made of the authorities, his comrades always sent him to speak for them, and when the convicts had any disputes between themselves, they came to Aksénov to settle them.

No one wrote Aksénov letters from his home, and he did not know whether his wife and children were alive, or not.

Once they brought some new prisoners to the prison. In the evening the old prisoners gathered around the new men, and asked them from what town they came, or from what village, and for what acts they had been sent up. Aksénov, too, sat down on the bed-boards near the new prisoners and, lowering his head, listened to what they were saying. One of the new prisoners was a tall, sound-looking old man of about sixty years of age, with a gray, clipped beard. He was telling them what he had been sent up for:

"Yes, brothers, I have come here for no crime at all. I had unhitched a driver's horse from the sleigh. I was caught. They said, 'You stole it.' And I said, 'I only wanted to get home quickly,

for I let the horse go. Besides, the driver is a friend of mine. I am telling you the truth.' – 'No,' they said, 'you have stolen it.' But they did not know what I had been stealing, or where I had been stealing. There were crimes for which I ought to have been sent up long ago, but they could not convict me, and now I am here contrary to the law. 'You are lying, – you have been in Siberia, but you did not make a long visit there – '"

"Where do you come from?" asked one of the prisoners.

"I am from the city of Vladímir, a burgher of that place. My name is Makár, and by my father Seménovich."

Aksénov raised his head, and asked:

"Seménovich, have you not heard in Vladímir about the family of Merchant Aksénov? Are they alive?"

"Yes, I have heard about them! They are rich merchants, even though their father is in Siberia. He is as much a sinner as I, I think. And you, grandfather, what are you here for?"

Aksénov did not like to talk of his misfortune. He sighed, and said:

"For my sins have I passed twenty-six years at hard labour."

Makár Seménovich said:

"For what sins?"

Aksénov said, "No doubt, I deserved it," and did not wish to tell him any more; but the other prison people told the new man how Aksénov had come to be in Siberia. They told him how on the road some one had killed a merchant and had put the knife into his bag, and he thus was sentenced though he was innocent.

When Makár Seménovich heard that, he looked at Aksénov, clapped his knees with his hands, and said:

"What a marvel! What a marvel! But you have grown old, grandfather!"

He was asked what he was marvelling at, and where he had seen Aksénov, but Makár Seménovich made no reply, and only said:

"It is wonderful, boys, where we were fated to meet!"

And these words made Aksénov think that this man might know something about who had killed the merchant. He said:

"Seménovich, have you heard before this about that matter, or have we met before?"

"Of course I have heard. The earth is full of rumours. That happened a long time ago: I have forgotten what I heard," said Makár Seménovich.

"Maybe you have heard who killed the merchant?" asked Aksénov.

Makár Seménovich laughed and said:

"I suppose he was killed by the man in whose bag the knife was found. Even if somebody stuck that knife into that bag, he was not caught, so he is no thief. And how could the knife have been put in? Was not the bag under your head? You would have heard him."

The moment Aksénov heard these words, he thought that that was the man who had killed the merchant. He got up and walked away. All that night Aksénov could not fall asleep. He felt sad,

and had visions: now he saw his wife such as she had been when she bade him farewell for the last time, as he went to the fair. He saw her, as though she was alive, and he saw her face and eyes, and heard her speak to him and laugh. Then he saw his children such as they had been then, – just as little, – one of them in a fur coat, the other at the breast. And he thought of himself, such as he had been then, – gay and young; he recalled how he had been sitting on the porch of the hostelry, where he was arrested, and had been playing the guitar, and how light his heart had been then. And he recalled the pillory, where he had been whipped, and the executioner, and the people all around, and the chains, and the prisoners, and his prison life of the last twenty-six years, and his old age. And such gloom came over him that he felt like laying hands on himself.

"And all that on account of that evil-doer!" thought Aksénov.

And such a rage fell upon him against Makár Seménovich, that he wanted to have his revenge upon him, even if he himself were to be ruined by it. He said his prayers all night long, but could not calm himself. In the daytime he did not walk over to Makár Seménovich, and did not look at him.

Thus two weeks passed. At night Aksénov could not sleep, and he felt so sad that he did not know what to do with himself.

Once, in the night, he walked all over the prison, and saw dirt falling from underneath one bedplace. He stopped to see what it was. Suddenly Makár Seménovich jumped up from under the bed and looked at Aksénov with a frightened face. Aksénov

wanted to pass on, so as not to see him; but Makár took him by his arm, and told him that he had dug a passage way under the wall, and that he each day carried the dirt away in his boot-legs and poured it out in the open, whenever they took the convicts out to work. He said:

"Keep quiet, old man, – I will take you out, too. And if you tell, they will whip me, and I will not forgive you, – I will kill you."

When Aksénov saw the one who had done him evil, he trembled in his rage, and pulled away his arm, and said:

"I have no reason to get away from here, and there is no sense in killing me, – you killed me long ago. And whether I will tell on you or not depends on what God will put into my soul."

On the following day, when the convicts were taken out to work, the soldiers noticed that Makár Seménovich was pouring out the dirt, and so they began to search in the prison, and found the hole. The chief came to the prison and began to ask all who had dug the hole. Everybody denied it. Those who knew had not seen Makár Seménovich, because they knew that for this act he would be whipped half-dead. Then the chief turned to Aksénov. He knew that Aksénov was a just man, and said:

"Old man, you are a truthful man, tell me before God who has done that."

Makár Seménovich stood as though nothing had happened and looked at the chief, and did not glance at Aksénov. Aksénov's arms and lips trembled, and he could not utter a word for long

time. He thought: "If I protect him, why should I forgive him, since he has ruined me? Let him suffer for my torments! And if I tell on him, they will indeed whip him to death. And suppose that I have a wrong suspicion against him. Will that make it easier for me?"

The chief said once more:

"Well, old man, speak, tell the truth! Who has been digging it?"

Aksénov looked at Makár Seménovich, and said:

"I cannot tell, your Honour. God orders me not to tell. And I will not tell. Do with me as you please, – you have the power."

No matter how much the chief tried, Aksénov would not say anything more. And so they did not find out who had done the digging.

On the following night, as Aksénov lay down on the bed-boards and was just falling asleep, he heard somebody come up to him and sit down at his feet. He looked in the darkness and recognized Makár. Aksénov said:

"What more do you want of me? What are you doing here?"

Makár Seménovich was silent. Aksénov raised himself, and said:

"What do you want? Go away, or I will call the soldier."

Makár bent down close to Aksénov, and said to him in a whisper:

"Iván Dmítrievich, forgive me!"

Aksénov said:

"For what shall I forgive you?"

"It was I who killed the merchant and put the knife into your bag. I wanted to kill you, too, but they made a noise in the yard, so I put the knife into your bag and climbed through the window."

Aksénov was silent and did not know what to say. Makár Seménovich slipped down from the bed, made a low obeisance, and said:

"Iván Dmítrievich, forgive me, forgive me for God's sake! I will declare that it was I who killed the merchant, – you will be forgiven. You will return home."

Aksénov said:

"It is easy for you to speak so, but see how I have suffered! Where shall I go now? My wife has died, my children have forgotten me. I have no place to go to – "

Makár Seménovich did not get up from the floor. He struck his head against the earth, and said:

"Iván Dmítrievich, forgive me! When they whipped me with the knout I felt better than now that I am looking at you. You pitied me, and did not tell on me. Forgive me, for Christ's sake! Forgive me, the accursed evil-doer!" And he burst out into tears.

When Aksénov heard Makár Seménovich crying, he began to weep himself, and said:

"God will forgive you. Maybe I am a hundred times worse than you!"

And suddenly a load fell off from his soul. And he no longer pined for his home, and did not wish to leave the prison, but only

thought of his last hour.

Makár Seménovich did not listen to Aksénov, but declared his guilt. When the decision came for Aksénov to leave, – he was dead.

HUNTING WORSE THAN SLAVERY

We were hunting bears. My companion had a chance to shoot at a bear: he wounded him, but only in a soft spot. A little blood was left on the snow, but the bear got away.

We met in the forest and began to discuss what to do: whether to go and find that bear, or to wait two or three days until the bear should lie down again.

We asked the peasant bear drivers whether we could now surround the bear. An old bear driver said:

"No, we must give the bear a chance to calm himself. In about five days it will be possible to surround him, but if we go after him now he will only be frightened and will not lie down."

But a young bear driver disputed with the old man, and said that he could surround him now.

"Over this snow," he said, "the bear cannot get away far, – he is fat. He will lie down to-day again. And if he does not, I will overtake him on snow-shoes."

My companion, too, did not want to surround the bear now, and advised waiting.

But I said:

"What is the use of discussing the matter? Do as you please, but I will go with Demyán along the track. If we overtake him, so

much is gained; if not, – I have nothing else to do to-day anyway, and it is not yet late."

And so we did.

My companions went to the sleigh, and back to the village, but Demyán and I took bread with us, and remained in the woods.

When all had left us, Demyán and I examined our guns, tucked our fur coats over our belts, and followed the track.

It was fine weather, chilly and calm. But walking on snow-shoes was a hard matter: the snow was deep and powdery.

