

Leo Tolstoy For Children

Leo Tolstoy

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Part 1: Ivan the Fool

THE STORY OF IVAN THE FOOL AND HIS TWO BROTHERS SIMON THE WARRIOR AND TARAS THE POT-BELLIED, AND OF HIS DEAF AND DUMB SISTER, AND THE OLD DEVIL AND THREE LITTLE DEVILKINS.

Once upon a time there lived a rich peasant, who had three sons—Simon the Warrior, Taras the Pot-bellied, and Ivan the Fool, and a deaf and dumb daughter, Malania, an old maid.

Simon the Warrior went off to the wars to serve the King; Taras the Pot-bellied went to a merchant's to trade in the town, and Ivan the Fool and the old maid stayed at home to do the work of the house and the farm. Simon the Warrior earned a high rank for himself and an estate and married a nobleman's daughter. He had a large income and a large estate, but he could never make both ends meet, for, what he managed to gather in, his wife managed to squander; thus it was that he never had any money.

And Simon the Warrior went to his estate one day to collect his income, and his steward said to him, "There is nothing to squeeze money out of; we have neither cattle, nor implements, nor horses, nor cows, nor plows, nor harrows; we must get all these things first, then there will be an income."

Then Simon the Warrior went to his father and said, "You are rich, father; and have given me nothing, let me have a third of your possessions and I will set up my estate."

And the old man replied, "Why should I? You have brought nothing to the home. It would be unfair to Ivan and the girl."

And Simon said, "Ivan is a fool and Malania is deaf and dumb; they do not need much, surely."

"Ivan shall decide," the old man said.

And Ivan said, "I don't mind; let him take what he wants."

Simon took a portion of his father's goods and moved them to his estate, and once more he set out to serve the King.

Taras the Pot-bellied made a great deal of money and married a merchant's widow, but still, it seemed to him that he had not enough, so he too went to his father and said, "Give me my portion, father." And the old man was loathe to give Taras his portion, and he said, "You have brought us nothing; everything in the home has been earned by Ivan; it would be unfair to him and the girl."

And Taras said, "Ivan is a fool, what does he need? He cannot marry, for no one would have him, and the girl is deaf and dumb and does not need much either." And turning to Ivan, he said, "Let me have half the corn, Ivan. I will not take any implements, and as for the cattle, I only want the gray cob; he is of no use to you for the plow."

Ivan laughed.

"Very well," he said, "you shall have what you want."

And Taras was given his portion, and he carted the corn off to the town and took away the gray cob, and Ivan was left with only the old mare to work the farm and support his father and mother.

II

The old Devil was annoyed that the three brothers had not quarreled over the matter and had parted in peace. He summoned three little Devilkins.

"There are three brothers," he said, "Simon the Warrior, Taras the Pot-bellied, and Ivan the Fool. I want them all to quarrel and they live in peace and goodwill. It is the Fool's fault. Go to these three brothers, the three of you, and confound them so that they will scratch out each others' eyes. Do you think you can do it?"

"We can," they said.

"How will you do it?"

"We will ruin them first," they said, "so that they have nothing to eat, then we will put them all together and they will begin to fight."

"I see you know your work," the old Devil said. "Go then, and do not return to me until you have confounded the whole three, or else I will skin you alive."

And the Devilkins set out to a bog to confer on the matter, and they argued and argued, for each wanted the easiest work, and they decided to cast lots and each to take the brother that fell to him, and whichever finished his work first was to help the others. And the Devilkins cast lots and fixed a day when they should meet again in the bog, in order to find out who had finished his work and who was in need of help.

The day arrived and the Devilkins gathered together in the bog. They began to discuss their work. The first to give his account was the one who had undertaken Simon the Warrior. "My work is progressing well," he said. "To-morrow Simon will return to his father."

"How did you manage it?" the others asked him.

"First of all," he said, "I gave Simon so much courage that he promised the King to conquer the whole world. And the King made him the head of his army and sent him to make war on the King of India. That same night I damped the powder of Simon's troops and I went to the King of India and made him numberless soldiers out of straw. And when Simon saw himself surrounded by the straw soldiers, a fear came upon him and he ordered the guns to fire, but the guns and cannon would not go off. And Simon's troops were terrified and ran away like sheep, and the King of India defeated them. Simon was disgraced. He was deprived of his rank and estate and to-morrow he is to be executed. I have only one day left in which to get him out of the dungeon and help him to escape home. To-morrow I shall have finished with him, so I want you to tell me which of you two is in need of help."

Then the second Devilkin began to tell of his work with Taras. "I do not want help," he said; "my work is also going well. Taras will not live in the town another week. The first thing I did was to make his belly grow bigger and fill him with greed. He is now so greedy for other people's goods that whatever he sees he must buy. He has bought up everything he could lay his eyes on, and spent all his money, and is still buying with borrowed money. He has taken so much upon himself, and become so entangled that he will never pull himself out. In a week he will have to repay the borrowed money, and I will turn his wares into manure so that he cannot repay, then he will go to his father."

"And how is your work getting on?" they asked the third Devilkin about Ivan.

"My work is going badly," he said. "The first thing I did was to spit into Ivan's jug of kvas to give him a stomachache and then I went into his fields and made the soil as hard as stones so that he could not move it. I thought he would not plow it, but the fool came with his plow and began

to pull. His stomachache made him groan, yet still he went on plowing. I broke one plow for him and he went home and repaired another, and again persisted in his work. I crawled beneath the ground and clutched hold of his plowshares, but I could not hold them—he pressed upon the plow so hard, and the shares were sharp and cut my hands. He has finished it all but one strip. You must come and help me, mates, for singly we shall never get the better of him, and all our labor will be wasted. If the fool keeps on tilling his land, the other two brothers will never know what need means, for he will feed them.”

The first Devilkin offered to come and help to-morrow when he had disposed of Simon the Warrior, and with that the three Devilkins parted.

III

Ivan had plowed all the fallow but one strip, and he went to finish that. His stomach ached, yet he had to plow. He undid the harness ropes, turned over the plow and set out to the fields. He drove one furrow, but coming back, the plowshares caught on something that seemed like a root.

“What a strange thing!” Ivan thought. “There were no roots here, yet here’s a root!”

He put his hand into the furrow and clutched hold of something soft. He pulled it out. It was a thing as black as a root and it moved. He looked closely and saw that it was a live Devilkin.

“You horrid little wretch, you!”

Ivan raised his hand to dash its head against the plow, but the Devilkin squealed, “Don’t kill me, and I’ll do whatever you want me to.”

“What can you do?”

“Tell me what you want.”

Ivan scratched his head.

“My stomach aches,” he said; “can you make it well?”

“I can.”

“Do it, then.”

The Devilkin bent down, rummaged about with his nails in the furrow and pulled out three little roots, grown together.

“There,” he said; “if any one swallows a single one of these roots all pain will pass away from him.”

Ivan took the three roots, separated them and swallowed one. His stomachache instantly left him.

“Let me go now,” the Devilkin begged once more. “I will dove through the earth and never bother you again.”

“Very well,” Ivan said; “go, in God’s name.”

At the mention of God the Devilkin plunged into the ground like a stone thrown into water, and there was nothing but the hole left. Ivan thrust the two remaining little roots into his cap and went on with his plowing. He finished the strip, turned over his plow and set off home. He unharnessed and went into the house, and there was his brother, Simon the Warrior, sitting at table with his wife, having supper. His estate had been taken from him; he had escaped from prison and come back to live with his father.

As soon as Simon the Warrior saw Ivan, he said to him, “I have come with my wife to live with you; will you keep us both until I find another place?”

“Very well,” Ivan said, “you can live here.”

When Ivan sat down by the table, the smell of him was displeasing to the lady and she said to her husband, “I cannot sup together with a stinking peasant.”

And Simon the Warrior said, “My lady says you do not smell sweet; you had better eat in the passage.”

“Very well,” Ivan said. “It is time for bed anyway, and I must feed the mare.”

Ivan took some bread and his coat and went out for the night.

IV

That night, having freed himself of Simon the Warrior, the first little Devilkin set out to seek Ivan’s Devilkin, to help him plague the Fool as they had agreed. He came to the fields, looked all round for his mate, but he was nowhere to be seen; he only found a hole. “I see some misfortune has happened to my mate; I must take his place. The plowing is all finished; I must upset the Fool at the mowing.”

And the Devilkin went to the meadow and flooded it and trampled the hay in the mud.

Ivan awoke at daybreak, put his scythe in order and set out to the meadow to mow the hay. Ivan swung the scythe once, he swung it twice, but the scythe grew blunt and would not cut; he had to sharpen it. Ivan struggled and struggled and struggled.

“This won’t do,” he said; “I must go home and bring a whetstone and a hunk of bread. If it takes me a week I’ll not give up until I’ve mowed it every bit.”

And the Devilkin grew pensive when he heard these words.

“The Fool has a temper,” he said; “I can’t catch him this way; I must think of something else.”

Ivan returned, sharpened his scythe and began to mow. The Devilkin crept into the grass, caught hold of the scythe by the heel and pushed the point into the ground. It was hard for Ivan, but he mowed all the grass, except a little piece in the swamp.

The Devilkin crept into the swamp, thinking, “Even if I have to cut my hands I won’t let him mow that!”

Ivan came to the swamp. The grass was not thick, but the scythe could not cut through it. Ivan grew angry and began to mow with all his might. The Devilkin began to lose hold, seeing that he was in a bad plight, but he had no time to get away and took refuge in a bush. Ivan swung the scythe near the bush and cut off half the Devilkin’s tail. He finished mowing the grass, told the old maid to rake it up and went away to mow the rye.

He came to the field with his sickle, but the Devilkin with the clipped tail was there before him. He had entangled the rye, so that the sickle could not take it. Ivan went back for his reaping-hook and reaped the whole field of rye. “Now,” he said, “I must tackle the oats.”

At these words the Devilkin with the clipped tail thought, “I did not trip him up with the rye, but I’ll do so with the oats. If only the morrow would come!”

In the morning the Devilkin hurried off to the field of oats, but the oats were all harvested. Ivan had reaped them overnight so that less of the grain should be wasted. The Devilkin lost his temper at that.

“He has mutilated and exhausted me, the fool! I’ve never had such trouble on the battlefield even. The wretch doesn’t sleep and you can’t get ahead of him. I’ll creep into the stacks of sheaves and rot the grain.”

And the Devilkin crept into a stack of sheaves, and began to rot them. He heated them, grew warm himself and fell asleep.

Ivan harnessed the mare and set out with his sister to gather in the sheaves. He stopped by the stack and began to throw the sheaves into the cart. He had thrown up two sheaves and was going to take up a third, when the fork dug into the Devilkin's back. He looked at the prongs and saw a live Devilkin with his tail clipped, wriggling and writhing and trying to get away.

"You horrid little wretch! You here again!"

"I'm not the same one," the Devilkin pleaded. "The other was my brother. I belong to your brother Simon."

"Whoever you are you shall share the same fate."

Ivan was about to dash it against the cart, when the Devilkin cried out, "Spare me! I'll not worry you again, and I'll do whatever you want me to."

"What can you do?"

"I can make soldiers out of anything you choose."

"What good are they?"

"You can make them do anything you like. Soldiers can do everything."

"Can they play songs?"

"They can."

"Very well; make some, then."

And the Devilkin said, "Take a sheaf of rye and bump it upright on the ground, saying,—

My slave bids you be a sheaf no more.

Every straw contained in you,

Must turn into a soldier true."

Ivan took the sheaf and banged it on the ground and repeated the Devilkin's words. And the sheaf burst asunder and every straw turned into a soldier and at their head the drummer and bugler were playing. Ivan laughed aloud.

"That was clever of you," he said. "It will amuse Malania."

"Let me go now," the Devilkin begged.

"Not yet," Ivan said. "I shall want to make the soldiers out of chaff so as not to waste the grain. Show me first how to turn the soldiers into a sheaf again, so that I can thrash it."

And the Devilkin said, "Repeat the words—

My slave bids every soldier be a straw

And turn into a sheaf once more."

Ivan repeated the Devilkin's words, and the soldiers turned into a sheaf again.

And again the Devilkin pleaded, "Let me go."

"Very well," Ivan said, taking him off the prongs. "Go, in God's name."

At the mention of God the Devilkin plunged into the ground like a stone thrown into water, and there was nothing but the hole left.

When Ivan reached home, his other brother, Taras, and his wife were sitting at table and having supper. Taras could not pay his debts; he fled from his creditors and came home to his father. As soon as he saw Ivan he said, "Until I can make some more money, will you keep me and my wife?"

"Very well," Ivan said. "You can live here."

Ivan took off his coat and sat down to table.

And Taras' wife said, "I cannot sup with a fool; he smells of sweat."

Taras the Pot-bellied said, "You do not smell sweet, Ivan; go and eat in the passage."

"Very well," Ivan said; "it's time for bed, anyhow, and I must feed the mare."

He took his coat and a piece of bread, and went out.

V

That night, having disposed of Taras, the third little Devilkin came to help his mates plague Ivan, as they had agreed. He came to the plowed field and looked and looked, but could see no one; he only found the hole. Then he went to the meadow and found a piece of tail in the swamp, and in the rye-stubble field he found another hole.

"I see some misfortune has happened to my mates. I must take their places and tackle the Fool."

The Devilkin set out to find Ivan.

Ivan had finished his work in the fields and had gone into the copse to cut wood.

The brothers found it too crowded to live together in their father's house and they ordered Ivan to fell timber to build themselves new houses.

The Devilkin rushed into the wood and crept into the knots of the trees to prevent Ivan from felling them.

Ivan had cut a tree in the right way so that it should fall on to a clear space, but the tree seemed to be possessed, and fell over where it was not wanted, and got entangled among the branches. Ivan lopped them off with his bill-hook and at last, with great difficulty, brought down the tree. He began to fell another and the same thing was repeated. He struggled and struggled and succeeded only after great exertion. He began on a third and the same thing happened. Ivan had intended to fell fifty trees at least, and he had not managed more than ten, and night was coming on. Ivan was exhausted, and the steam rose from him and floated through the wood like a mist; yet still he would not give up. He felled another tree and his back began to ache so that he could not go on. He stuck his ax into the trunk of a tree and sat down to rest.

When the Devilkin realized that Ivan had ceased to work, he rejoiced. "He is worn out at last," he thought; "now I can rest too." And he sat himself astride on a branch, exulting.

Ivan rose, took out his ax, flourished it aloft, and brought it down so heavily that the tree came down with a crash. The Devilkin had no time to disentangle his legs; the branch broke and pinned down his paw.

Ivan began to clear the tree and behold! there was a live Devilkin. Ivan was amazed.

"You horrid little wretch! You here again!"

"I am not the same one," the Devilkin said. "I belong to your brother Taras."

"Whoever you may be, you shall share the same fate." And Ivan raised the ax to bring it down on its head, but the Devilkin began to plead.

"Don't kill me," he said, "and I'll do whatever you want me to."

"What can you do?"

"I can make as much money as you like."

"Very well," Ivan said; "make it, then."

And the Devilkin taught him what to do.

“Take some leaves from this oak and rub them in your hands and gold will fall to the ground.”

Ivan took the leaves and rubbed them in his hand and gold rained down.

“This is well,” he said; “on holidays it will amuse the children.”

“Let me go,” the Devilkin begged.

“I don’t mind,” Ivan said, and taking up his ax, he freed the Devilkin of the branch. “Go, in God’s name.”

At the mention of God the Devilkin plunged into the ground like a stone thrown into water and there was nothing but the hole left.

VI

The brothers built themselves houses and began to live apart. Ivan finished his work in the fields, brewed some beer and invited his brothers to a feast. The brothers did not accept his invitation.

“We do not go to feast with peasants,” they said.

Ivan treated the peasants and the peasant-women and drank himself until he got tipsy, and he went into the street and joined the dancers and singers. He approached the women, and bade them sing his praises.

“I will give you something you have never seen in your lives,” he said.

The women laughed and began to sing his praises, and when they had finished, they said, “Well, give us what you promised.”

“I will bring it in a moment,” Ivan said, and he took his seed-basket and ran into the wood.

The women laughed. “What a fool!” they said, and forgot all about him, when behold! Ivan returned, his basket full of something.

“Shall I share it out?”

“Do.”

Ivan took up a handful of gold and threw it to the women. Heavens! The women rushed to pick it up, the peasants after them, snatching it out of each others’ hands. One old woman was nearly killed in the fray.

Ivan laughed.

“You fools!” he said. “Why did you hurt Granny? If you are not so rough I’ll give you some more.”

He scattered more gold. The whole village came up. Ivan emptied his basket. The people asked for more, but he said, “Not now; another time I’ll give you more. Now let us dance. You play some songs.”

The women began to play.

“I don’t like your songs,” Ivan said.

“Do you know any better ones?”

“You shall see in a moment.”

Ivan went into a barn, took up a sheaf, thrashed it, stood it up, and banged it on the floor, and said—

My slave bids you be a sheaf no more.

Every straw contained in you

Must turn into a soldier true.

And the sheaf burst asunder and turned into soldiers, and the drummers and buglers played at their head. Ivan asked the soldiers to play some songs, and led them into the street. The people were amazed.

When the soldiers had played their songs Ivan took them back into the barn, forbidding any one to follow. He turned the soldiers into a sheaf again and threw it on a pile of straw, then he went home and lay down to sleep in the stables.

VII

Simon the Warrior heard of these things next morning, and went to his brother.

“Tell me,” he said, “where did you get the soldiers from, and where did you take them to?”

“What does it matter to you?”

“Matter, indeed! With soldiers one can do anything. One can conquer a kingdom.”

Ivan wondered.

“Really! Then why didn’t you tell me before?” he said. “I will make you as many soldiers as you like. It is well Malania and I have threshed so much straw.”

Ivan took his brother to the barn and said, “Look here, if I make the soldiers you must take them away at once, for if we have to feed them they will eat up the whole village in a day.”

Simon the Warrior promised to take the soldiers away, and Ivan began to make them. He banged a sheaf on the threshing-floor and a company appeared. He banged another sheaf and a second company appeared. He made so many soldiers that they filled the whole field.

“Are there enough now?” he asked.

Simon was overjoyed and said, “That will do, Ivan, thank you.”

“Very well. If you want more, come back and I’ll make them for you. There is plenty of straw this year.”

Simon the Warrior soon put his troops in order, and went away to make war.

He had no sooner gone than Taras the Pot-bellied came along. He, too, had heard of yesterday’s affair and he said to his brother, “Tell me where you get gold money from. If only I could get hold of some I could make it bring in money from the whole world.”

Ivan wondered.

“Really? Then why didn’t you tell me before? I’ll make you as much as you like.”

Taras was overjoyed.

“I shall be satisfied with three baskets full,” he said.

“Very well; come into the wood,” Ivan said; “but I had better harness the mare, for you won’t be able to carry it away.”

They rode into the wood. Ivan began to rub the oak leaves, and made a heap of gold.

“Is it enough?” he asked.

Taras was overjoyed.

“It will do for the present, thank you, Ivan,” he said.

“Very well,” Ivan said; “if you want more, come back and I’ll make it for you. There are plenty of leaves left.”

Taras the Pot-bellied gathered up a whole cartload of money, and went off to trade.

Both brothers had gone—Simon to make war and Taras to trade. And Simon the Warrior conquered a kingdom, and Taras the Pot-bellied made much money in trade.

When the two brothers met they told each other how they had come by their soldiers and money.

Simon the Warrior said to his brother, "I have conquered a kingdom for myself and live well, only I have not enough money to feed my soldiers."

And Taras the Pot-bellied said, "I have made a heap of money, only unfortunately I have no one to guard it."

And Simon the Warrior said, "Let us go to our brother Ivan. I will ask him to make more soldiers and give them to you to guard your money, and you must ask him to make more money and give it to me to feed my soldiers."

And they came to Ivan.

And Simon said, "I haven't enough soldiers, brother. Will you make another couple of sheaves for me?"

Ivan shook his head.

"No," he said; "I won't make you any more soldiers."

"But you promised you would."

"I know I promised, but I won't make any more."

"Why not, you fool?"

"Because your soldiers killed a man. I will not let you have any more."

And he was obstinate, and would not make any more soldiers.

Then Taras the Pot-bellied asked Ivan the Fool to make him more golden money.

Ivan shook his head.

"No," he said; "I won't make any more money."

"But you promised."

"I know I promised, but I won't make any more."

"Why not, you fool?"

"Because your money took a cow away from a woman in the village."

"But how can that be?"

"The woman had a cow. The children used to drink the milk, but the other day they came to beg a little milk of me. 'But where's your cow?' I asked them, and they said, 'Taras' bailiff came and gave mother three golden coins and she gave him the cow; now we have no milk to drink.' I thought you only wanted to play with the golden coins, but you've taken away the cow from the children; I won't give you any more."

And the Fool was obstinate and kept to his word.

And the brothers went away and deliberated over their difficult situation in order to find a way out.

Simon said, "This is what we must do. You give me some of your money to feed my soldiers, and I'll give you half my kingdom and soldiers to guard your money."

Taras agreed. The brothers divided their possessions, and both became kings and both were rich.

VIII

And Ivan lived at home, supporting his father and mother and working in the fields with his deaf and dumb sister.

One day Ivan's yard-dog fell sick. He grew mangy, and was near dying. Ivan pitied it. He took a piece of bread from his sister, put it in his cap, carried it out and threw it to the dog. The creases in his cap parted and out rolled one of the little roots with the bread. The dog ate it up. As soon as it had swallowed the root it began to jump about and bark and play and wag its tail. It was quite well again.

The father and mother were amazed.

"How did you cure the dog?" they asked.

And Ivan said, "I had two little roots that could cure any pain, and the dog swallowed one."

It happened at the time that the King's daughter fell ill, and the King proclaimed to every town and village that he would reward any man who could cure her, and that if he were an unmarried man he should have her for his wife. The news came to Ivan's village.

And the father and mother summoned Ivan and said to him, "Have you heard of the King's promise? You told us you had a little root that could cure any sickness; go, cure the King's daughter, you will then be happy for life."

"Very well," Ivan said, "I will go."

And Ivan prepared himself for the journey, and they dressed him in his best clothes. When he came out on the doorstep he saw a beggar-woman with a crippled hand.

"I heard that you can cure the sick," she said. "Cure my hand, for I cannot even put on my own shoes."

"Very well," Ivan said. And he took the little root out of his cap, gave it to the beggar-woman and told her to swallow it. As soon as she swallowed it, she recovered, and began to wave her hand.

The father and mother came out to bid good-bye to Ivan, and they heard that he had given away his last root and had nothing left with which to cure the King's daughter, and they began to scold him.

"You pity a beggar-woman, yet have no pity for the King's daughter," they reproached him.

But Ivan was sorry for the King's daughter. He harnessed the mare, threw some straw into the cart and got in.

"Where are you going to, you fool?"

"To cure the King's daughter."

"But you have nothing to cure her with now."

"It doesn't matter," he said, and drove away.

He came to the King's palace, and as soon as he stepped over the threshold the King's daughter got well.

The King was overjoyed. He ordered Ivan to be brought to him, and dressed him in fine clothes.

"You must be my son-in-law," he said.

"Very well," Ivan said.

And Ivan married the princess. Her father died soon after, and Ivan became King.

All three brothers were now kings.

IX

The three brothers lived and reigned.

The elder brother Simon the Warrior lived well. With his straw soldiers he gathered together real soldiers. Throughout the whole of his kingdom he ordered a levy of one soldier for every ten houses, and each soldier had to be tall and whole of body and clean of face. In this way he gathered many soldiers and trained them. If any one opposed him he sent his soldiers off at once and imposed his will, and people began to fear him. His life was a very goodly one. Whatever he saw and wanted was his. He sent his soldiers and they brought him all he wanted.

Taras the Pot-bellied also lived well. He did not lose the money Ivan had given him, but increased it a hundredfold. He introduced law and order into his kingdom. He stowed his money away in coffers and levied taxes on the people. There was a poll-tax, and tolls for walking and driving, and a tax on shoes and stockings and frills. He got whatever he wanted. For money people brought him everything, and even worked for him, for every one wanted money.

Ivan the Fool, too, did not live badly. As soon as his father-in-law was dead he took off his royal robes and gave them to his wife to stow away in a chest. And he put on his coarse linen shirt and breeches and peasant shoes and began to work once more.

"It's so dull for me," he said. "I've got fat, lost my appetite and can't sleep."

He brought his father and mother and sister to live with him, and began to work as of old.

"But you are a king," people remonstrated.

"Even a king must eat," he said.

One of his ministers came to him and said, "We have no money to pay salaries."

"Don't pay them, then," he said.

"But no one will serve us."

"What does it matter? They needn't. They'll have more time for work. There's the manure to cart; heaps of it lying about."

When people came to Ivan for justice and said, "That man stole my money," Ivan said, "Never mind; he must have wanted it."