The snow had not settled in the forest, and, besides, fresh snow had fallen on the day before, so that the snow-shoes sunk half a foot in the snow, and in places even deeper.

The bear track could be seen a distance away. We could see the way the bear had walked, for in spots he had fallen in the snow to his belly and had swept the snow aside. At first we walked in plain sight of the track, through a forest of large trees; then, when the track went into a small pine wood, Demyán stopped.

"We must now give up the track," he said. "He will, no doubt, lie down here. He has been sitting on his haunches, – you can see it by the snow. Let us go away from the track, and make a circle around him. But we must walk softly and make no noise, not even cough, or we shall scare him."

We went away from the track, to the left. We walked about five hundred steps and there we again saw the track before us. We again followed the track, and this took us to the road. We stopped on the road and began to look around, to see in what

direction the bear had gone. Here and there on the road we could see the bear's paws with all the toes printed on the snow, while in others we could see the tracks of a peasant's bast shoes. He had, evidently, gone to the village.

We walked along the road. Demyán said to me:

"We need not watch the road; somewhere he will turn off the road, to the right or to the left, – we shall see in the snow. Somewhere he will turn off, – he will not go to the village."

We walked thus about a mile along the road; suddenly we saw the track turn off from the road. We looked at it, and see the wonder! It was a bear's track, but leading not from the road to the woods, but from the woods to the road: the toes were turned to the road. I said:

"That is another bear."

Demyán looked at it, and thought awhile.

"No," he said, "that is the same bear, only he has begun to cheat. He left the road backwards."

We followed the track, and so it was. The bear had evidently walked about ten steps backwards from the road, until he got beyond a fir-tree, and then he had turned and gone on straight ahead. Demyán stopped, and said:

"Now we shall certainly fall in with him. He has no place but this swamp to lie down in. Let us surround him."

We started to surround him, going through the dense pine forest. I was getting tired, and it was now much harder to travel. Now I would strike against a juniper-bush, and get caught in it;

or a small pine-tree would get under my feet; or the snow-shoes would twist, as I was not used to them; or I would strike a stump or a block under the snow. I was beginning to be worn out. I took off my fur coat, and the sweat was just pouring down from me. But Demyán sailed along as in a boat. It looked as though the snow-shoes walked under him of their own accord. He neither caught in anything, nor did his shoes turn on him.

And he even threw my fur coat over his shoulders, and kept urging me on.

We made about three versts in a circle, and walked past the swamp. Demyán suddenly stopped in front of me, and waved his hand. I walked over to him. Demyán bent down, and pointed with his hand, and whispered to me:

"Do you see, a magpie is chattering on a windfall: the bird is scenting the bear from a distance. It is he."

We walked to one side, made another verst, and again hit the old trail. Thus we had made a circle around the bear, and he was inside of it. We stopped. I took off my hat and loosened my wraps: I felt as hot as in a bath, and was as wet as a mouse. Demyán, too, was all red, and he wiped his face with his sleeve.

"Well," he said, "we have done our work, sir, so we may take a rest."

The evening glow could be seen through the forest. We sat down on the snow-shoes to rest ourselves. We took the bread and salt out of the bags; first I ate a little snow, and then the bread. The bread tasted to me better than any I had eaten in all my life.

We sat awhile; it began to grow dark. I asked Demyán how far it was to the village.

"About twelve versts. We shall reach it in the night; but now we must rest. Put on your fur coat, sir, or you will catch a cold."

Demyán broke off some pine branches, knocked down the snow, made a bed, and we lay down beside each other, with our arms under our heads. I do not remember how I fell asleep. I awoke about two hours later. Something crashed.

I had been sleeping so soundly that I forgot where I was. I looked around me: what marvel was that? Where was I? Above me were some white chambers, and white posts, and on everything glistened white tinsel. I looked up: there was a white, checkered cloth, and between the checks was a black vault in which burned fires of all colours. I looked around, and I recalled that we were in the forest, and that the snow-covered trees had appeared to me as chambers, and that the fires were nothing but the stars that flickered between the branches.

In the night a hoarfrost had fallen, and there was hoarfrost on the branches, and on my fur coat, and Demyán was all covered with hoarfrost, and hoarfrost fell from above. I awoke Demyán. We got up on our snow-shoes and started. The forest was quiet. All that could be heard was the sound we made as we slid on our snow-shoes over the soft snow, or when a tree would crackle from the frost, and a hollow sound would pass through the whole woods. Only once did something living stir close to us and run away again. I thought it was the bear. We walked over to the place

from where the noise had come, and we saw hare tracks. The young aspens were nibbled down. The hares had been feeding on them.

We came out to the road, tied the snow-shoes behind us, and walked down the road. It was easy to walk. The snow-shoes rattled and rumbled over the beaten road; the snow creaked under our boots; the cold hoarfrost stuck to our faces like down. And the stars seemed to run toward us along the branches: they would flash, and go out again, – just as though the sky were walking round and round.

My companion was asleep, – I awoke him. We told him how we had made a circle around the bear, and told the landlord to collect the drivers for the morning. We ate our supper and lay down to sleep.

I was so tired that I could have slept until dinner, but my companion woke me. I jumped up and saw that my companion was all dressed and busy with his gun.

"Where is Demyán?"

"He has been in the forest for quite awhile. He has investigated the circle, and has been back to take the drivers out."

I washed myself, put on my clothes, and loaded my guns. We seated ourselves in the sleigh, and started.

There was a severe frost, the air was calm, and the sun could not be seen: there was a mist above, and the hoarfrost was settling.

We travelled about three versts by the road, and reached the

forest. We saw a blue smoke in a hollow, and peasants, men and women, were there with clubs.

We climbed out of the sleigh and went up to the people. The peasants were sitting and baking potatoes, and joking with the women.

Demyán was with them. The people got up, and Demyán took them away to place them in our last night's circuit. The men and women stretched themselves out in single file, – there were thirty of them and they could be seen only from the belt up, – and went into the woods; then my companion and I followed their tracks.

Though they had made a path, it was hard to walk; still, we could not fall, for it was like walking between two walls.

Thus we walked for half a verst. I looked up, and there was Demyán running to us from the other side on snow-shoes, and waving his hand for us to come to him.

We went up to him, and he showed us where to stand. I took up my position and looked around.

To the left of me was a tall pine forest. I could see far through it, and beyond the trees I saw the black spot of a peasant driver. Opposite me was a young pine growth, as tall as a man's stature. In this pine growth the branches were hanging down and stuck together from the snow. The path through the middle of the pine grove was covered with snow. This path was leading toward me. To the right of me was a dense pine forest, and beyond the pine grove there was a clearing. And on this clearing I saw Demyán place my companion.

I examined my two guns and cocked them, and began to think where to take up a stand. Behind me, about three steps from me, there was a pine-tree. "I will stand by that pine, and will lean the other gun against it." I made my way to that pine, walking knee-deep in snow. I tramped down a space of about four feet each way, and there took my stand. One gun I took into my hands, and the other, with hammers raised, I placed against the tree. I unsheathed my dagger and put it back in the scabbard, to be sure that in case of need it would come out easily.

I had hardly fixed myself, when Demyán shouted from the woods:

"Start it now, start it!"

And as Demyán shouted this, the peasants in the circuit cried, each with a different tone of voice: "Come now! OO-oo-oo!" and the women cried, in their thin voices: "Ai! Eekh!"

The bear was in the circle. Demyán was driving him. In the circuit the people shouted, and only my companion and I stood still, did not speak or move, and waited for the bear. I stood, and looked, and listened, and my heart went pitapat. I was clutching my gun and trembling. Now, now he will jump out, I thought, and I will aim and shoot, and he will fall – Suddenly I heard to the left something tumbling through the snow, only it was far away. I looked into the tall pine forest: about fifty steps from me, behind the trees, stood something large and black. I aimed and waited. I thought it might come nearer. I saw it move its ears and turn around. Now I could see the whole of him from the side. It was

a huge beast. I aimed hastily. Bang! I heard the bullet strike the tree. Through the smoke I saw the bear make back for the cover and disappear in the forest. "Well," I thought, "my business is spoiled: he will not run up to me again; either my companion will have a chance to shoot at him, or he will go through between the peasants, but never again toward me." I reloaded the gun, and stood and listened. The peasants were shouting on all sides, but on the right, not far from my companion, I heard a woman yell, "Here he is! Here he is! Here he is! This way! This way! Oi, oi, oi! Ai, ai, ai!"

There was the bear, in full sight. I was no longer expecting the bear to come toward me, and so looked to the right toward my companion. I saw Demyán running without the snow-shoes along the path, with a stick in his hand, and going up to my companion, sitting down near him, and pointing with the stick at something, as though he were aiming. I saw my companion raise his gun and aim at where Demyán was pointing. Bang! he fired it off.

"Well," I thought, "he has killed him." But I saw that my companion was not running toward the bear. "Evidently he missed him, or did not strike him right. He will get away," I thought, "but he will not come toward me."