And all realized that Ivan was a fool. And his wife said to him, "People say you are a fool."

"What does it matter?" Ivan said.

His wife reflected awhile, but she was also a fool.

"Why should I go against my husband?" she said. "Where the needle goes, the thread follows."

So she took off her royal robes, put them away in a chest and went to Malania to learn to work. When she knew how, she began to help her husband.

All the wise left Ivan's kingdom, and only the fools remained.

Nobody had money. They lived and worked, fed themselves and others.

X

The old Devil waited and waited for news of the Devilkins. He was expecting to hear that they had ruined the three brothers, but no news came. He set out himself to find them. He searched and searched, and found nothing but three holes.

"They've not been able to manage it, evidently," he thought. "I must tackle the job myself."

He went to look for the brothers, but they were no longer in their old places. He found them in their different kingdoms. All three lived and reigned. The old Devil was annoyed.

"Now we'll see what I can do!" he said.

First of all he went to King Simon.

He did not go in his own shape, but disguised himself as a general. In that guise he appeared before King Simon.

“I have heard that you are a great warrior, King Simon,” he said. “I am well versed in these things and want to serve you.”

And King Simon began to ask him all manner of questions, and seeing that he was a clever man, he took him into his service.

The new commander instructed King Simon how to collect a large army.

“First of all,” he said, “we must get more soldiers. There are many idle people in your kingdom. We must conscript all the young men without exception, then you will have an army five times as large as the one you have now. Secondly, we must get new guns and cannons. I will get guns that will fire a hundred bullets at one shot; they will rain out like peas. And I will get cannons that will consume with fire either man or horse or wall; they will burn everything.”

King Simon listened to the new commander, and enrolled all the young men as soldiers and built new factories where he manufactured new guns and cannons, then he made war on a neighboring king. As soon as he was faced by the opposing army, King Simon ordered his soldiers to rain bullets against it and shoot fire from their cannons, in this way wiping out half the hostile troops. The neighboring king was alarmed; he surrendered and gave up his kingdom. King Simon rejoiced.

“Now,” he said, “I will make war on the King of India.”

And the King of India heard of King Simon’s doings. He adopted all his methods, and invented some improvements of his own. He not only enrolled all the young men as soldiers, but the unmarried women as well, and in consequence had a larger army than King Simon. And he made guns and cannons like King Simon’s, and invented machines to fly in the air and drop explosive bombs from above.

And King Simon set out to make war on the King of India, thinking he would beat him as easily as he had beaten the other king, but the scythe that had cut so well had lost its edge. The King of India did not give Simon time to open fire, for he sent his women to fly in the air and drop explosive bombs on Simon’s troops. And the women rained down bombs from above like borax upon cockroaches and Simon’s troops scattered and fled, and Simon was left alone.

The King of India took possession of Simon’s kingdom, and Simon the Warrior escaped as best he could.

Having disposed of this brother, the old Devil went to King Taras.

He changed himself into a merchant and settled in Taras’ kingdom, where he opened establishments and began to circulate money freely. He paid high prices for everything, and the people flocked to him for the sake of the extra profit. And the people came to have so much money that they were able to settle all their arrears and to pay their taxes at the proper time. King Taras rejoiced.

“Thanks to the merchant,” he thought, “I have more money than ever, and I’ll be able to live better than I used to.”

And he began making all sorts of new plans, and decided to have a new palace built for himself. He proclaimed to the people that he wanted timber and stone and labor, for which he was prepared to pay a high price. King Taras thought that for his money people would flock to work for him as of old. But lo! all the timber and stone was taken to the merchant, and all the laborers flocked to work for him. King Taras raised his price, and the merchant raised his. King Taras

had much money, but the merchant had more and beat the King. The King's palace could not be built.

King Taras had arranged to make a new garden. When the autumn came he proclaimed that he wanted men to come and plant his garden, but no one came, for the people were all digging for the merchant.

Winter came. King Taras wanted to buy some sable skins for a new coat. He sent a messenger to buy it, but the messenger returned empty-handed, and said that there were no sable skins, for the merchant had bought them all at a higher price, and made himself a sable carpet.

King Taras wanted to buy some stallions. He sent a messenger, but the messenger returned and said that the merchant had all the good stallions; they were carting water for him to make a pond.

And the King's plans fell to pieces, for no one would work for him. All worked for the merchant, and only brought him the merchant's money to pay the taxes.

And the King came to have so much money that he did not know where to put it all, but he lived badly. The King gave up making plans; he would have been contented to live quietly somehow, but even that was difficult. He was hampered on all sides. His cook and coachman and servants left him to go to the merchant's. He even went short of food. When he sent to the market to buy some provisions there were none left, for the merchant had bought up everything, and the people only brought the King money for their taxes.

King Taras lost patience and banished the merchant from his kingdom. The merchant settled on the very border, and did exactly the same as before, and for his money the people dragged everything away from the King and brought it to the merchant. Life became very hard for the King. For whole days he did not eat, and to make matters worse a rumor went abroad that the merchant had boasted that he would buy the King himself. King Taras lost courage, and did not know what to do.

Simon the Warrior came to him and said, "Will you support me? I have been beaten by the King of India."

King Taras himself was in a sad plight.

"I haven't eaten anything myself for two days," he said.

XI

Having disposed of the two brothers, the old Devil went to Ivan. He changed himself into a general and came to Ivan, and began to persuade him to set up a large army.

"A king should not live without an army," he said. "Give me the power, and I'll collect soldiers from among your people and organize an army."

Ivan listened to all he had to say.

"Very well," he said, "organize one, then; only teach the soldiers to sing nice songs, for I like singing."

And the old Devil went through Ivan's kingdom to collect a voluntary army. To each recruit who should offer himself he promised a bottle of vodka and a red cap.

The fools laughed at him.

"We have plenty of drink," they said; "we brew it ourselves, and as for caps, our women can make us any kind we like—embroidered ones and even ones with fringes."

And no one offered himself.

The old Devil went back to Ivan and said, “Your fools won’t enlist of their own accord; we’ll have to force them.”

“Very well; force them, then.”

And the old Devil proclaimed throughout the kingdom that every man must enlist as a soldier, and if he fails to do so Ivan will have him put to death.

The fools came to the Devil and said, “You tell us that if we won’t enlist as soldiers the King will have us put to death, but you don’t say what will happen to us when we become soldiers. People say that soldiers are killed.”

“You can’t get over that.”

When the fools heard this they kept to their decision.

“We won’t go,” they said. “We’d sooner die at home since we have to die in either case.”

“What fools you are!” the old Devil said. “A soldier may or may not be killed, but if you don’t go King Ivan will have you put to death for certain.”

The fools reflected over this; then went to Ivan the Fool and said, “A general has appeared among us who orders us all to enlist as soldiers. ‘If you go as a soldier,’ he says, ‘you may or you may not be killed, but if you don’t go, King Ivan will have you put to death for certain.’ Is it true?”

Ivan laughed.

“How can I alone have you all put to death? Had I not been a fool I would have explained it to you, but I don’t understand it myself.”

“Then we won’t go,” the fools said.

“Very well, don’t.”

The fools went to the general and refused to enlist as soldiers.

The old Devil saw that his plan would not work, so he went to the King of Tarakan and wormed himself into his favor.

“Come,” he said, “let us go and make war on King Ivan. He has no money, but grain and cattle and all manner of good things he has in abundance.”

The King of Tarakan prepared to make war. He gathered together a large army, repaired his guns and cannons and marched across the border on his way to Ivan’s kingdom.

People came to Ivan and said, “The King of Tarakan is marching on us with his army.”

“Very well; let him,” Ivan said.

When the King of Tarakan crossed the border he sent his vanguard to find Ivan’s troops. They searched and searched, but no troops were to be found anywhere. Should they wait and see if they showed themselves? But there was no sign of any troops and no one to fight with. The King of Tarakan sent men to seize the villages. The soldiers came to one village and the fools—men and women alike—rushed out and stood gaping at them in wonder. The soldiers began to take away their corn and cattle and the fools let them have what they wanted, making no resistance. The soldiers went to another village and the same thing was repeated. And they marched one day and another, and still the same thing happened. Everything was given up without any resistance and the fools even invited the soldiers to stay with them. “If you find it hard to live in your parts, good fellows, come and settle with us altogether.” And the soldiers marched from village to village and no troops were to be found anywhere; the people lived, fed themselves and others; no one offered any resistance and every one invited them to settle there.

And the soldiers grew weary of the job and they went back to their King of Tarakan.

“We can’t fight here,” they said; “take us to another place. This is not war; this is child’s-play. We can’t fight here.”

The King of Tarakan grew angry. He ordered his soldiers to go over the whole kingdom and lay waste the villages and burn the corn and kill the cattle.

“If you won’t do what I tell you,” he said, “I will punish you all.”

The soldiers were frightened and began to carry out the King’s commands. They burnt the houses and corn and killed the cattle. The fools made no resistance, they only wept. The old men wept and the old women and the little children.

“Why do you treat us like this?” they said. “Why do you waste the good things? If you want them, why not take them?”

And the soldiers grew to loathe their work. They refused to go further and the troops dispersed.

XII

And the old Devil went away, having failed to bring Ivan to reason by means of the soldiers.

The old Devil changed himself into a clean gentleman and came to live in Ivan’s kingdom, hoping to ruin Ivan by money, as he had done Taras.

“I want to do you good and teach you common sense,” he said. “I will build myself a house in your midst and open an establishment.”

“Very well,” the people said; “you can live here.”

The clean gentleman spent the night and in the morning he went out to the square with a bag of gold and a bundle of papers and said, “You all live like swine. I want to teach you how you ought to live. Build me a house according to this plan. You will work for me and I will teach you and pay you in golden money.” And he showed them the gold.

The fools marveled. They had no money in circulation, but exchanged thing for thing, or paid by labor. And they began to exchange things with the gentleman and to work for his golden coins. And the old Devil, as in Taras’ kingdom, began to circulate gold, and people brought him things and worked for him.

The old Devil rejoiced.

“At last my plan is beginning to work!” he thought. “I will ruin him as I ruined Taras, and will get him completely in my power.”

The fools collected the golden coins and gave them to the women to make themselves necklaces and to the girls to plait into their hair; the children even played with the coins in the street. After a while every one had enough and refused to take more. And the clean gentleman’s house was not half finished, and the corn and cattle had not yet been stored up for the year. And the gentleman invited people to come and work for him to bring him corn and rear his cattle, offering to pay many golden coins for everything brought and every piece of work done.

But no one would come and work, and no one would bring him anything, unless a chance boy or girl brought him an egg in exchange for a golden coin; and no one else came and he was left without any food. And the clean gentleman was hungry and went through the village to buy himself something for dinner. He went into one house and offered a golden coin for a chicken, but the mistress would not take it.

“I have many such coins,” she said.

He went into another place to buy a salt herring, offering a golden piece. "I don't want it, my good man," the mistress said. "I have no children to play with them, and have three of these pieces already as curiosities."

He went into a peasant's for some bread. The peasant too would not take the money.

"I don't want it," he said. "But if you want the bread in Christ's name, then wait, and I'll tell my old woman to cut you some."

The old Devil spat on the ground and fled from the peasant. To hear the word Christ was worse than a knife to him, let alone to take anything in His name.

And so he got no bread. All had gold; wherever the old Devil went no one would give him anything for money, and every one said, "Bring us something else instead, or come and work, or take it in Christ's name." And the Devil had nothing to offer but money and had no liking for work, and he could not take anything in Christ's name. He lost his temper.

"What more do you want when I offer you money?" he said. "You can buy anything you like for gold and employ any kind of labor."

But the fools did not heed him.

"We don't need money," they said. "We exchange everything in kind and have no taxes to pay; what good would it be to us?"

The old Devil went supperless to bed.

The story reached Ivan the Fool. People came to him and said, "What shall we do? A clean gentleman has appeared in our midst who likes to eat and drink well, and dress in fine clothes, but he won't work and won't take anything in Christ's name; he only offers us golden coins. People gave him what he wanted until they had enough of these coins, and now no one gives him anything. What are we to do with him? He may die of hunger."

Ivan listened to what they had to say.

"He must be fed, certainly. Let him act as a shepherd to you all in turn."

Since there was no way out, the old Devil had to go about shepherding. He went from house to house until it came to Ivan's turn. The old Devil came in to dinner and the deaf and dumb girl was getting it ready. She had often been deceived by lazy folk who came in early to dinner without having done their share of work and ate up all the porridge, so she invented a means of finding out the sluggards by their hands. Those who had horny hands were put at the table; the others were given the leavings. The old Devil sat down by the table, but the deaf and dumb girl seized him by the hands and looked at them to see if they had any blisters, but they were clean and smooth and the finger nails were long. The girl grunted and pulled the old Devil away from the table.

Ivan's wife said to him, "Don't be offended, fine gentleman. My sister-in-law never lets any one sit at the table who hasn't horny hands. In good time, when the others have finished, you shall get what is left."

And the old Devil was hurt that in the King's house they should want to feed him with the pigs. And he said to Ivan, "What a stupid custom there is in your kingdom that all people must work with their hands! I suppose you were too stupid to think of anything else. Do you think it's only with the hands people work? Do you know what wise men work with?"

And Ivan said, "How are we fools to know; we work only with our hands and backs."

"That is because you are fools. I will teach you how to work with the head, then you will know that it is more profitable than to work with the hands."

Ivan wondered.

“Really! No wonder people call us fools!”

And the old Devil said, “Only it’s not easy to work with the head. You won’t give me any dinner because my hands are smooth, but you don’t know that it’s a hundred times harder to work with the head. Sometimes one’s head nearly splits.”

Ivan grew thoughtful.

“Why should you torture yourself so, my good man? Wouldn’t it be better to do the easier work with your hands and back?”

And the Devil said, “I torture myself because I pity you fools. If I were not to torture myself you would remain fools for ever. I have worked with the head and now I’m going to teach you.”

Ivan wondered.

“Teach us, then,” he said, “so that when our hands are tired we can work with the head.”

The Devil promised to teach them.

And Ivan proclaimed throughout his kingdom that a clean gentleman had appeared among them who would teach every one to work with his head and that it was more profitable to work with the head than with the hands, and he bade every man come and hear him.

There was a high tower in Ivan’s kingdom and a steep staircase leading up to it and there was a turret on the top. And Ivan took the gentleman up the tower, so that he might be seen by all.

And the gentleman took his place on the top of the tower and began to speak, and the fools flocked to look at him. They thought that the gentleman would really show them how to work with the head instead of the hands, but he merely told them in words how they could live without working at all. The fools did not understand him. They stared and stared, then went home to attend to their own affairs.

The old Devil stood on top of the tower one day and another, speaking all the time. He was hungry, but it never occurred to the fools to bring him some bread up the tower. They thought that if he could work with the head better than with the hands, he could easily make himself some bread. The old Devil stood on the tower for another day, still speaking. The people came and stared at him for a while; then went their ways.

“Well, has the gentleman begun to work with his head?” Ivan asked.

“Not yet; he is still jabbering.”

The Devil stood on the tower for another day and began to grow faint. He swayed and knocked his head against a pillar. One of the fools saw him and told Ivan’s wife, who hastened to Ivan at the plowing.

“Come, come,” she said. “They say the gentleman has begun to work with his head.”

Ivan wondered.

“Really?” he said, and turning his horse round, he went to the tower. When he got there, the old Devil, who was quite faint with hunger by this time, was staggering and knocking his head against the pillars, and when Ivan came up he fell with a crash down the stairs, counting each step on the way with a knock of his head.

“Well,” Ivan said, “the clean gentleman spoke truly when he said that the head splits sometimes. Blisters on the hands are nothing to this; after such work there will be bumps on the head.”

The old Devil fell to the bottom of the stairs and thumped his head against the ground. Ivan was about to go up and see how much work he had done, when suddenly the earth opened and the old Devil fell through. Only a hole was left.

Ivan scratched his head.

“You horrid wretch! One of those devils again! The father of the others, no doubt. What a huge one too!”

Ivan is living to this day and people flock to his kingdom. His own brothers have come to him and he supports them. When any one comes and says, “Feed me,” Ivan says, “Very well, you can live with us; we have plenty of everything.” Only there is a special custom in his kingdom— whoever has horny hands comes to table; whoever has smooth ones eats the leavings.

Part 2: Where There Is Love, There Is God Also

In the town there was a shoemaker by the name of Martin, who lived in a basement with a tiny little window looking out into the street. Martin could see the people pass, and though he only got a glimpse of their feet, he still knew every one, for Martin could recognize people by their boots. Martin had lived in that basement for many a long year and had numbers of acquaintances. There were not many pairs of boots in the neighborhood that had not been through his hands at least once or twice—some for new soles, others for a patch or a stitch, or a second time for new tops, perhaps. Martin had plenty of work, for he always did it well; he gave good leather, did not overcharge, and kept true to his word. If he could do a piece of work for the time it was required, he took it; if not, he would not deceive his customers and told them so beforehand. And all knew Martin and he had no lack of work.

Martin had always been a good man, but as he grew older he began to think the more about his soul and to draw nearer to God. Martin's wife had died when he had still worked for a master, and he was left with a boy of three years old. Their children never survived; the eldest were all dead. At first Martin wanted to send his little son to a sister in the country, but he felt sorry for the child, thinking, "It will be hard for the poor boy to grow up in a strange family; I will keep him with me."

And Martin left his master and went into lodgings with his little son. But God had not ordained Martin to be happy in his children. The boy had no sooner grown up and become a help and a comfort to his father than he fell sick, tossed about with fever for a week and died. Martin buried his son and gave himself up to despair. His despair was so great that he even began to complain against God. Martin was so lonely that many were the times he prayed to God to let him die, reproaching Him for having spared an old man like himself and taken his only beloved son. Martin gave up going to church.

One day an old countryman came to visit him, who had been on a pilgrimage for eight years. Martin opened his heart to the old man and complained about his sorrow.

"I have no desire to live even," he said; "I only want to die. That is all I pray to God about. I am a desperate man now."

And the old man said to him, "It is not well what you say, Martin; we cannot judge the ways of God; they are beyond our understanding. He has judged it fitting to take away your son and to let you live, so it must be for the best. You despair because you want to live only for your own personal pleasure."

"And what else should I live for?" Martin asked.

And the old man said, "You must live for God, Martin. He gave you life and you must live for Him. When you begin to live for Him and cease to worry about anything, then all will become easy for you."

Martin was silent a while; then asked, "How can one live for God?"

And the old man said, "We must live for God as Christ taught us. You can read, can you not? Then buy the Gospels and read them and you will find out how to live for God. The Gospels tell us everything."

Martin took these words to heart. That very day he bought a copy of the New Testament, printed in large type, and began to read it.

Martin had intended to read only on holidays, but when he once began he grew so lighthearted that he read every day. Sometimes he got so absorbed in his reading that the oil in the lamp burnt low and still he could not tear himself away.

Martin read every evening, and the more he read the more clearly he understood what God required of him and how he was to live for God. And his heart grew lighter than ever. At one time when he went to bed he would sigh and moan and think of his boy; now he only said to himself, "Glory to Thee, glory to Thee, God! Thy will be done!"

And a change came into Martin's life. On holidays he used to hang about the public-houses to drink a cup of tea and did not refuse vodka even when it came his way. He would drink, as it happened, with some acquaintance, and though not exactly drunk, would come out of the public-house in an excited mood and speak vain words, giving back rough word for rough word.

But now this had all left him. His life became a peaceful and happy one.

In the morning he would sit down to his work and keep on for the necessary time, then he would take the lamp off the wall, put it on the table, fetch the Bible from a shelf, open it, and sit down to read. And the more he read, the more he understood, and the serener and lighter grew his heart.

One day Martin sat reading until late into the night. He was reading Luke's Gospel and had come to the sixth chapter and the verses, "And unto him that smiteth thee on the one cheek, offer also the other; and him that taketh away thy cloke forbid not to take thy coat also. Give to every man that asketh of thee; and of him that taketh away thy goods ask them not again. And as ye would that men should do to you, do ye also to them likewise."

And he also read the verses where our Lord says, "And why call ye me, Lord, Lord, and do not the things which I say? Whosoever cometh to me and heareth my sayings, and doeth them, I will show you to whom he is like. He is like a man which built an house, and digged deep, and laid the foundation on a rock; and when the flood arose, the stream beat vehemently upon that house, and could not shake it; for it was founded upon a rock. But he that heareth, and doeth not, is like a man that without a foundation built an house upon the earth; against which the stream did beat vehemently, and immediately it fell; and the ruin of that house was great."

When Martin read these words a feeling of joy entered his heart. He took off his spectacles, laid them on the Bible, then resting his elbows on the table, he began to ponder over what he had read. He compared his own life to the light of these words. "Is my house built on a rock or on sand?" he thought. "If on a rock it is well. It seems so easy when one sits alone here, and one thinks one has done all that God commands, but no sooner does one cease to be on one's guard than one falls into sin. I must persevere; it brings such happiness! Help me, oh God!"

With this thought in his mind, he was about to go to bed, but was loathe to leave his Bible, and went on reading the seventh chapter. He read about the centurion, the widow's son, and the answer to John's disciples, and he came to the passage where a rich Pharisee invited the Lord to his house; and about the woman who was a sinner and anointed His feet and washed them with her tears, and how the Lord comforted her. And he came to the forty-fourth verse and began to read the words, "And he turned to the woman and said unto Simon, Seest thou this woman? I

entered into thine house, thou gavest me no water for my feet; but she hath washed my feet with tears, and wiped them with the hairs of her head. Thou gavest me no kiss, but this woman since the time I came in, hath not ceased to kiss my feet; my head with oil thou didst not anoint, but this woman hath anointed my feet with ointment.”

Martin read these verses and thought, “He gave no water for His feet, and no kiss, and he did not anoint His head with oil.” Once more Martin took off his spectacles and laid them on the Bible.

“He must have been like me, that Pharisee. Like me he thought only of himself—how to get a cup of tea, how to live in warmth and comfort. He cared only for himself, with never a thought about his guest. And the Lord Himself was his guest! I wonder if I would act like that if He came to visit me?”

And Martin rested his elbows on the table and his head on his hands and fell into a doze.

“Martin!” Some one suddenly breathed into his ear.

Martin started. “Who is that?” he asked, half asleep.

He turned and looked at the door, but no one was there. He called again and this time he heard a voice say clearly, “Martin! Martin! Look out for me in the street to-morrow; I am coming to see you.”

Martin roused himself, got up from the chair and began to rub his eyes. He did not know whether he had heard the words in a dream or when awake. He turned out the lamp and went to bed.

At daybreak next morning Martin arose, lit the stove, prepared some soup and porridge, got the samovar ready, put on his apron and sat down at the window to his work. As he worked he thought of what had happened yesterday. Now it seemed to him that he had heard the voice in his dreams, now that he had really heard it when awake.

“Things like that have happened before,” he thought.

Martin sat at the window and did not work so much as peer out into the street, and when an unfamiliar pair of boots came along, he would stoop down and look up to catch a glimpse of the person to whom they belonged. A yard-porter passed in new felt boots and a water-carrier; then an old soldier of Nicholas’ reign came alongside the window, spade in hand. Martin recognized him by his felt boots. The old man was called Stepan and a merchant who lived near by kept him out of charity. His duties were to help the yard-porter. He stopped opposite Martin’s window to clear away the snow. Martin looked at him and again went on with his work.

“What a fool I am getting in my old age,” Martin thought, amused at his own fancies. “Stepan is shoveling away the snow and I thought it was Christ come to visit me. Old dotard that I am!”

Yet after a dozen stitches or so Martin was again drawn to the window. He looked out and saw that Stepan had leaned his spade against the wall and was resting and trying to warm himself. The man was old and broken and had no strength even to clear away the snow. “Why not give him a cup of tea while the samovar is still on the boil?” Martin thought. And he put down his awl, rose, brought the samovar to the table, poured out a cup of tea and tapped on the window. Stepan turned and came up. Martin beckoned to him and went to open the door.

“Come in and get warm,” he said; “you must be quite frozen.”

“Christ save us! but my bones do ache,” Stepan said. Stepan came in, shook the snow off himself and began to wipe his boots so as not to dirty the floor, reeling as he did so.

“Don’t bother to wipe your feet,” Martin said; “I will wipe the floor afterwards; I am used to that. Come in and sit down. Here is a cup of tea.”

And Martin poured out two cups, gave one to his guest, poured some of his own into a saucer and began to blow on it in order to cool it.

Stepan finished his cup, turned it upside down in the saucer, put the remaining bit of sugar on top and began to thank Martin, who could see that the old man wanted some more.

“Have another cup,” Martin said and poured out more tea for his guest and for himself, and as he drank, he kept peering out of the window.

“Are you expecting some one?” Stepan asked.