What was that? Suddenly I heard something in front of me: somebody was flying like a whirlwind, and scattering the snow near by, and panting. I looked ahead of me, but he was making headlong toward me along the path through the dense pine growth. I could see that he was beside himself with fear. When

he was within five steps of me I could see the whole of him: his chest was black and his head was enormous, and of a reddish colour. He was flying straight toward me, and scattering the snow in all directions. I could see by the bear's eyes that he did not see me and in his fright was rushing headlong. He was making straight for the pine where I was standing. I raised my gun, and shot, but he came still nearer. I saw that I had not hit him: the bullet was carried past him. He heard nothing, plunged onward, and did not see me. I bent down the gun, almost rested it against his head. Bang! This time I hit him, but did not kill him.

He raised his head, dropped his ears, showed his teeth, – and straight toward me. I grasped the other gun; but before I had it in my hand, he was already on me, knocked me down, and flew over me. "Well," I thought, "that is good, he will not touch me." I was just getting up, when I felt something pressing against me and holding me down. In his onrush he ran past me, but he turned around and rushed against me with his whole breast. I felt something heavy upon me, something warm over my face, and I felt him taking my face into his jaws. My nose was already in his mouth, and I felt hot, and smelled his blood. He pressed my shoulders with his paws, and I could not stir. All I could do was to pull my head out of his jaws and press it against my breast, and I turned my nose and eyes away. But he was trying to get at my eyes and nose. I felt him strike the teeth of his upper jaw into my forehead, right below the hair, and the lower jaw into the cheek-bones below the eyes, and he began to crush me. It was

as though my head were cut with knives. I jerked and pulled out my head, but he chawed and chawed and snapped at me like a dog. I would turn my head away, and he would catch it again. "Well," I thought, "my end has come." Suddenly I felt lighter. I looked up, and he was gone: he had jumped away from me, and was running now.

When my companion and Demyán saw that the bear had knocked me into the snow, they dashed for me. My companion wanted to get there as fast as possible, but lost his way; instead of running on the trodden path, he ran straight ahead, and fell down. While he was trying to get out of the snow, the bear was gnawing at me. Demyán ran up to me along the path, without a gun, just with the stick which he had in his hands, and he shouted, "He is eating up the gentleman! He is eating up the gentleman!" And he kept running and shouting, "Oh, you wretched beast! What are you doing? Stop! Stop!"

The bear listened to him, stopped, and ran away. When I got up, there was much blood on the snow, just as though a sheep had been killed, and over my eyes the flesh hung in rags. While the wound was fresh I felt no pain.

My companion ran up to me, and the peasants gathered around me. They looked at my wounds, and washed them with snow. I had entirely forgotten about the wounds, and only asked, "Where is the bear? Where has he gone?"

Suddenly we heard, "Here he is! Here he is!" We saw the bear running once more against us. We grasped our guns, but before

we fired he ran past us. The bear was mad: he wanted to bite me again, but when he saw so many people he became frightened. We saw by the track that the bear was bleeding from the head. We wanted to follow him up, but my head hurt me, and so we drove to town to see a doctor.

The doctor sewed up my wounds with silk, and they began to heal.

A month later we went out again to hunt that bear; but I did not get the chance to kill him. The bear would not leave the cover, and kept walking around and around and roaring terribly. Demyán killed him. My shot had crushed his lower jaw and knocked out a tooth.

This bear was very large, and he had beautiful black fur. I had the skin stuffed, and it is lying now in my room. The wounds on my head have healed, so that one can scarcely see where they were.

A PRISONER OF THE CAUCASUS

I

A certain gentleman was serving as an officer in the Caucasus. His name was Zhilín.

One day he received a letter from home. His old mother wrote to him:

"I have grown old, and I should like to see my darling son before my death. Come to bid me farewell and bury me, and then, with God's aid, return to the service. I have also found a bride for you: she is bright and pretty and has property. If you take a liking to her, you can marry her, and stay here for good."

Zhilín reflected: "Indeed, my old mother has grown feeble; perhaps I shall never see her again. I must go; and if the bride is a good girl, I may marry her."

He went to the colonel, got a furlough, bade his companions good-bye, treated his soldiers to four buckets of vódka, and got himself ready to go.

At that time there was a war in the Caucasus. Neither in the daytime, nor at night, was it safe to travel on the roads. The moment a Russian walked or drove away from a fortress, the Tartars either killed him or took him as a prisoner to the mountains. It was a rule that a guard of soldiers should go twice

a week from fortress to fortress. In front and in the rear walked soldiers, and between them were other people.

It was in the summer. The carts gathered at daybreak outside the fortress, and the soldiers of the convoy came out, and all started. Zhilín rode on horseback, and his cart with his things went with the caravan.

They had to travel twenty-five versts. The caravan proceeded slowly; now the soldiers stopped, and now a wheel came off a cart, or a horse stopped, and all had to stand still and wait.

The sun had already passed midday, but the caravan had made only half the distance. It was dusty and hot; the sun just roasted them, and there was no shelter: it was a barren plain, with neither tree nor bush along the road.

Zhilín rode out ahead. He stopped and waited for the caravan to catch up with him. He heard them blow the signal-horn behind: they had stopped again.

Zhilín thought: "Why can't I ride on, without the soldiers? I have a good horse under me, and if I run against Tartars, I will gallop away. Or had I better not go?"

He stopped to think it over. There rode up to him another officer, Kostylín, with a gun, and said:

"Let us ride by ourselves, Zhilín! I cannot stand it any longer: I am hungry, and it is so hot. My shirt is dripping wet."

Kostylín was a heavy, stout man, with a red face, and the perspiration was just rolling down his face. Zhilín thought awhile and said:

"Is your gun loaded?"

"It is."

"Well, then, we will go, but on one condition, that we do not separate."

And so they rode ahead on the highway. They rode through the steppe, and talked, and looked about them. They could see a long way off.

When the steppe came to an end, the road entered a cleft between two mountains. So Zhilín said:

"We ought to ride up the mountain to take a look; for here they may leap out on us from the mountain without our seeing them."

But Kostylín said:

"What is the use of looking? Let us ride on!"

Zhilín paid no attention to him.

"No," he said, "you wait here below, and I will take a look up there."

And he turned his horse to the left, up-hill. The horse under Zhilín was a thoroughbred (he had paid a hundred roubles for it when it was a colt, and had himself trained it), and it carried him up the slope as though on wings. The moment he reached the summit, he saw before him a number of Tartars on horseback, about eighty fathoms away. There were about thirty of them. When he saw them, he began to turn back; and the Tartars saw him, and galloped toward him, and on the ride took their guns out of the covers. Zhilín urged his horse down-hill as fast as its legs would carry him, and he shouted to Kostylín:

"Take out the gun!" and he himself thought about his horse: "Darling, take me away from here! Don't stumble! If you do, I am lost. If I get to the gun, they shall not catch me."

But Kostylín, instead of waiting, galloped at full speed toward the fortress, the moment he saw the Tartars. He urged the horse on with the whip, now on one side, and now on the other. One could see through the dust only the horse switching her tail.

Zhilín saw that things were bad. The gun had disappeared, and he could do nothing with a sword. He turned his horse back to the soldiers, thinking that he might get away. He saw six men crossing his path. He had a good horse under him, but theirs were better still, and they crossed his path. He began to check his horse: he wanted to turn around; but the horse was running at full speed and could not be stopped, and he flew straight toward them. He saw a red-bearded Tartar on a gray horse, who was coming near to him. He howled and showed his teeth, and his gun was against his shoulder.

"Well," thought Zhilín, "I know you devils. When you take one alive, you put him in a hole and beat him with a whip. I will not fall into your hands alive – "

Though Zhilín was not tall, he was brave. He drew his sword, turned his horse straight against the Tartar, and thought:

"Either I will knock his horse off its feet, or I will strike the Tartar with my sword."

Zhilín got within a horse's length from him, when they shot at him from behind and hit the horse. The horse dropped on the

ground while going at full speed, and fell on Zhilín's leg.

He wanted to get up, but two stinking Tartars were already astride of him. He tugged and knocked down the two Tartars, but three more jumped down from their horses and began to strike him with the butts of their guns. Things grew dim before his eyes, and he tottered. The Tartars took hold of him, took from their saddles some reserve straps, twisted his arms behind his back, tied them with a Tartar knot, and fastened him to the saddle. They knocked down his hat, pulled off his boots, rummaged all over him, and took away his money and his watch, and tore all his clothes.

Zhilín looked back at his horse. The dear animal was lying just as it had fallen down, and only twitched its legs and did not reach the ground with them; in its head there was a hole, and from it the black blood gushed and wet the dust for an ell around.

A Tartar went up to the horse, to pull off the saddle. The horse was struggling still, and so he took out his dagger and cut its throat. A whistling sound came from the throat, and the horse twitched, and was dead.

The Tartars took off the saddle and the trappings. The red-bearded Tartar mounted his horse, and the others seated Zhilín behind him. To prevent his falling off, they attached him by a strap to the Tartar's belt, and they rode off to the mountains.

Zhilín was sitting back of the Tartar, and shaking and striking with his face against the stinking Tartar's back. All he saw before him was the mighty back, and the muscular neck, and the livid,

shaved nape of his head underneath his cap. Zhilín's head was bruised, and the blood was clotted under his eyes. And he could not straighten himself on the saddle, nor wipe off his blood. His arms were twisted so badly that his shoulder bones pained him.