“I? I hardly like to tell you whom I expect. But I wait and wait. A certain word took possession of my heart. Was it a dream or not, I cannot tell. It was like this, brother; I was reading the Gospels last night about Christ our Father and how He suffered on earth. You have heard tell of it, I daresay.”

“Yes,” Stepan said, “but we are ignorant folk and cannot read.”

“Well, I was reading how the Lord walked on earth, how He went to visit a Pharisee who did not receive Him well. And I wondered, as I read, how any man could receive the Lord without due honor. ‘Supposing such a thing were to happen to me,’ I thought, ‘what would I not do to receive Him? And the Pharisee did nothing!’ Thinking thus I fell asleep, and as I slept I heard a voice call to me. I rose; the voice seemed to whisper ‘Expect me; I am coming to-morrow.’ I heard it twice. Well, would you believe it? the idea took hold of my mind, and though I upbraided myself, I keep on expecting the Lord to come to me.”

Stepan shook his head, but made no remark. He finished his cup of tea and laid it down on its side in the saucer, but Martin took it up and filled it again.

“Have some more, bless you! I was thinking, too, that our Lord despised no one when He walked on earth; He was mostly with common folk. He went about with plain people and chose His disciples from men of our kind—simple workmen and sinners like ourselves. ‘He who raises himself,’ He said, ‘shall be humbled, and he who humbles himself shall be raised. You call Me Lord,’ he said, ‘and I will wash your feet. He who would be first,’ He said, ‘let him be the servant of all, because,’ He said, ‘blessed are the poor, the humble, the meek, the merciful.’ ”

Stepan forgot his tea. He was an old man and easily moved to tears; and as he listened the tears rolled down his cheeks.

“Have some more,” Martin said, but Stepan crossed himself, thanked Martin, pushed away his cup and rose.

“Thank you Martin,” he said; “you have nourished my body and my soul.”

“You are welcome another time. I shall always be pleased to see you; come again.”

Stepan went out; Martin poured himself out a last cup of tea, drank it, cleared away the dishes and sat down again by the window to work, stitching the back seam of a boot. As he stitched he peered out of the window to see if Christ was coming, and he kept on thinking of Him and His doings and recalling His words.

Two soldiers passed; one in Government boots, the other in boots of his own; then the owner of the next house went by in clean goloshes, and a baker with a basket. All these passed on; then a woman came up in woolen stockings and coarse country shoes. She went by the window and stopped by the wall. Martin looked up and saw that she was a stranger, poorly clad, with a baby in her arms. She was standing with her back to the wind, trying to wrap up the baby, but there was nothing to wrap it in. Her garments were summer ones and ragged, too. Through the window Martin heard the baby crying; the woman tried to comfort it but could not.

Martin rose and going out at the door and up the steps, he called to her.

“Come this way, my dear!”

The woman turned to him.

“Don’t stand in the cold there with the baby; come inside in the warm; you can make him more comfortable here. Come along!”

The woman was surprised to see an old man in an apron and spectacles on his nose inviting her to his room, but she followed him. They descended the stairs and entered the room. Martin led her to the bed.

“Come and sit here, my dear,” he said. “It is nearer to the stove; you can warm yourself and feed the baby.”

“I haven’t any milk; I have eaten nothing myself since morning,” the woman said, yet putting the child to the breast.

Martin shook his head. He got some bread and a cup, opened the oven door and filled the cup with soup. He then took the porridge-pot out of the oven, but the porridge was not quite done. He spread a cloth and put the soup and bread on the table.

“Sit down and have something to eat, my dear. I’ll look after the baby. I have had children of my own and know how to nurse them.”

The woman crossed herself, sat down by the table and began to eat, and Martin sat on the bed with the baby. He clucked and clucked, but having no teeth he could not do it well, and the baby would not stop its crying. And Martin tried to amuse him with his finger. He poked the finger straight at the baby’s mouth, then drew it back again. He would not let the child take the finger in its mouth because it was black with cobbler’s wax. The child looked at the finger, stopped crying and began to laugh. Martin was pleased.

As the woman ate she told him about herself, saying who she was and where she was going.

“I am a soldier’s wife,” she said. “It is now eight months that my husband has been taken away and I haven’t heard a word from him. I had a place as a cook when the child was born, but they would not keep me after that. I’ve been without a place for three months now and eaten everything I possessed. I wanted to go as a wet-nurse, but no one would have me because they said I was too thin. I went to a merchant’s wife with whom our grandmother is in service and she promised to take me. I thought she meant at once, but she told me to come next week, and she lives a long way. I’m quite worn out, and the baby is half-starved. If our landlady did not take pity on us, I don’t know how we should live.”

Martin sighed and said, “Have you no warm clothes?”

“How can I have warm clothes! I pawned my last shawl yesterday for sixpence!”

The woman went up to the bed and took the child. Martin rummaged about among the things hanging on the wall and brought out an old coat.

“Though it isn’t much of a thing, it will do to wrap up in,” he said.

The woman looked at the coat; then at the old man. She took the coat and burst into tears. Martin turned away, crawled under the bed and pulled out a box. He rummaged about in it and once more sat down facing the woman.

And the woman said, “Christ save you, Grandfather. It must have been He who sent me to your window, otherwise the child and I would have been starved to death. It was mild when I started, but it’s very cold now. The dear Lord made you look out of the window and caused you to pity me.”

Martin smiled and said, “He did make me, indeed! I was not gazing idly out of the window, my dear.”

And Martin told the woman his dream and how he had heard a voice and how the voice had promised him that the Lord should come and visit him this day.

"All things are possible," the woman said, and she rose, put on the coat, wrapped the child in it and began to take her leave, thanking Martin.

"Take this in Christ's name," Martin said, thrusting a sixpence into her hand. "It will do to take out your shawl."

The woman crossed herself, Martin did likewise, then accompanied her to the door.

When she had gone Martin ate some soup, cleared the table, and again sat down to work. But he did not forget the window. As soon as a shadow fell across it, he looked up to see who it was. Acquaintances passed and strangers, and nothing particular happened. Suddenly Martin saw an old apple-woman stop by his window. She was carrying a basket of apples. She must have sold nearly all, for only a few remained. Over her shoulders was a bag of chips and shavings, she had collected no doubt in half-finished houses, and was taking home. The bag made her shoulder ache it seemed and she wanted to change it over to the other shoulder. She let it down on the pavement, placed her basket of apples on a post and shook the bag. As she was doing so a boy in a ragged cap appeared from somewhere, snatched an apple out of the basket and was about to slip away when the old woman saw him and caught him by the sleeve. The boy struggled to get away, but the old woman held him fast with both hands. She had knocked off his cap and clutched him by the hair. The boy screamed, the woman cursed. Martin did not wait to put the awl in its place, but dropped it on the floor and rushed out at the door and stumbled up the stairs, dropping his spectacles on the way. He ran out into the street. The old woman was pulling the boy by the hair, cursing and threatening to take him to the policeman; the boy struggled and resisted her. "Why do you strike me?" he was saying. "I didn't take anything!"

Martin tried to part them; he took the boy by the hand and said, "Let him go, Granny. Forgive him for Christ's sake."

"I'll forgive him so that he won't forget it for a long time! I'll take the rascal to the police-station!"

Martin began to plead with her.

"Let him go, Granny; he won't do it again. Let him go for Christ's sake!"

The old woman released the boy, who was about to run away when Martin stopped him.

"Ask Granny to forgive you and don't do it again in future; I saw you take the apple."

The boy burst into tears and begged the old woman to forgive him.

"There now, here's an apple for you," and Martin took an apple from the basket and gave it to the boy. "I'll pay for it, Granny," he said.

"You shouldn't spoil the rascal," the old woman said. "You ought to give him something he wouldn't forget in a week."

"Ah, Granny, Granny!" Martin said; "that is how we judge, but God does not judge like that. If the boy is to be whipped for an apple what do you suppose we deserve for our sins?"

The old woman was silent.

And Martin told her the parable of the Lord who forgave his servant a large debt and how the servant then seized his own debtor by the throat. The old woman listened; the boy, too, stood and listened.

"God bade us forgive," Martin said, "that we may be forgiven. Forgive every one, even a thoughtless boy."

The old woman shook her head with a sigh.

"It's true enough," she said, "but boys get very spoiled nowadays."

"Then we old folk must teach them better," Martin said.

"That's just what I said," the old woman replied. "I had seven of my own, but now I've only a daughter left." And the old woman began to tell him where and how she lived with her daughter and how many grandchildren she had. "You see," she said, "I'm old now, yet still I work, for the sake of the grandchildren. And nice children they are, too. No one is so kind to me as they. The youngest won't leave me for any one. It's nothing but Granny dear, Granny darling all the time."

The old woman had quite softened by now.

"Children will be children," she said to Martin in reference to the boy. "The Lord bless them."

She was about to raise her bag on to her shoulder when the boy rushed up and said, "Let me carry it, Granny; I'm going your way."

The old woman shook her head and put the bag on the boy's shoulder. And they walked down the street side by side. The old woman had forgotten to ask Martin to pay for the apple. Martin stood and watched them, listening to their voices as they talked together.

When they were out of sight he turned in, found his spectacles on the stairs quite whole, took up his awl and sat down to his work once more. After a while he could not see to pass the thread through the holes and he noticed the lamplighter lighting the street lamps. "I must light up," he thought. And he trimmed the lamp, hung it up and went on with his work. He finished the boot he was doing and turned it over to examine it. He then put away his tools, cleared up the bits of leather and thread and awls, took down the lamp, put it on the table and took the Bible down from the shelf. He wanted to open it at the place he had marked with a piece of morocco, but it opened at another place. And as he opened the Gospels Martin recalled his dream of last night. And no sooner had he thought of it than he seemed to hear some one move behind him, as though some one were coming towards him. He turned, and it seemed to him that people were standing in the dark corner, but he could not make out who they were. And a voice whispered into his ear, "Martin, Martin, don't you know me?"

"Who is it?" Martin asked.

"It is I," the voice said.

And Stepan stepped out of the dark corner, smiling, and vanished like a cloud, and he was no more.

"It is I," the voice said again, and from out the dark corner stepped the woman with the baby, and she smiled and the child smiled, and they too vanished.

"It is I," said the voice once more, and out stepped the old woman and boy with an apple in his hand, and both smiled and also vanished.

And a feeling of gladness entered Martin's soul. He crossed himself, put on his spectacles and began to read the Gospel just where it had opened. At the top of the page were the words, "For I was an hungered, and ye gave me meat; I was thirsty and ye gave me drink; I was a stranger and ye took me in..."

And at the bottom of the page he read, "Inasmuch as ye have done it unto one of the least of these brethren, ye have done it unto me."

And Martin understood that his dream had come true and that his Savior had really come to him that day, and that he had welcomed Him.

Part 3: A Prisoner

An officer by the name of Jilin served in the army in the Caucasus.

One day he received a letter from home. It was from his mother, who wrote, "I am getting old now, and I want to see my beloved son before I die. Come and say good-bye to me, and when you have buried me, with God's grace, you can return to the Army. I have found a nice girl for you to marry; she is clever and pretty, and has some property of her own. If you like her perhaps you will marry and settle down for good."

Jilin pondered over the letter. It was true; his mother was really failing fast, and it might be his only chance of seeing her alive. He would go home, and if the girl was nice, he might even marry.

He went to his colonel and asked for leave, and bidding good-bye to his

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fellow-officers, gave his men four bucketfuls of vodka as a farewell treat, and got ready to go.

There was a war in the Caucasus at the time. The roads were not safe by day or by night. If a Russian ventured away from his fort, the Tartars either killed him or took him off to the hills. So it had been arranged that a body of soldiers should march from fortress to fortress to convoy any person who wanted to travel. The soldiers marched in front and behind; the travelers in between them.

It was summer. At daybreak the baggage-train was loaded behind the fort; the convoy came out and started along the road. Jilin was on horseback; his things were on a cart with the baggage-train.

They had about twenty miles to go. The baggage-train moved along slowly; now the soldiers would stop, now a wheel came off a cart, now a horse would refuse to go on, and then everybody had to wait.

It was already past noon and they had not covered half the distance. It was hot, dusty, the sun scorching and no shade at all—bare steppe, with not a tree or a bush the whole way.

Jilin rode on ahead and stopped to wait until the baggage-train should catch him up. He heard the signal-horn sounded; the company had stopped again. Jilin thought, "Why shouldn't I go on alone without the soldiers? I have a good horse, and if I come across any Tartars I can easily gallop away. I wonder if it would be safe?"