They rode for a long time from one mountain to another, and forded a river, and came out on a path, where they rode through a ravine.

Zhilín wanted to take note of the road on which they were travelling, but his eyes were smeared with blood, and he could not turn around.

It was getting dark. They crossed another stream and rode up a rocky mountain. There was an odour of smoke, and the dogs began to bark. They had come to a native village. The Tartars got down from their horses; the Tartar children gathered around Zhilín, and screamed, and rejoiced, and aimed stones at him.

The Tartar drove the boys away, took Zhilín down from his horse, and called a labourer. There came a Nogay, with large cheek-bones; he wore nothing but a shirt. The shirt was torn and left his breast bare. The Tartar gave him a command. The labourer brought the stocks, – two oak planks drawn through iron rings, and one of these rings with a clasp and lock.

They untied Zhilín's hands, put the stocks on him, and led him into a shed: they pushed him in and locked the door. Zhilín fell on the manure pile. He felt around in the darkness for a soft spot, and lay down there.

II

Zhilín lay awake nearly the whole night. The nights were short. He saw through a chink that it was getting light. He got up, made the chink larger, and looked out.

Through the chink Zhilín saw the road: it went down-hill; on the right was a Tartar cabin, and near it two trees. A black dog lay on the threshold, and a goat strutted about with her kids, which were jerking their little tails. He saw a young Tartar woman coming up the hill; she wore a loose coloured shirt and pantaloons and boots, and her head was covered with a caftan, and on her head there was a large tin pitcher with water. She walked along, jerking her back, and bending over, and by the hand she led a young shaven Tartar boy in nothing but his shirt. The Tartar woman went into the cabin with the water, and out came the Tartar of the day before, with the red beard, wearing a silk half-coat, a silver dagger on a strap, and shoes on his bare feet. On his head there was a tall, black sheepskin hat, tilted backwards. He came out, and he stretched himself and smoothed his red beard. He stood awhile, gave the labourer an order, and went away.

Then two boys rode by, taking the horses to water. The muzzles of the horses were wet. Then there ran out some other shaven boys, in nothing but their shirts, with no trousers; they gathered in a crowd, walked over to the shed, picked up a stick, and began to poke it through the chink. When Zhilín shouted at

the children, they screamed and started to run back, so that their bare knees glistened in the sun.

Zhilín wanted to drink, – his throat was all dried up. He thought: "If they would only come to see me!" He heard them open the shed. The red Tartar came in, and with him another, black-looking fellow, of smaller stature. His eyes were black and bright, his cheeks ruddy, his small beard clipped; his face looked jolly, and he kept laughing all the time. This swarthy fellow was dressed even better: he had on a silk half-coat, of a blue colour, embroidered with galloons. In his belt there was a large silver dagger; his slippers were of red morocco and also embroidered with silver. Over his thin slippers he wore heavier shoes. His cap was tall, of white astrakhan.

The red Tartar came in. He said something, as though scolding, and stopped. He leaned against the door-post, dangled his dagger, and like a wolf looked furtively at Zhilín. But the swarthy fellow – swift, lively, walking around as though on springs – went up straight to Zhilín, squatted down, showed his teeth, slapped him on the shoulder, began to rattle off something in his language, winked with his eyes, clicked his tongue, and kept repeating: "Goot Uruss! Goot Uruss!"

Zhilín did not understand a thing and said:

"Give me to drink, give me water to drink!"

The swarthy fellow laughed. "Goot Uruss!" he kept rattling off.

Zhilín showed with his lips and hands that he wanted

something to drink.

The swarthy fellow understood what he wanted, laughed out, looked through the door, and called some one: "Dina!"

In came a thin, slender little girl, of about thirteen years of age, who resembled the swarthy man very much. Evidently she was his daughter. Her eyes, too, were black and bright, and her face was pretty. She wore a long blue shirt, with broad sleeves and without a belt. The skirt, the breast, and the sleeves were trimmed with red. On her legs were pantaloons, and on her feet slippers, with high-heeled shoes over them; on her neck she wore a necklace of Russian half-roubles. Her head was uncovered; her braid was black, with a ribbon through it, and from the ribbon hung small plates and a Russian rouble.

Her father gave her a command. She ran away, and came back and brought a small tin pitcher. She gave him the water, and herself squatted down, bending up in such a way that her shoulders were below her knees. She sat there, and opened her eyes, and looked at Zhilín drinking, as though he were some animal.

Zhilín handed her back the pitcher. She jumped away like a wild goat. Even her father laughed. He sent her somewhere else. She took the pitcher and ran away; she brought some fresh bread on a round board, and again sat down, bent over, riveted her eyes on him, and kept looking.

The Tartars went away and locked the door.

After awhile the Nogay came to Zhilín, and said:

"Ai-da, master, ai-da!"

He did not know any Russian, either. All Zhilín could make out was that he should follow him.

Zhilín started with the stocks, and he limped and could not walk, so much did the stocks pull his legs aside. Zhilín went out with the Nogay. He saw a Tartar village of about ten houses, and a church of theirs, with a small tower. Near one house stood three horses, all saddled. Boys were holding the reins. From the house sprang the swarthy Tartar, and he waved his hand for Zhilín to come up. He laughed all the while, and talked in his language, and disappeared through the door.

Zhilín entered the house. It was a good living-room, – the walls were plastered smooth with clay. Along the front wall lay coloured cushions, and at the sides hung costly rugs; on the rugs were guns, pistols, swords, – all in silver. By one wall there was a small stove, on a level with the floor. The floor was of dirt and as clean as a threshing-floor, and the whole front corner was carpeted with felt; and over the felt lay rugs, and on the rugs cushions. On these rugs sat the Tartars, in their slippers without their outer shoes: there were the swarthy fellow, the red Tartar, and three guests. At their backs were feather cushions, and before them, on a round board, were millet cakes and melted butter in a bowl, and Tartar beer, "buza," in a small pitcher. They were eating with their hands, and their hands were all greasy from the butter.

The swarthy man jumped up and ordered Zhilín to be placed

to one side, not on a rug, but on the bare floor; he went back to his rug, and treated his guests to millet cakes and buza. The labourer placed Zhilín where he had been ordered, himself took off his outer shoes, put them at the door, where stood the other shoes, and sat down on the felt next to the masters. He looked at them as they ate, and wiped off his spittle.

The Tartars ate the cakes. Then there came a Tartar woman, in a shirt like the one the girl had on, and in pantaloons, and with a kerchief over her head. She carried away the butter and the cakes, and brought a small wash-basin of a pretty shape, and a pitcher with a narrow neck. The Tartars washed their hands, then folded them, knelt down, blew in every direction, and said their prayers. Then one of the Tartar guests turned to Zhilín, and began to speak in Russian:

"You," he said, "were taken by Kazi-Muhammed," and he pointed to the red Tartar, "and he gave you to Abdul-Murat." He pointed to the swarthy man. "Abdul-Murat is now your master."

Zhilín kept silence. Then Abdul-Murat began to speak. He pointed to Zhilín, and laughed, and kept repeating:

"Soldier Uruss! Goot Uruss!"

The interpreter said:

"He wants you to write a letter home that they may send a ransom for you. When they send it, you will be set free."

Zhilín thought awhile and said:

"How much ransom does he want?"

The Tartars talked together; then the interpreter said:

"Three thousand in silver."

"No," said Zhilín, "I cannot pay that."

Abdul jumped up, began to wave his hands and to talk to Zhilín, thinking that he would understand him. The interpreter translated. He said:

"How much will you give?"

Zhilín thought awhile, and said:

"Five hundred roubles."

Then the Tartars began to talk a great deal, all at the same time. Abdul shouted at the red Tartar. He was so excited that the spittle just spirted from his mouth.

But the red Tartar only scowled and clicked his tongue.

They grew silent, and the interpreter said:

"The master is not satisfied with five hundred roubles. He has himself paid two hundred for you. Kazi-Muhammed owed him a debt. He took you for that debt. Three thousand roubles, nothing less will do. And if you do not write, you will be put in a hole and beaten with a whip."

"Oh," thought Zhilín, "it will not do to show that I am frightened; that will only be worse." He leaped to his feet, and said:

"Tell that dog that if he is going to frighten me, I will not give him a penny, and I will refuse to write. I have never been afraid of you dogs, and I never will be."

The interpreter translated, and all began to speak at the same time.

They babbled for a long time; then the swarthy Tartar jumped up and walked over to Zhilín:

"Uruss," he said, "dzhigit, dzhigit Uruss!"

Dzhigit in their language means a "brave." And he laughed; he said something to the interpreter, and the interpreter said:

"Give one thousand roubles!"

Zhilín stuck to what he had said:

"I will not give more than five hundred. And if you kill me, you will get nothing."

The Tartars talked awhile and sent the labourer somewhere, and themselves kept looking now at Zhilín and now at the door. The labourer came, and behind him walked a fat man; he was barefoot and tattered; he, too, had on the stocks.

Zhilín just shouted, for he recognized Kostylín. He, too, had been caught. They were placed beside each other. They began to talk to each other, and the Tartars kept silence and looked at them. Zhilín told what had happened to him; and Kostylín told him that his horse had stopped and his gun had missed fire, and that the same Abdul had overtaken and captured him.

Abdul jumped up, and pointed to Kostylín, and said something. The interpreter translated it, and said that both of them belonged to the same master, and that the one who would first furnish the money would be the first to be released.

"Now you," he said, "are a cross fellow, but your friend is meek; he has written a letter home, and they will send five thousand roubles. He will be fed well, and will not be insulted."

So Zhilín said:

"My friend may do as he pleases; maybe he is rich, but I am not. As I have said, so will it be. If you want to, kill me, – you will not gain by it, – but more than five hundred will I not give."

They were silent for awhile. Suddenly Abdul jumped up, fetched a small box, took out a pen, a piece of paper, and some ink, put it all before Zhilín, slapped him on the shoulder, and motioned for him to write. He agreed to the five hundred.

"Wait awhile," Zhilín said to the interpreter. "Tell him that he has to feed us well, and give us the proper clothes and shoes, and keep us together, – it will be jollier for us, – and take off the stocks." He looked at the master and laughed. The master himself laughed. He listened to the interpreter, and said:

"I will give you the best of clothes, – a Circassian mantle and boots, – you will be fit to marry. We will feed you like princes. And if you want to stay together, you may live in the shed. But the stocks cannot be taken off, for you will run away. For the night we will take them off."

He ran up to Zhilín, and tapped him on the shoulder:

"You goot, me goot!"

Zhilín wrote the letter, but he did not address it right. He thought he would run away.

Zhilín and Kostylín were taken back to the shed. They brought for them maize straw, water in a pitcher, bread, two old mantles, and worn soldier boots. They had evidently been pulled off dead soldiers. For the night the stocks were taken off, and they were

locked in the barn.

III

Zhilín and his companion lived thus for a whole month. Their master kept laughing.

"You, Iván, goot, me, Abdul, goot!"

But he did not feed them well. All he gave them to eat was unsalted millet bread, baked like pones, or entirely unbaked dough.

Kostylín wrote home a second letter. He was waiting for the money to come, and felt lonesome. He sat for days at a time in the shed counting the days before the letter would come, or he slept. But Zhilín knew that his letter would not reach any one, and so he did not write another.

"Where," he thought, "is my mother to get so much money? As it is, she lived mainly by what I sent her. If she should collect five hundred roubles, she would be ruined in the end. If God grants it, I will manage to get away from here."

And he watched and thought of how to get away.

He walked through the village and whistled, or he sat down somewhere to work with his hands, either making a doll from clay, or weaving a fence from twigs. Zhilín was a great hand at all kinds of such work.

One day he made a doll, with a nose, and hands, and legs, in a Tartar shirt, and put the doll on the roof. The Tartar maidens were going for water. His master's daughter, Dina, saw the doll,

and she called up the Tartar girls. They put down their pitchers, and looked, and laughed. Zhilín took down the doll and gave it to them. They laughed, and did not dare take it. He left the doll, and went back to the shed to see what they would do.

Dina ran up, looked around, grasped the doll, and ran away with it.

In the morning, at daybreak, he saw Dina coming out with the doll in front of the house. The doll was all dressed up in red rags, and she was rocking the doll and singing to it in her fashion. The old woman came out. She scolded her, took the doll away from her and broke it, and sent Dina to work.

Zhilín made another doll, a better one than before, and he gave it to Dina. One day Dina brought him a small pitcher. She put it down, herself sat down and looked at him, and laughed, as she pointed to the pitcher.

"What is she so happy about?" thought Zhilín.

He took the pitcher and began to drink. He thought it was water, but, behold, it was milk. He drank the milk, and said:

"It is good!"

Dina was very happy.

"Good, Iván, good!" and she jumped up, clapped her hands, took away the pitcher, and ran off.

From that time she brought him milk every day on the sly. The Tartars make cheese-cakes from goat milk, and dry them on the roofs, – and so she brought him those cakes also. One day the master killed a sheep, so she brought him a piece of mutton in

her sleeve. She would throw it down and run away.

One day there was a severe storm, and for an hour the rain fell as though from a pail. All the streams became turbid. Where there was a ford, the water was now eight feet deep, and stones were borne down. Torrents were running everywhere, and there was a roar in the mountains. When the storm was over, streams were coming down the village in every direction. Zhilín asked his master to let him have a penknife, and with it he cut out a small axle and little boards, and made a wheel, and to each end of the wheel he attached a doll.

The girls brought him pieces of material, and he dressed the dolls: one a man, the other a woman. He fixed them firmly, and placed the wheel over a brook. The wheel began to turn, and the dolls to jump.

The whole village gathered around it; boys, girls, women, and men came, and they clicked with their tongues:

"Ai, Uruss! Ai, Iván!"

Abdul had a Russian watch, but it was broken. He called Zhilín, showed it to him, and clicked his tongue. Zhilín said:

"Let me have it! I will fix it!"

He took it to pieces with a penknife; then he put it together, and gave it back to him. The watch was running now.

The master was delighted. He brought his old half-coat, – it was all in rags, – and made him a present of it. What could he do but take it? He thought it would be good enough to cover himself with in the night.

After that the rumour went abroad that Zhilín was a great master. They began to come to him from distant villages: one, to have him fix a gun-lock or a pistol, another, to set a clock a-going. His master brought him tools, – pinchers, gimlets, and files.

One day a Tartar became sick: they sent to Zhilín, and said, "Go and cure him!" Zhilín did not know anything about medicine. He went, took a look at him, and thought, "Maybe he will get well by himself." He went to the barn, took some water and sand, and mixed it. In the presence of the Tartars he said a charm over the water, and gave it to him to drink. Luckily for him, the Tartar got well.

Zhilín began to understand their language. Some of the Tartars got used to him. When they needed him, they called, "Iván, Iván!" but others looked at him awry, as at an animal.

The red Tartar did not like Zhilín. Whenever he saw him, he frowned and turned away, or called him names. There was also an old man; he did not live in the village, but came from farther down the mountain. Zhilín saw him only when he came to the mosque, to pray to God. He was a small man; his cap was wrapped with a white towel. His beard and moustache were clipped, and they were as white as down; his face was wrinkled and as red as a brick. His nose was hooked, like a hawk's beak, and his eyes were gray and mean-looking; of teeth he had only two tusks. He used to walk in his turban, leaning on a crutch, and looking around him like a wolf. Whenever he saw Zhilín, he

grunted and turned away.

One day Zhilín went down-hill, to see where the old man was living. He walked down the road, and saw a little garden, with a stone fence, and inside the fence were cherry and apricot trees, and stood a hut with a flat roof. He came closer to it, and he saw beehives woven from straw, and bees were swarming around and buzzing. The old man was kneeling, and doing something to a hive. Zhilín got up higher, to get a good look, and made a noise with his stocks. The old man looked around and shrieked; he pulled the pistol out from his belt and fired at Zhilín. He had just time to hide behind a rock.

The old man went to the master to complain about Zhilín. The master called up Zhilín, and laughed, and asked:

"Why did you go to the old man?"

"I have not done him any harm," he said. "I just wanted to see how he lives."

The master told the old man that. But the old man was angry, and hissed, and rattled something off; he showed his teeth and waved his hand threateningly at Zhilín.

Zhilín did not understand it all; but he understood that the old man was telling his master to kill all the Russians, and not to keep them in the village. The old man went away.

Zhilín asked his master what kind of a man that old Tartar was. The master said:

"He is a big man! He used to be the first dzhigit: he killed a lot of Russians, and he was rich. He had three wives and eight

sons. All of them lived in the same village. The Russians came, destroyed the village, and killed seven of his sons. One son was left alive, and he surrendered himself to the Russians. The old man went and surrendered himself, too, to the Russians. He stayed with them three months, found his son there, and killed him, and then he ran away. Since then he has stopped fighting. He has been to Mecca, to pray to God, and that is why he wears the turban. He who has been to Mecca is called a Hadji and puts on a turban. He has no use for you fellows. He tells me to kill you; but I cannot kill you, – I have paid for you; and then, Iván, I like you. I not only have no intention of killing you, but I would not let you go back, if I had not given my word to you." He laughed as he said that, and added in Russian: "You, Iván, good, me, Abdul, good!"

IV

Zhilín lived thus for a month. In the daytime he walked around the village and made things with his hands, and when night came, and all was quiet in the village, he began to dig in the shed. It was difficult to dig on account of the rocks, but he sawed the stones with the file, and made a hole through which he meant to crawl later. "First I must find out what direction to go in," he thought; "but the Tartars will not tell me anything."

So he chose a time when his master was away; he went after dinner back of the village, up-hill, where he could see the place. But when his master went away, he told his little boy to keep an eye on Zhilín and to follow him everywhere. So the boy ran after Zhilín, and said:

"Don't go! Father said that you should not go there. I will call the people!"

Zhilín began to persuade him.