As he stood there thinking it over, another officer, by the name of Kostilin, rode up with a rifle and said, "Let us go on alone, Jilin. I'm dreadfully hungry, and the heat's unbearable. My shirt is wringing wet."

Kostilin was a big man and stout; his face was burning red, and the perspiration poured from his brow.

Jilin deliberated for a moment and said, "Is your rifle loaded?"

"It is."

“Very well; come along. Only the condition is to be that we don’t part.”

And they set off down the road alone. They were riding along the steppe talking together and keeping a sharp look-out from side to side. They could see a long way round them. When they left the steppe they came to a road running down a valley between two hills. And Jilin said, “Let’s go up on that hill and look about; some Tartars might easily spring out from the hills and we shouldn’t see them.”

“What’s the use?” Kostilin said. “We’d better go on.”

Jilin paid no heed to him.

“You wait down here,” he said, “and I’ll just go up and have a look.” And he turned his horse to the left up the hill. Jilin’s horse was a hunter and carried him up the hill as though it had wings. He had bought it for a hundred rubles as a colt, and broken it in himself. When he reached the top of the hill he saw some thirty Tartars a few paces ahead of him. He turned hastily, but the Tartars had seen him and gave chase down the hill, getting their rifles out as they went. Jilin bounded down as fast as the horse’s legs would carry him, crying out to Kostilin, “Get your rifle ready!” And in thought he said to his horse, “Get me out of this, my beauty; don’t stumble, or I’m lost. Once I reach the rifle, they shan’t take me alive!”

But Kostilin, instead of waiting when he saw the Tartars, set off full gallop in the direction of the fortress, lashing his horse now on one side, now on the other, and the horse’s switching tail was all that could be seen of him in the clouds of dust.

Jilin saw that it was all up with him. The rifle was gone; with a sword alone he could do nothing. He turned his horse in the direction of the convoy, hoping to escape, but six Tartars rushed ahead to cut him off. His horse was a good one, but theirs were better, and they were trying to cross his path. He wanted to turn in another direction, but his horse could not pull up and dashed on straight towards the Tartars. A red-bearded Tartar on a gray horse caught Jilin’s eyes. He was yelling and showing his teeth and pointing his rifle at him.

“I know what devils you are!” Jilin thought. “If you take me alive, you’ll put me in a pit and have me flogged. I’ll not be taken alive!”

Though Jilin was a little man, he was brave. He drew his sword and dashed at the red-bearded Tartar, thinking, “I’ll either ride him down or kill him with my sword.”

But he had no time to reach the Tartar; he was fired at from behind and his horse was hit. It fell to the ground full weight, pinning Jilin’s leg. He attempted to rise, but two evil-smelling Tartars were already sitting on him, twisting his arms behind him. He struggled, flung the Tartars off, but three others leaped from their horses and fell on him, beating him on the head with the butt ends of their rifles. A mist rose before his eyes and he staggered. The Tartars seized him, and taking spare girths from their saddles twisted his hands behind him and tied them with a Tartar knot and dragged him to the saddle. They knocked off his cap, pulled off his boots, searched him all over, took his money and watch and tore his clothes. Jilin looked round at his horse. The poor creature lay on its side just as it had fallen, struggling with its legs in the air and unable to get them to the ground. There was a hole in its head from which the dark blood was oozing, laying the dust for a yard around.

One of the Tartars approached it and took off the saddle. As it was still struggling, he drew a dagger and cut its windpipe. A whistling sound came from its throat; the horse gave a shudder and died.

The Tartars took off the saddle and strappings. The red-bearded Tartar mounted his horse, the others lifted Jilin into the saddle behind him, and, to prevent his falling off, they strapped him to the Tartar's girdle, and took him off to the hills.

Jilin sat behind the Tartar, rocking from side to side, his face touching the evil-smelling Tartar's back. All he could see was the man's broad back and sinewy neck, the closely-shaven bluish nape peeping out from beneath his cap. Jilin had a wound in his head, from which the blood poured and congealed over his eyes, but he could not shift his position on the saddle, nor wipe off the blood. His arms were twisted so far behind his back that his collar-bones ached. They rode over the hills for some time, then they came to a river which they forded and got out on to a road running down a valley. Jilin wanted to see where they were going, but his eyes were matted with blood and he could not move.

It began to get dark; they forded another river and rode up a rocky hill; there was a smell of smoke and a barking of dogs. They had reached a Tartar village. The Tartars got off their horses; the Tartar children gathered round Jilin, yelling and throwing stones at him. A Tartar drove them away, took Jilin off the horse and called his servant. A man with high cheek-bones came up, clad in nothing but a shirt, and that so torn that his breast was bare. The Tartar gave him some order. The man brought some shackles, two blocks of oak with iron rings attached, and a clasp and lock was fixed to one of the rings.

They untied Jilin's arms, put on the shackles, took him to a shed, pushed him in and locked the door. Jilin fell on to a dung heap. He groped about in the darkness to find a softer place and lay down.

II

Jilin did not sleep the whole of that night. The nights were short. Through a chink he saw that it was getting light. He got up, made the chink a little bigger and peeped out.

He saw a road at the foot of a hill, to the right of which was a Tartar hut with two trees near it. A black dog lay on the threshold and a goat and kids were moving about and swishing their tails. Then he saw a young Tartar woman coming from the direction of the hill. She wore a colored blouse and trousers with a girdle round her waist, high boots on her feet and a kerchief on her head, on which she was carrying a tin pitcher of water. Her back moved gracefully as she walked; she was leading a closely-shaven Tartar boy, who wore nothing but a shirt. The Tartar woman went into the hut with the water; the red-bearded Tartar of yesterday came out in a silken tunic, a silver-hilted knife stuck in his girdle and slippers on bare feet. A high, black sheepskin cap was pushed far back on his head. He stretched himself as he came out and stroked his red beard. He gave some order to his servant and went away.

Then two boys rode past. They had been to water their horses and the horses' noses were still wet. Some more closely-shaven boys came out, dressed only in shirts with no trousers. A whole group of them came up to the shed, and taking up a piece of stick, they thrust it through the chink. Jilin grunted at them and the boys ran off, yelling, their little white knees gleaming as they went.

Jilin was thirsty; his throat was parched. "If only some one would come," he thought. Soon the door of the shed opened and the red-bearded Tartar entered with another, shorter than he, and dark. He had bright black eyes, a ruddy complexion and a short beard. He had a jolly face, and

was always laughing. This man was dressed better than the first, in a blue silken tunic, trimmed with braid. The knife in his broad girdle was of silver, the shoes on his feet were of red morocco, embroidered in silver thread, and over these he wore a thicker pair of shoes. His cap was high and of white sheepskin.

The red-bearded Tartar entered, muttering some angry words. He leant against the doorpost, playing with his dagger and looking askance at Jilin, like a wolf. The dark man, quick and lively and moving as if on springs, came up to Jilin and squatted down in front of him, showing his teeth. He clapped Jilin on the shoulder and began to jabber something in his own language, blinking his eyes and clacking his tongue. "Good Russ! Good Russ!" he said.

Jilin understood nothing. "I am thirsty; give me some water," he said.

The dark man laughed. "Good Russ!" he kept on saying.

Jilin made signs with his lips and hands that he wanted some water. The dark man laughed, and putting his head out at the door, he called to some one "Dina!"

A little girl came up. She was about thirteen, slight and thin, her face resembling the dark man's. She was obviously his daughter. She, too, had bright, black eyes and a rosy complexion. She was clad in a long blue blouse with broad sleeves, and loose at the waist—the hem and front and sleeves were embroidered in red. She wore trousers and slippers and shoes with high heels over them; she had a necklace round her throat made out of Russian coins. Her head was bare. Her black plait was tied with a ribbon, the ends of which were trimmed with silver rubles.

Her father said something to her. She ran away and came back again with a tin jug of water. She gave it to Jilin and also squatted down in front of him, huddled up, so that her shoulders came lower than her knees. She sat staring at Jilin as he drank, as at some strange animal.

Jilin handed her back the jug. She took it and bounded out like a wild goat. Even her father could not help laughing. He sent her off somewhere else. She ran away with the jug and brought back some unleavened bread on a round wooden platter, and huddling down in front of him once more, she again stared at him open-eyed.

The Tartars went out and locked the door.

After a while the red-bearded man's servant came up and called to Jilin. He too, did not know Russian, only Jilin understood that he wanted him to go somewhere.

Jilin followed him limping, for the shackles impeded his walking. He followed the servant. They came to a Tartar village, consisting of about ten houses, a Tartar church with a dome on top in the midst of them. In front of one house stood three saddled horses; some boys were holding them by their bridles. The dark little Tartar rushed out of this house and beckoned to Jilin to come to him. He laughed, jabbered something in his own tongue and went in again. Jilin came to the house. The room was large, the mud walls smoothly plastered. Near the front wall lay a pile of brightly colored feather beds, on the side walls hung rich rugs with rifles and pistols and swords fastened to them, all inlaid in silver. At one wall was a small stove on a level with the earthen floor, which was beautifully clean. In the near corner a felt carpet was spread on which were rich rugs and down cushions. On these rugs, in slippers only, sat some Tartars—the dark one, the red-bearded one and three guests. All had down cushions at their backs. In front of them, on a wooden platter, were some millet pancakes, some melted butter in a cup and a jug of Tartar beer. They took the pancakes up with their fingers, and their hands were all greasy with the butter.

The dark Tartar jumped up and bade Jilin sit down, not on the rugs, but on the bare floor. Then he sat down on his rug again, and treated his guests to more pancakes and beer. The servant made

Jilin sit down in the place assigned to him, took off his overshoes, which he placed by the door where the other shoes were standing, and sat down on the felt carpet, nearer to his master. He watched the others eating, his mouth watering. When the Tartars had finished, a woman came in dressed like the girl in trousers and a kerchief on her head. She cleared away the remains, and brought a basin and a narrow-necked jug of water. The Tartars washed their hands, laid them together, fell on their knees and said their prayers in their own tongue. When they had finished one of the guests turned to Jilin and addressed him in Russian.

"You were captured by Kasi-Mohammed," he said, indicating the red-bearded Tartar, "but he has given you to Abdul-Murat." And he indicated the dark Tartar. "Abdul-Murat is now your master."

Jilin was silent.

Abdul-Murat now began to speak, pointing at Jilin and laughing. "A soldier Russ, a good Russ," he said.

And the interpreter said, "He wants you to write home asking your people to send a ransom for you. When the money comes, he will let you go."

Jilin reflected and said, "How much does he want?"

The Tartars deliberated among themselves; the interpreter said, "Three thousand rubles."

"I can't pay as much as that," Jilin said.

Abdul leaped up and began to gesticulate violently. He was saying something to Jilin, thinking that he would understand.

"How much will you give?" the interpreter asked.

After reflection Jilin said, "Five hundred rubles."

At this the Tartars all began talking together. Abdul shouted at the red-bearded Tartar, jabbering away till he foamed at the mouth. The red-bearded Tartar merely frowned and clacked his tongue.

They grew silent and the interpreter said, "The master thinks a ransom of five hundred rubles is not enough. He himself paid two hundred rubles for you. Kasi-Mohammed was in his debt, and he took you in payment. He wants three thousand rubles and refuses to let you go for less. If you won't pay the money you'll be flung into a pit and flogged."

"The more you show you're afraid of them, the worse it is," Jilin thought. He leaped to his feet and said, "Tell the dog that if he begins to threaten me, he shan't have a farthing! I won't write home at all! I was never afraid of you, and I'm not going to be now, you dogs!"

The interpreter conveyed his words, and again the Tartars began to speak all at once.

They jabbered for a long time, then the dark one sprang up and came to Jilin.

"Russ," he said, "*djigit, djigit* Russ!" (*Djigit* in their tongue means brave.) He laughed and said a few words to the interpreter, who turned to Jilin.

"Will you give a thousand rubles?"

Jilin stuck to his own.

"I won't give more than five hundred, not if you kill me."

The Tartars conferred together, and sent the servant off somewhere, and when he was gone they stared now at Jilin, now at the door.

The servant returned, followed by a stout, bare-footed man, in torn clothes. On his feet were also shackles. Jilin gave an exclamation of surprise. It was Kostilin. He, too, had been captured then. The Tartars sat them down side by side, and they began to tell each other of their experiences, the Tartars looking on in silence. Jilin told Kostilin what had happened to him, and

Kostilin told Jilin that his horse had got tired, his rifle missed fire, and that this same Abdul had caught him up and captured him.

Abdul jumped up and began to speak, pointing at Kostilin. The interpreter explained that they both belonged to the same master, and that the one who would produce the money first would be the first to be set free.

“See how quiet your comrade is,” he said to Jilin. “You get angry and he has written home asking to have five thousand rubles sent him. He will be well fed, and no one will do him any harm.”

And Jilin said, “My comrade can do what he likes. He may be rich, and I am not. I won’t go back on my word. You can kill me if you like, but you get no advantage by that; I won’t write for more than five hundred rubles.”

The Tartars were silent. Suddenly Abdul sprang up, took out a pen, ink and a scrap of paper from a little box, put them in Jilin’s hands and slapping him on the shoulder, said, “Write.” He had agreed to the five hundred rubles.

“One moment,” Jilin said to the interpreter; “tell him that he must feed and clothe us well, and that he must put us together so that we don’t feel so lonely, and he must remove our shackles.”

He looked at Abdul as he spoke and smiled. Abdul too smiled and said, “You shall have the best of clothes—coats and boots fit to be married in, and you shall be fed like princes, and you can be together in the shed if you like, but I can’t take off the shackles because you might escape. You shall have them removed at night.” He rushed up to Jilin and slapped him on the shoulder. “Fine fellow! fine fellow!” he said.

Jilin wrote the letter, but did not address it correctly, so that it should not reach home. “I will escape, somehow,” he thought.

Jilin and Kostilin were taken back to the shed. They were given some straw, a jug of water and bread, two old coats and some worn boots, evidently taken from the bodies of dead soldiers. At night their shackles were removed and they were locked in the shed.

III

Thus Jilin and his comrade lived for a month. Their master was always cheerful. “You, good fellow, Ivan! I, Abdul, good fellow, too!” But he fed them badly. All the food they got was some unleavened bread of millet flour, or millet cakes, and sometimes nothing but raw dough.

Kostilin sent another letter home and did nothing but mope and wait for the money to arrive. He would sit in the barn day after day, either counting the days for the letter to come or sleeping. Jilin knew that his letter would not reach home, but he never wrote another.

“Where on earth could mother get so much money from?” he thought. “She lived mostly on what I used to send her, and if she has to procure five hundred rubles she’ll be quite ruined. With God’s help I’ll get away myself.”

So he kept his eyes open, planning how to run away.

He would walk about the village whistling, or doing something with his hands, such as modeling dolls out of clay, or plaiting baskets out of twigs. Jilin was very clever with his hands.

One day he modeled a doll with a nose, arms and legs and in a Tartar shirt, and he put this doll on the roof of the shed. The Tartar girls went to fetch water. The master’s daughter Dina caught sight of the doll, and called to the others. They put down their pitchers and looked up laughing.

Jilin took down the doll and held it out to them. They laughed, but dared not take it. He left the doll and went into the shed to see what would happen.

Dina ran up, looked about her, snatched up the doll and ran off with it.

The following morning, at daybreak, Dina came out on the threshold with the doll. She had bedecked it in bits of red stuff, and was rocking it to and fro like a baby and singing a lullaby. An old woman came out and began to scold her. She snatched the doll away from the child and broke it, and sent Dina off to her work.

Jilin made another doll—a better one this time—and gave it to Dina.

One day Dina brought Jilin a jug, and sitting down, she looked up at him, laughing and pointing to the jug.

“What is she so pleased about?” Jilin thought. He took up the jug to have a drink, thinking it was full of water, but it turned out to be milk. “How nice!” he said, and finished it. Dina was overjoyed.

“Nice, nice, Ivan!” She jumped up and clapped her hands in glee, then she seized the jug and ran away.

After that she brought Jilin milk in secret every day. When the Tartar women used to make cheese cakes out of goat’s milk, which they baked on the roof, she would steal some and bring them to him. Once the master killed a sheep, and Dina brought Jilin a piece of the flesh hidden in her sleeve. She would throw the things down and run away.

One day there was a terrible storm; the rain poured down in torrents for a whole hour. The rivers became turbid. At the ford, the water rose till it was seven feet high and the current was so strong that it moved the stones along. Rivulets flowed everywhere and there was a roar in the hills. After the storm streams flowed down the village everywhere. Jilin asked his master for a knife, and with it he shaped a small cylinder and made a wheel out of a piece of board, to which he fixed two dolls, one on each side. The little girls brought him some bits of stuff with which he dressed the dolls—one as a peasant, the other as a peasant woman. He made them fast and set the wheel so that the stream should work it. When the wheel began to whirl the dolls danced.

The whole village gathered round—boys and girls and women and men came to look on, the latter clacking their tongues.

“Ah, Russ! Ah, Ivan!” they said.

Abdul had a Russian watch which was broken. He called Jilin and showed it to him. Jilin said, “Give it to me and I’ll mend it.”

He took it to pieces with the knife, sorted the pieces out, put them together again and the watch went quite well.

The master was pleased and presented him with one of his old tunics, all in holes. Jilin had to take it, besides, it would come in useful to cover up with at night.

From that day Jilin’s fame as a man skilled in handiworks spread fast. People began to flock to him from distant villages, one bringing the lock of a rifle or a pistol that wanted mending; another a watch or a clock. The master gave him some tools—pincers, gimlets and a file.

One day a Tartar fell ill, and they came to Jilin, saying, “Come and heal him.” Jilin did not know how to heal the sick, but he went just the same thinking, “The man will recover of his own accord.” He disappeared into the shed and mixed up some sand and water. In the presence of the Tartars he mumbled some words over the mixture, and gave it to the sick man to drink. Fortunately the Tartar got well.

Jilin began to understand a little of their tongue. Some of the Tartars got quite used to him, and when they wanted him would call "Ivan, Ivan!" Others again looked at him askance as at some wild beast.

The red-bearded Tartar did not like Jilin. He frowned when he saw him, and either turned away or cursed. There was another old man, who did not live in the village, but somewhere at the foot of a hill. He came to the village only sometimes. Jilin saw him when the man went to the Mosque to say his prayers. He was short and had a white towel wound round his cap. His beard and mustaches were clipped and white as down; his face was wrinkled and brick-red. He had a hooked nose like a hawk's, and cruel gray eyes. He had no teeth, but two tusks in front. He would pass with his turban on his head, leaning on his staff, and peering round like a wolf. When he saw Jilin he snorted and turned away.

One day Jilin went to the hills to find out where the old man lived. He strolled down a path and saw a little garden and a stone wall; within the stone wall were wild cherry trees and peaches and a hut with a flat roof. He came a little closer and saw some hives made of plaited straw and humming bees flying hither and thither. The old man was on his knees, doing something to the hives. Jilin stood on tiptoe in order to get a better view; his shackles rattled. The old man turned and gave a yell and pulling a pistol out of his belt he aimed at Jilin, who just managed to shield himself behind the stone wall.

The old man came to the master to complain. The master summoned Jilin and laughing, asked him, "Why did you go to the old man's place?"

"I didn't mean to do him any harm," he said. "I only wanted to see how he lived."

The master conveyed his words to the old man.

But the old man was angry. He jabbered away, showing his tusks, and shook his fists menacingly at Jilin.

Jilin could not understand all he said, but he gathered that the old man was warning the master not to keep any Russians about the place, but to have them all killed.

The old man went away.

Jilin asked the master who the old man was, and the master said, "He is a great man! He was the bravest of us all, and killed many Russians, and he was rich, too. He had three wives and eight sons, who all lived in the same village. The Russians came, destroyed the village, and killed seven of his sons. One son only remained, and he surrendered to the Russians. The old man followed them, and also gave himself up. He lived with the Russians for three months, when he found his son. With his own hand he killed him and escaped. After that he gave up fighting. He went to Mecca to pray to God; that is why he wears a turban. Any man who has been to Mecca is called a *Hajji* and has to wear a turban. He does not like you Russians. He wanted me to kill you, but I can't kill you because I paid money for you. Besides, I have taken a fancy to you, Ivan; I would not let you go at all, if I had not given my word." He laughed and added in Russian, "You are a good fellow, Ivan, and I, Abdul, am a good fellow too."

IV

Jilin lived in this way for a month. During the day he wandered about the village or busied himself with some handicraft, and at night he dug in his shed. The digging was difficult because of the stones, but he worked away at them with his file and at last made a hole beneath the wall

big enough to crawl through. "If only I knew the neighborhood well and which way to turn," he thought; "the Tartars would not tell me."

He chose a day when the master was away, left the village after dinner and went up a hill, hoping to find out the lie of the land from there. But before the master departed he told one of his boys to look after Jilin and not let him out of his sight. The boy ran after Jilin, crying, "Don't go away! My father told you not to! I'll call for help!"

Jilin tried to soothe him.

"I'm not going far," he said. "I only want to go to the top of that hill to find a certain herb with which to cure your people when they are sick. Come with me; I can't run away with the shackles on my feet. I'll make you a bow and some arrows to-morrow."

After some persuasion the boy went with him. The hill did not seem very far off, but it was difficult to get there shackled as he was. He struggled and struggled until he got to the top. Jilin sat down and began to look about him. To the south, beyond the shed, a herd of horses could be seen in a valley, and at the bottom of the valley was another village. Beyond the village was a steep hill and another hill beyond that. Between the two hills was a dark patch that looked like a wood; hill upon hill rose beyond it, and higher than all rose the snow-capped mountains as white as sugar, the peak of one standing out above the rest. To the east and west were other such hills; here and there were villages in the valleys from which the smoke curled up. "This is all Tartar country," he thought. He looked in the direction of Russia—below was a river, and the village he lived in, surrounded by gardens. On the river bank, looking as tiny as dolls, sat Tartar women, washing clothes. Beyond the village was a hill, lower than the one to the south and beyond that two wooded hills. Between these two hills was a plain and away in the distance on this plain smoke seemed to rise. Jilin tried to recollect where the sun rose and set when he lived in the fort. He came to the conclusion that the fortress must lie in that very valley. Between these two hills would he have to make his way when he escaped.

The sun began to set. The snow-clad mountains turned from white to red; the dark mountains grew darker still; a vapor rose from the valley, and the plain where he supposed the fortress to be seemed on fire with the sunset's glow. Jilin gazed intently; something seemed to quiver in that plain, like smoke rising from a chimney, and Jilin felt sure that the Russian fortress was there.

It was getting late. The Mullah's cry was heard. The flocks and herds were driven home; the cows were lowing. The boy kept on begging "Come home," but Jilin had no desire to move.

They returned home. "Now that I know the place I must lose no time in running away," Jilin thought. He wanted to escape that very night, for the nights were dark then; the moon had waned, but as luck would have it, the Tartars returned that evening. Sometimes when they brought cattle home they would come back in a jolly mood, but this time there were no cattle, and on the saddle of his horse they brought back the red-bearded Tartar's brother who had been killed. They returned in a gloomy mood and gathered the village together for the burial. Jilin, too, came out to look on. They wrapped the body in a sheet and without a coffin carried it out and laid it on the grass beneath some plane-trees. The Mullah arrived and the old men; they wrapped towels around their caps, took off their shoes, and squatted down on their heels before the body. In front was the Mullah, behind him three old men in turbans, and behind them three other Tartars. They sat silent, eyes downcast, for a long time, then the Mullah raised his head and said, "Allah!" (meaning God). After this word he again bowed his head, and there was another long silence. They all sat motionless. Again the Mullah raised his head and said "Allah!" All repeated "Allah!" and again there was silence. The dead man lay on the grass motionless and the

others, too, seemed dead. Not a single man moved. The only sound to be heard was the rustling of the leaves on the plane-trees. After a while the Mullah said a prayer; all rose, and raising the dead man with their hands they carried him away. They brought him to a pit. It was not an ordinary pit, but hollowed out under the ground like a vault. They lifted the dead man under the arms, bent him into a sitting posture and let him down into the pit, gently, his hands folded in front of him.

The master's servant brought some green rushes which they stuffed into the pit, then they hastily covered it with earth, leveled the ground properly and placed a stone, upright, at the head of the grave. They stamped down the soil and once more sat down round the grave side by side. For a long time they were silent.

"Allah! Allah!" they sighed and rose.

The red-bearded Tartar gave some money to the old men, then he took a whip, struck himself three times on the forehead and went home.

In the morning Jilin saw the red-bearded Tartar leading a mare out of the village, followed by three other Tartars. When they left the village behind them the red-bearded Tartar took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves—his arms were strong and muscular—and taking out a dagger, he sharpened it on a whetstone. The other Tartars raised the mare's head and he cut her throat. The mare dropped down and he began to skin her with his big hands. Women and girls came up and washed the entrails. The mare was cut up and the pieces carried to the red Tartar's hut, where the whole village gathered for a funeral feast.