"I do not want to go far," he said; "I just want to walk up the mountain: I want to find an herb with which to cure you people. Come with me; I cannot run away with the stocks. To-morrow I will make you a bow and arrows."

He persuaded the boy, and they went together. As he looked up the mountain, it looked near, but with the stocks it was hard to walk; he walked and walked, and climbed the mountain with difficulty. Zhilín sat down and began to look at the place. To the

south of the shed there was a ravine, and there a herd of horses was grazing, and in a hollow could be seen another village. At that village began a steeper mountain, and beyond that mountain there was another mountain. Between the mountains could be seen a forest, and beyond it again the mountains, rising higher and higher. Highest of all, there were white mountains, capped with snow, just like sugar loaves. And one snow mountain stood with its cap above all the rest. To the east and the west there were just such mountains; here and there smoke rose from villages in the clefts.

"Well," he thought, "that is all their side."

He began to look to the Russian side. At his feet was a brook and his village, and all around were little gardens. At the brook women were sitting, – they looked as small as dolls, – and washing the linen. Beyond the village and below it there was a mountain, and beyond that, two other mountains, covered with forests; between the two mountains could be seen an even spot, and on that plain, far, far away, it looked as though smoke were settling. Zhilín recalled where the sun used to rise and set when he was at home in the fortress. He looked down there, – sure enough, that was the valley where the Russian fortress ought to be. There, then, between those two mountains, he had to run.

The sun was beginning to go down. The snow-capped mountains changed from white to violet; it grew dark in the black mountains; vapour arose from the clefts, and the valley, where our fortress no doubt was, gleamed in the sunset as though on

fire. Zhilín began to look sharply, – something was quivering in the valley, like smoke rising from chimneys. He was sure now that it must be the Russian fortress.

It grew late; he could hear the mullah call; the flock was being driven, and the cows lowed. The boy said to him, "Come!" but Zhilín did not feel like leaving.

They returned home. "Well," thought Zhilín, "now I know the place, and I must run." He wanted to run that same night. The nights were dark, – the moon was on the wane. Unfortunately the Tartars returned toward evening. At other times they returned driving cattle before them, and then they were jolly. But this time they did not drive home anything, but brought back a dead Tartar, a red-haired companion of theirs. They came back angry, and all gathered to bury him. Zhilín, too, went out to see. They wrapped the dead man in linen, without putting him in a coffin, and carried him under the plane-trees beyond the village, and placed him on the grass. The mullah came, and the old men gathered around him, their caps wrapped with towels, and took off their shoes and seated themselves in a row on their heels, in front of the dead man.

At their head was the mullah, and then three old men in turbans, sitting in a row, and behind them other Tartars. They sat, and bent their heads, and kept silence. They were silent for quite awhile. Then the mullah raised his head, and said:

"Allah!" (That means "God.") He said that one word, and again they lowered their heads and kept silence for a long time;

they sat without stirring. Again the mullah raised his head:

"Allah!" and all repeated, "Allah!" and again they were silent. The dead man lay on the grass, and did not stir, and they sat about him like the dead. Not one of them stirred. One could hear only the leaves on the plane-tree rustling in the breeze. Then the mullah said a prayer, and all got up, lifted the dead body, and carried it away. They took it to a grave, – not a simple grave, but dug under like a cave. They took the dead man under his arms and by his legs, bent him over, let him down softly, pushed him under in a sitting posture, and fixed his arms on his body.

A Nogay dragged up a lot of green reeds; they bedded the grave with it, then quickly filled it with dirt, levelled it up, and put a stone up straight at the head of it. They tramped down the earth, and again sat down in a row near the grave. They were silent for a long time.

"Allah, Allah, Allah!" They sighed and got up.

A red-haired Tartar distributed money to the old men; then he got up, took a whip, struck himself three times on his forehead, and went home.

Next morning Zhilín saw the red Tartar take a mare out of the village, and three Tartars followed him. They went outside the village; then the red-haired Tartar took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, – he had immense arms, – and took out his dagger and whetted it on a steel. The Tartars jerked up the mare's head, and the red-haired man walked over to her, cut her throat, threw her down, and began to flay her, – to rip the skin open with his fists.

Then came women and girls, and they began to wash the inside and the entrails. Then they chopped up the mare and dragged the flesh to the house. And the whole village gathered at the house of the red-haired Tartar to celebrate the dead man's wake.

For three days did they eat the horse-flesh, drink buza, and remember the dead man. On the fourth day Zhilín saw them get ready to go somewhere for a dinner. They brought horses, dressed themselves up, and went away, – about ten men, and the red Tartar with them; Abdul was the only one who was left at home. The moon was just beginning to increase, and the nights were still dark.

"Well," thought Zhilín, "to-night I must run," and he told Kostylín so. But Kostylín was timid.

"How can we run? We do not know the road."

"I know it."

"But we cannot reach it in the night."

"If we do not, we shall stay for the night in the woods. I have a lot of cakes with me. You certainly do not mean to stay. It would be all right if they sent the money; but suppose they cannot get together so much. The Tartars are mean now, because the Russians have killed one of theirs. I understand they want to kill us now."

Kostylín thought awhile:

"Well, let us go!"

V

Zhilín crept into the hole and dug it wider, so that Kostylín could get through; and then they sat still and waited for everything to quiet down in the village.

When all grew quiet, Zhilín crawled through the hole and got out. He whispered to Kostylín to crawl out. Kostylín started to come out, but he caught a stone with his foot, and it made a noise. Now their master had a dappled watch-dog, and he was dreadfully mean; his name was Ulyashin. Zhilín had been feeding him before. When Ulyashin heard the voice, he began to bark and rushed forward, and with him other dogs. Zhilín gave a low whistle and threw a piece of cake to the dog, and the dog recognized him and wagged his tail and stopped barking.

The master heard it, and he called out from the hut, "Hait, hait, Ulyashin!"

But Zhilín was scratching Ulyashin behind his ears; so the dog was silent and rubbed against his legs and wagged his tail.

They sat awhile around the corner. All was silent; nothing could be heard but the sheep coughing in the hut corner, and the water rippling down the pebbles. It was dark; the stars stood high in the heaven; the young moon shone red above the mountain, and its horns were turned upward. In the clefts the mist looked as white as milk.

Zhilín got up and said to his companion:

"Now, my friend, let us start!"

They started. They had made but a few steps, when they heard the mullah sing out on the roof: "Allah besmillah! Ilrakhman!" That meant that the people were going to the mosque. They sat down again, hiding behind a wall. They sat for a long time, waiting for the people to pass by. Again everything was quiet.

"Well, with God's aid!" They made the sign of the cross, and started. They crossed the yard and went down-hill to the brook; they crossed the brook and walked down the ravine. The mist was dense and low on the ground, and overhead the stars were, oh, so visible. Zhilín saw by the stars in what direction they had to go. In the mist it felt fresh, and it was easy to walk, only the boots were awkward, they had worn down so much. Zhilín took off his boots and threw them away, and marched on barefoot. He leaped from stone to stone, and kept watching the stars. Kostylín began to fall behind.

"Walk slower," he said. "The accursed boots, – they have chafed my feet."

"Take them off! You will find it easier without them."

Kostylín walked barefoot after that; but it was only worse: he cut his feet on the rocks, and kept falling behind. Zhilín said to him:

"If you bruise your feet, they will heal up; but if they catch you; they will kill you, – so it will be worse."

Kostylín said nothing, but he groaned as he walked. They walked for a long time through a ravine. Suddenly they heard

dogs barking. Zhilín stopped and looked around; he groped with his hands and climbed a hill.

"Oh," he said, "we have made a mistake, – we have borne too much to the right. Here is a village, – I saw it from the mountain; we must go back and to the left, and up the mountain. There must be a forest here."

But Kostylín said:

"Wait at least awhile! Let me rest: my feet are all blood-stained."

"Never mind, friend, they will heal up! Jump more lightly, – like this!"

And Zhilín ran back, and to the left, up the mountain into the forest. Kostylín kept falling behind and groaning. Zhilín hushed him, and walked on.

They got up the mountain, and there, indeed, was a forest. They went into the forest, and tore all the clothes they had against the thorns. They struck a path in the forest, and followed it.

"Stop!" Hoofs were heard tramping on the path. They stopped to listen. It was the sound of a horse's hoofs. They started, and again it began to thud. They stopped, and it, too, stopped. Zhilín crawled up to it, and saw something standing in the light on the road. It was not exactly a horse, and again it was like a horse with something strange above it, and certainly not a man. He heard it snort. "What in the world is it?" Zhilín gave a light whistle, and it bolted away from the path, so that he could hear it crash through the woods: the branches broke off, as though a storm

went through them.

Kostylín fell down in fright. But Zhilín laughed and said:

"That is a stag. Do you hear him break the branches with his horns? We are afraid of him, and he is afraid of us."

They walked on. The Pleiades were beginning to settle, – it was not far from morning. They did not know whether they were going right, or not. Zhilín thought that that was the path over which they had taken him, and that he was about ten versts from his own people; still there were no certain signs, and, besides, in the night nothing could be made out. They came out on a clearing. Kostylín sat down, and said:

"Do as you please, but I will not go any farther! My feet refuse to move."

Zhilín begged him to go on.

"No," he said, "I cannot walk on."

Zhilín got angry, spit out in disgust, and scolded him.

"Then I will go by myself, – good-bye!"

Kostylín got up and walked on. They walked about four versts. The mist grew denser in the forest, and nothing could be seen in front of them, and the stars were quite dim.

Suddenly they heard a horse tramping in front of them. They could hear the horse catch with its hoofs in the stones. Zhilín lay down on his belly, and put his ear to the ground to listen.

"So it is, a rider is coming this way!"

They ran off the road, sat down in the bushes, and waited. Zhilín crept up to the road, and saw a Tartar on horseback,

driving a cow before him, and mumbling something to himself. The Tartar passed by them. Zhilín went back to Kostylín.

"Well, with God's help, he is gone. Get up, and let us go!"

Kostylín tried to get up, but fell down.

"I cannot, upon my word, I cannot. I have no strength."

The heavy, puffed-up man was in a perspiration, and as the cold mist in the forest went through him and his feet were all torn, he went all to pieces. Zhilín tried to get him up, but Kostylín cried:

"Oh, it hurts!"

Zhilín was frightened.

"Don't shout so! You know that the Tartar is not far off, – he will hear you." But he thought: "He is, indeed, weak, so what shall I do with him? It will not do to abandon my companion."

"Well," he said, "get up, get on my back, and I will carry you, if you cannot walk."

He took Kostylín on his back, put his hands on Kostylín's legs, walked out on the road, and walked on.

"Only be sure," he said, "and do not choke me with your hands, for Christ's sake. Hold on to my shoulders!"

It was hard for Zhilín: his feet, too, were blood-stained, and he was worn out. He kept bending down, straightening up Kostylín, and throwing him up, so that he might sit higher, and dragged him along the road.

Evidently the Tartar had heard Kostylín's shout. Zhilín heard some one riding from behind and calling in his language. Zhilín

made for the brush. The Tartar pulled out his gun and fired; he screeched in his fashion, and rode back along the road.

"Well," said Zhilín, "we are lost, my friend! That dog will collect the Tartars and they will start after us. If we cannot make another three versts, we are lost." But he thought about Kostylín: "The devil has tempted me to take this log along. If I had been alone, I should have escaped long ago."

Kostylín said:

"Go yourself! Why should you perish for my sake?"

"No, I will not go, – it will not do to leave a comrade."

He took him once more on his shoulders, and held on to him. Thus they walked another verst. The woods extended everywhere, and no end was to be seen. The mist was beginning to lift, and rose in the air like little clouds, and the stars could not be seen. Zhilín was worn out.

They came to a little spring by the road; it was lined with stones. Zhilín stopped and put down Kostylín.

"Let me rest," he said, "and get a drink! We will eat our cakes. It cannot be far now."

He had just got down to drink, when he heard the tramping of horses behind them. Again they rushed to the right, into the bushes, down an incline, and lay down.

They could hear Tartar voices. The Tartars stopped at the very spot where they had left the road. They talked awhile, then they made a sound, as though sicking dogs. Something crashed through the bushes, and a strange dog made straight for them. It

stopped and began to bark.

Then the Tartars came down, – they, too, were strangers. They took them, bound them, put them on their horses, and carried them off.

They travelled about three versts, when they were met by Abdul, the prisoners' master, and two more Tartars. They talked with each other, and the prisoners were put on the other horses and taken back to the village.

Abdul no longer laughed, and did not speak one word with them.

They were brought to the village at daybreak, and were placed in the street. The children ran up and beat them with stones and sticks, and screamed.

The Tartars gathered in a circle, and the old man from down-hill came, too. They talked together. Zhilín saw that they were sitting in judgment on them, discussing what to do with them. Some said that they ought to be sent farther into the mountains, but the old man said that they should be killed. Abdul disputed with them and said:

"I have paid money for them, and I will get a ransom for them."

But the old man said:

"They will not pay us anything; they will only give us trouble. It is a sin to feed Russians. Kill them, and that will be the end of it."

They all went their way. The master walked over to Zhilín and

said:

"If the ransom does not come in two weeks, I will beat you to death. And if you try to run again I will kill you like a dog. Write a letter, and write it well!"

Paper was brought to them, and they wrote the letters. The stocks were put on them, and they were taken back of the mosque. There was a ditch there, about twelve feet in depth, – and into this ditch they were let down.

VI

They now led a very hard life. The stocks were not taken off, and they were not let out into the wide world. Unbaked dough was thrown down to them, as to dogs, and water was let down to them in a pitcher. There was a stench in the ditch, and it was close and damp. Kostylín grew very ill, and swelled, and had a breaking out on his whole body; and he kept groaning all the time, or he slept. Zhilín was discouraged: he saw that the situation was desperate. He did not know how to get out of it.

He began to dig, but there was no place to throw the dirt in; the master saw it, and threatened to kill him.

One day he was squatting in the ditch, and thinking of the free world, and he felt pretty bad. Suddenly a cake fell down on his knees, and a second, and some cherries. He looked up, – it was Dina. She looked at him, laughed, and ran away. Zhilín thought: "Maybe Dina will help me."

He cleaned up a place in the ditch, scraped up some clay, and began to make dolls. He made men, horses, and dogs. He thought: "When Dina comes I will throw them to her."

But on the next day Dina did not come. Zhilín heard the tramping of horses; somebody rode by, and the Tartars gathered at the mosque; they quarrelled and shouted, and talked about the Russians. And he heard the old man's voice. He could not make out exactly what it was, but he guessed that the Russians had

come close to the village, and that the Tartars were afraid that they might come to the village, and they did not know what to do with the prisoners.

They talked awhile and went away. Suddenly he heard something rustle above him. He looked up; Dina was squatting down, and her knees towered above her head; she leaned over, and her necklace hung down and dangled over the ditch. Her little eyes glistened like stars. She took two cheese-cakes out of her sleeve and threw them down to him. Zhilín said to her:

"Why have you not been here for so long? I have made you some toys. Here they are!"

He began to throw one after the other to her, but she shook her head, and did not look at them.

"I do not want them," she said. She sat awhile in silence, and said; "Iván, they want to kill you!" She pointed with her hand to her neck.

"Who wants to kill me?"

"My father, – the old men tell him to. I am sorry for you."

So Zhilín said:

"If you pity me, bring me a long stick!"

She shook her head, to say that she could not. He folded his hands, and began to beg her:

"Dina, if you please! Dear Dina, bring it to me!"

"I cannot," she said. "The people are at home, and they would see me."

And she went away.

Zhilín was sitting there in the evening, and thinking what would happen. He kept looking up. The stars could be seen, and the moon was not yet up. The mullah called, and all grew quiet. Zhilín was beginning to fall asleep; he thought the girl would be afraid.

Suddenly some clay fell on his head. He looked up and saw a long pole coming down at the end of the ditch. It tumbled, and descended, and came down into the ditch. Zhilín was happy; he took hold of it and let it down, – it was a stout pole. He had seen it before on his master's roof.

He looked up: the stars were shining high in the heavens, and over the very ditch Dina's eyes glistened in the darkness. She bent her face over the edge of the ditch, and whispered: "Iván, Iván!" and waved her hands in front of her face, as much as to say: "Speak softly!"

"What is it?" asked Zhilín.

"They are all gone. There are two only at the house."

So Zhilín said:

"Kostylín, come, let us try for the last time; I will give you a lift."

Kostylín would not even listen.

"No," he said, "I shall never get away from here. Where should I go, since I have no strength to turn around?"

"If so, good-bye! Do not think ill of me!"

He kissed Kostylín.

He took hold of the pole, told Dina to hold on to it, and

climbed up. Two or three times he slipped down: the stocks were in his way. Kostylín held him up, and he managed to get on. Dina pulled him by the shirt with all her might, and laughed.

Zhilín took the pole, and said:

"Take it to where you found it, for if they see it, they will beat you."

She dragged the pole away, and Zhilín went down-hill. He crawled down an incline, took a sharp stone, and tried to break the lock of the stocks. But the lock was a strong one, and he could not break it. He heard some one running down the hill, leaping lightly. He thought it was Dina. Dina ran up, took a stone, and said:

"Let me do it!"

She knelt down and tried to break it; but her arms were as thin as rods, – there was no strength in them. She threw away the stone, and began to weep. Zhilín again worked on the lock, and Dina squatted near him, and held on to his shoulder. Zhilín looked around; on the left, beyond the mountain, he saw a red glow, – the moon was rising.

"Well," he thought, "before the moon is up I must cross the ravine and get to the forest."

He got up, threw away the stone, and, though in the stocks, started to go.

"Good-bye, Dina dear! I will remember you all my life."

Dina took hold of him; she groped all over him, trying to find a place to put the cakes. He took them from her.

"Thank you," he said, "you are a clever girl. Who will make dolls for you without me?" And he patted her on the head.

Dina began to cry. She covered her eyes with her hands, and ran up-hill like a kid. In the darkness he could hear the ornaments in the braid striking against her shoulders.

Zhilín made the sign of the cross, took the lock of his fetters in his hand, that it might not clank, and started down the road, dragging his feet along, and looking at the glow, where the moon was rising. He recognized the road. By the straight road it would be about eight versts. If he only could get to the woods before the moon was entirely out! He crossed a brook, – and it was getting light beyond the mountain. He walked through the ravine; he walked and looked, but the moon was not yet to be seen. It was getting brighter, and on one side of the ravine everything could be seen more and more clearly. The shadow was creeping down the mountain, up toward him.

Zhilín walked and kept in the shade. He hurried on, but the moon was coming out faster still; the tops of the trees on the right side were now in the light. As he came up to the woods, the moon came out entirely from behind the mountains, and it grew bright and white as in the daytime. All the leaves could be seen on the trees. The mountains were calm and bright; it was as though everything were dead. All that could be heard was the rippling of a brook below.

He reached the forest, – he came across no men. Zhilín found a dark spot in the woods and sat down to rest himself.

He rested, and ate a cake. He found a stone, and began once more to break down the lock. He bruised his hands, but did not break the lock. He got up, and walked on. He marched about a verst, but his strength gave out, – his feet hurt him so. He would make ten steps and then stop. "What is to be done?" he thought. "I will drag myself along until my strength gives out entirely. If I sit down, I shall not be able to get up. I cannot reach the fortress, so, when day breaks, I will lie down in the forest for the day, and at night I will move on."

He walked the whole night. He came across two Tartars only, but he heard them from afar, and so hid behind a tree.

The moon was beginning to pale, and Zhilín had not yet reached the edge of the forest.

"Well," he thought, "I will take another thirty steps, after which I will turn into the forest, where I will sit down."

He took the thirty steps, and there he saw that the forest came to an end. He went to the edge of it, and there it was quite light. Before him lay the steppe and the fortress, as in the palm of the hand, and to the left, close by at the foot of the mountain, fires were burning and going out, and the smoke was spreading, and men were near the camp-fires.

He took a sharp look at them: the guns were glistening, – those were Cossacks and soldiers.

Zhilín was happy. He collected his last strength and walked down-hill. And he thought: "God forfend that a Tartar rider should see me in the open! Though it is not far off, I should not

get away."

No sooner had he thought so, when, behold, on a mound stood three Tartars, not more than 150 fathoms away. They saw him, and darted toward him. His heart just sank in him. He waved his arms and shouted as loud as he could:

"Brothers! Help, brothers!"

Our men heard him, and away flew the mounted Cossacks. They started toward him, to cut off the Tartars.

The Cossacks had far to go, but the Tartars were near. And Zhilín collected his last strength, took the stocks in his hand, and ran toward the Cossacks. He was beside himself, and he made the sign of the cross, and shouted:

"Brothers! Brothers! Brothers!"

There were about fifteen Cossacks.

The Tartars were frightened, and they stopped before they reached him. And Zhilín ran up to the Cossacks.

The Cossacks surrounded him, and asked:

"Who are you? Where do you come from?"

But Zhilín was beside himself, and he wept, and muttered:

"Brothers! Brothers!"

The soldiers ran out, and surrounded Zhilín: one gave him bread, another gruel, a third vódka; one covered him with a cloak, another broke off the lock.

The officers heard of it, and took him to the fortress. The soldiers were happy, and his companions came to see him.

Zhilín told them what had happened, and said:

"So I have been home, and got married! No, evidently that is not my fate."

And he remained in the service in the Caucasus. Not till a month later was Kostylín ransomed for five thousand. He was brought back more dead than alive.

ERMÁK

In the reign of Iván Vasílevich the Terrible there were the rich merchants, the Stroganóvs, and they lived in Perm, on the river Káma. They heard that along the river Káma, in a circle of 140 versts, there was good land: the soil had not been ploughed for centuries, the forests had not been cut down for centuries. In the forests were many wild animals, and along the river fish lakes, and no one was living on that land, but only Tartars passed through it.

The Stroganóvs wrote a letter to the Tsar:

"Give us this land, and we will ourselves build towns there and gather people and settle them there, and will not allow the Tartars to pass through it."

The Tsar agreed to it, and gave them the land. The Stroganóvs sent out clerks to gather people. And there came to them a large number of roving people. Whoever came received from the Stroganóvs land, forest, and cattle, and no tenant pay was collected. All they had to do was to live and, in case of need, to go out in mass to fight the Tartars. Thus the land was settled by the Russian people.

About twenty years passed. The Stroganóvs grew richer yet, and that land, 140 versts around, was not enough for them. They wanted to have more land still. About one hundred versts from them were high mountains, the Ural Mountains, and beyond

them, they had heard, there was good land, and to that land there was no end. This land was ruled by a small Siberian prince, Kuchum by name. In former days Kuchum had sworn allegiance to the Russian Tsar, but later he began to rebel, and he threatened to destroy Stroganóv's towns.

So the Stroganóvs wrote to the Tsar:

"You have given us land, and we have conquered it and turned it over to you; now the thievish Tsarling Kuchum is rebelling against you, and wants to take that land away and ruin us. Command us to take possession of the land beyond the Ural Mountains; we will conquer Kuchum, and will bring all his land under your rule."

The Tsar assented, and wrote back:

"If you have sufficient force, take the land away from Kuchum. Only do not entice many people away from Russia."

When the Stroganóvs got that letter from the Tsar, they sent out clerks to collect more people. And they ordered them to persuade mostly the Cossacks from the Vólga and the Don to come. At that time many Cossacks were roving along the Vólga and the Don. They used to gather in bands of two, three, or six hundred men, and to select an atamán, and to row down in barges, to capture ships and rob them, and for the winter they stayed in little towns on the shore.

The clerks arrived at the Vólga, and there they asked who the famous Cossacks of that region were. They were told:

"There are many Cossacks. It is impossible to live for them.

There is Míshka Cherkáshenin, and Sarý-Azmán; but there is no fiercer one than Ermák Timoféich, the atamán. He has a thousand men, and not only the merchants and the people are afraid of him, but even the Tsarian army does not dare to cope with him."

And the clerks went to Ermák the atamán, and began to persuade him to go to the Stroganóvs. Ermák received the clerks, listened to their speeches, and promised to come with his people about the time of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

Near the holiday of the Assumption there came to the Stroganóvs six hundred Cossacks, with their atamán, Ermák Timoféich. At first Stroganóv sent them against the neighbouring Tartars. The Cossacks annihilated them. Then, when nothing was doing, the Cossacks roved in the neighbourhood and robbed.

So Stroganóv sent for Ermák, and said:

"I will not keep you any longer, if you are going to be so wanton."

But Ermák said:

"I do not like it myself, but I cannot control my people, they are spoiled. Give us work to do!"

So Stroganóv said:

"Go beyond the Ural and fight Kuchum, and take possession of his land. The Tsar will reward you for it."

And he showed the Tsar's letter to Ermák. Ermák rejoiced, and collected his men, and said:

"You are shaming me before my master, – you are robbing

without reason. If you do not stop, he will drive you away, and where will you go then? At the Vólga there is a large Tsarian army; we shall be caught, and then we shall suffer for our old misdeeds. But if you feel lonesome, here is work for you."

And he showed them the Tsar's letter, in which it said that Stroganóv had been permitted to conquer land beyond the Ural. The Cossacks had a consultation, and agreed to go. Ermák went to Stroganóv, and they began to deliberate how they had best go.

They discussed how many barges they needed, how much grain, cattle, guns, powder, lead, how many captive Tartar interpreters, and how many foreigners as masters of gunnery.

Stroganóv thought:

"Though it may cost me much, I must give them everything or else they will stay here and will ruin me."

Stroganóv agreed to everything, gathered what was needed, and fitted out Ermák and the Cossacks.

On the 1st of September the Cossacks rowed with Ermák up the river Chúsovaya on thirty-two barges, with twelve men in each. For four days they rowed up the river, and then they turned into Serébryanaya River. Beyond that point it was impossible to navigate. They asked the guides, and learned that from there they had to cross the mountains and walk overland about two hundred versts, and then the rivers would begin again. The Cossacks stopped, built a town, and unloaded all their equipment; they abandoned the boats, made carts, put everything upon them, and started overland, across the mountains. All those places were

covered with forest, and nobody was living there. They marched for about ten days, and struck the river Zharóvnya. Here they stopped again, and made themselves boats. They loaded them, and rowed down the river. They rowed five days, and then came more cheerful places, – meadows, forests, lakes. There was a plenty of fish and of animals, and animals that had not been scared by hunters. They rowed another day, and sailed into the river Túra. Along the Túra they came on Tartar people and towns.

Ermák sent some Cossacks to take a look at a town, to see what it was like, and whether there was any considerable force in it. Twenty Cossacks went there, and they frightened all the Tartars, and seized the whole town, and captured all the cattle. Some of the Tartars they killed, and others they brought back alive.

Ermák asked the Tartars through his interpreters what kind of people they were, and under whose rule they were living. The Tartars said that they were in the Siberian kingdom, and that their king was Kuchum.

Ermák let the Tartars go, but three of the more intelligent he took with him, to show him the road.

They rowed on. The farther they rowed, the larger did the river grow; and the farther they went, the better did the places become.

Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.