For three days they ate the mare's flesh and drank beer in honor of the dead man. All the Tartars were at home. On the fourth day, about dinner time, Jilin saw that they were preparing to go away somewhere. The horses were brought out, they got ready, and about ten of the Tartars, the red one among them, went away, Abdul remaining at home. There was a new moon and the nights were still dark.

"To-night we must escape," Jilin thought, and he unfolded his plan to Kostilin. But Kostilin was afraid.

"How can we run away? We don't know the way even."

"I know the way."

"We couldn't get there in one night."

"If we can't, we can hide in the wood. I've got some cakes here for us to eat. What's the good of sitting here? If they send your ransom, well and good, but supposing they can't raise the money? The Tartars are getting vicious because our people have killed one of their men. They will probably kill us."

Kostilin reflected.

"Very well; let us go," he said.

V

Jilin went down the hole and made it a little bigger so that Kostilin could crawl through, then they sat down to wait till all grew quiet in the village.

When the Tartars had all retired to rest Jilin crawled under the wall and got outside. "Follow me," he whispered to Kostilin.

Kostilin crept into the hole, but his foot hit against a stone and made a clatter. The master had a speckled watch-dog—a vicious creature it was, called Ulashin. The dog growled and rushed forward, followed by other dogs. Jilin gave a low whistle and threw it a cake. Ulashin recognized him, wagged his tail and ceased his growling.

The master heard the dog and called from the hut, "*Hait, hait*, Ulashin!"

But Jilin stroked the dog by the ears and it did not move. It rubbed itself against Jilin's legs and wagged its tail.

They sat crouching round the corner. All grew quiet; only a sheep was heard to cough in a barn, and below, the water rippled over the stones. It was dark; the stars were high in the sky and the new moon looked red as it set behind the hill, horns upwards. A mist as white as milk lay over the valley.

Jilin got up and turning to Kostilin said, "Let us come, brother."

They set off, but they had no sooner done so than the Mullah intoned from the roof "Allah Besmilla! Ilrachman!" That meant that the people would be going to the Mosque. They sat down again, crouching behind the wall. For a long time they sat there waiting till the people went past. All grew quiet again.

"Now then; with God's help we must get away," Jilin said.

They crossed themselves and started. They went through the yard and downhill to the river which they forded and came out into the valley. The mist hung low and dense; above, the stars were visible. By the stars Jilin could tell the direction they had to take. It was cool in the mist and walking was easy, only their boots were uncomfortable, being old and worn out. Jilin cast his off and went bare-foot. He leaped over the stones, gazing up at the stars. Kostilin began to lag behind.

"Slower, please," he said, "these cursed boots hurt my feet."

"Take them off and you'll find it easier."

Kostilin too went barefoot, but that was still worse. The stones cut his feet and he lagged behind more than ever.

Jilin said to him, "The cuts on your feet will heal up soon enough, but if the Tartars catch us it will be much more serious; they will kill us."

Kostilin did not say anything, but walked along, groaning.

They walked along the valley for a long time, when suddenly they heard the barking of dogs. Jilin stopped and looked about him. He climbed up the hill on all fours.

"We mistook our way, and turned to the right. Another Tartar village lies here; I saw it from the hill the other day. We must turn back and go to the left up the hill. There must be a wood here."

And Kostilin said, "Let us rest a while; my feet are all bleeding."

"They'll get better in good time, brother. Walk more lightly—like this."

And Jilin turned back and went up the hill to the left into the wood. Kostilin kept on lagging behind and groaning. Jilin remonstrated with him and walked on ahead.

They reached the top of the hill, where they found a wood, as Jilin had surmised. They went into it. The brambles tore the last of their clothes. At last they found a path and followed it.

"Stop!" Jilin said. There was a trampling of hoofs on the path. They listened. It sounded like the trampling of horses' hoofs, but the sound ceased. They moved on and again they heard the trampling. They stopped again, and the sound ceased. Jilin crept nearer and in a patch of light on the path he saw something standing. It seemed like a horse, yet not like a horse, and it had

something queer on its back that was not a man. The creature snorted. "What a strange thing!" Jilin thought, and gave a low whistle. The animal bounded off the path into the thicket and there was a sound of cracking branches as though a storm had swept through the wood.

Kostilin fell to the ground in terror; Jilin laughed, saying, "It's a stag. Can't you hear how it's breaking the branches with its antlers? We are afraid of him and he is afraid of us."

They went on further. The Great Bear was already setting and the dawn was not far off. They did not know whether they were going in the right direction. It seemed to Jilin that the Tartars had brought him along this path when they captured him and that it was still another seven miles to the fortress, but he had nothing certain to go by, and at night one could easily mistake the way.

Kostilin dropped to the ground and said, "Do what you like, but I can't go any further. My legs won't carry me."

Jilin attempted persuasion.

"It's no good," Kostilin said; "I can't go on."

Jilin grew angry and vented his disgust.

"Then I'm going alone—good-bye."

Kostilin jumped up and followed.

They walked another three miles. The mist grew denser; they could not see ahead of them and the stars were no longer visible.

They suddenly heard a trampling of horses coming from the direction in which they were going. They could hear the horse's hoofs hit against the stones. Jilin lay flat down and put his ear to the ground to listen.

"There is certainly a horseman coming towards us," he said. They ran off the path into the thicket and sat down to wait. After a while Jilin crept out into the path to look. A mounted Tartar was coming along, driving a cow and humming softly to himself. When he had passed Jilin turned to Kostilin, "Thank God the danger is over. Come, let us go."

Kostilin attempted to rise, but dropped down again.

"I can't, I can't! I've no more strength left."

The man was heavy and stout and had perspired freely. The heavy mist had chilled him, tired and bleeding as he was, and made him quite stiff. Jilin tried to lift him, but Kostilin cried out, "Oh, it hurts!"

Jilin turned to stone.

"Why did you shout? The Tartar is still near; he will have heard you," he remonstrated, while to himself he thought, "The man is evidently exhausted; what shall I do with him? I can't desert him." "Come," he said, "climb on to my back, then, and I'll carry you if you really can't walk."

He helped Kostilin up, put his arms under his thighs and carried him on to the path.

"For heaven's sake don't put your arms round my neck or you'll throttle me. Hold on to my shoulders."

It was hard work for Jilin; his feet, too, were bleeding and tired. He bent down now and then to get him in a more comfortable position, or jerked him up so that he sat higher up, and went on his weary way.

The Tartar had evidently heard Kostilin's cry. Jilin heard some one following behind, calling out in the Tartar tongue. Jilin rushed into the thicket. The Tartar seized his gun and aimed; the shot missed; the Tartar yelled and galloped down the path.

"I'm afraid we're lost," Jilin said. "He'll collect the Tartars to hunt us down. If we don't cover a couple of miles before they've time to set out, nothing will save us." To himself he thought, "Why the devil did I saddle myself with this block? I should have got there long ago had I been alone."

Kostilin said, "Why should you be caught because of me?"

"I can't go alone; it would be mean to desert a comrade."

Again he raised Kostilin on to his shoulders and went on. They walked along for another half-mile. They were still in the wood and could not see the end of it. The mist had dispersed; the clouds seemed to gather; the stars were no longer visible. Jilin was worn out. They came to a spring walled in by stones. He stopped and put Kostilin down.

"Let us rest a minute or two and have a drink and a bite of this cake. We can't be very far off now."

He had no sooner lain down to take a drink from the spring than he heard the stamping of horses behind him. Again they rushed into the thicket to the right and lay down on a slope.

They heard a sound of Tartar voices. The Tartars stopped at the very spot where they had turned off the path. They seemed to confer for a bit and then set a dog on the scent. There was a crackling among the bushes and a strange dog appeared. It stopped and began to bark. The Tartars followed it. They were also strangers. They bound Jilin and Kostilin and took them off on their horses.

When they had ridden for about two miles they were met by the master, Abdul, and two other Tartars. He exchanged some words with the strange Tartars, after which Jilin and Kostilin were removed to his horses and he took them back to the village.

Abdul was no longer laughing, and did not say a word to them.

They reached the village at daybreak and were placed in the street. The children gathered round them and threw stones at them and lashed them with whips, yelling all the time.

All the Tartars collected in a circle, the old man from the hills among them. They began to talk; Jilin gathered that they were considering what was to be done with him and Kostilin. Some said that they should be sent into the hills, and the old man persisted that they should be killed. Abdul would not agree to either plan, saying, "I paid money for them and must get their ransom."

The old man said, "They will not pay the ransom; they'll only do a great deal of harm. It is a sin to keep Russians. Kill them and have done with it."

The Tartars dispersed. The master came to Jilin and said to him, "If your ransom does not come in two weeks, I'll have you flogged, and if you attempt to run away again, I'll kill you like a dog. Write home, and write to the point!"

They brought them pen and paper and they wrote home. The shackles were put on them and they were taken behind the Mosque, where there was a pit of about twelve feet deep, into which they were flung.

VI

Life was very hard for them now. Their shackles were never removed, and they were never allowed out into the fresh air. Raw dough was thrown down to them, as one throws a scrap to a dog, and water was let down in a jug. The stench in the pit was awful and it was damp as well. Kostilin grew quite ill; he swelled very much and every bone in his body ached. He either

groaned or slept all the time. Jilin, too, was depressed; he saw that their position was hopeless and did not know how to get out of it.

He tried to make a tunnel but there was nowhere to throw the earth, and when the master saw it, he threatened to kill him.

One day when he was most downcast, squatting in the pit and thinking of his freedom, a cake fell from above, then another, and some cherries rained down. Jilin looked up and saw Dina. She looked at him, laughed and ran away.

“I wonder if Dina would help us?” Jilin thought.

He cleared a space in the pit, dug a little clay and began to make some dolls. He molded some men and horses and dogs, thinking, “When Dina comes, I will throw these up to her.”

But Dina did not come the next day. Jilin heard a stamping of horses; some Tartars seemed to have come and all gathered at the Mosque, shouting and arguing. It was something about the Russians. The voice of the old man was heard, too. Jilin could not understand all they said, but he made out that the Russians were near, that the Tartars were afraid of them and did not know what to do with their prisoners.

After a while they dispersed. Suddenly Jilin heard a rustling overhead and saw Dina crouching at the edge of the pit, her knees higher than her head. She bent over so that the coins at the end of her plaits dangled over the pit. Her eyes were twinkling like two stars. From her sleeve she took two cakes made of cheese and threw them down to him. Jilin picked them up and said, “What a long time it is since you’ve been to see me! I’ve made you some toys. Look, here they are!” He threw them up to her one by one. She shook her head and averted her gaze. “I don’t want them, Ivan,” she said. “They want to kill you, Ivan,” she added, pointing to her throat.

“Who wants to kill me?”

“My father. The old man told him to, but I’m sorry for you.”

Jilin said, “If you are sorry for me, bring me a long pole.”

She shook her head, as much as to say that it was impossible.

He put up his hands and implored her, “Please, Dina! Be a dear and bring it!”

“I can’t,” she said; “they’ll catch me at home.” Then she went away.

In the evening Jilin sat in the pit wondering what would happen. He kept looking up; the stars were visible, but the moon had not yet risen. The Mullah’s call was heard, and all grew quiet. Jilin began to doze, thinking “The child is afraid.” Suddenly some clay dropped on to his head. He looked up, and saw a long pole poking into the opposite wall of the pit; it began to slide down. Jilin took hold of it and lowered it with a feeling of gladness at his heart. It was a stout, strong pole; he had noticed it many times on the roof of the master’s hut.

He looked up. The stars were shining high in the sky and above the pit Dina’s eyes gleamed in the darkness like a cat’s. She leant her head over the pit and whispered, “Ivan, Ivan!” making signs to him to speak low.

“What is it?” Jilin asked.

“They’ve all gone but two.”

“Come, Kostilin,” Jilin said; “let us try our luck for the last time; I’ll help you up.”

But Kostilin would not listen to him.

“No,” he said; “it seems that I can’t get away from here. How can I come when I’ve hardly strength enough to move?”

“Well, good-bye, then. Don’t think ill of me.”

He kissed Kostilin, and seizing the pole, he asked Dina to hold it at the top and swarmed up. Twice he fell back again; the shackles hindered him. But Jilin persevered and got to the top somehow. Dina clutched hold of his shirt and pulled at him with all her might, unable to control her laughter.

When he clambered out Jilin handed her the pole, saying, "Put it back in its place, Dina, for if they notice its absence they'll beat you."

Dina dragged the pole away, and Jilin went down the hill. When he got to the bottom he sat down under its shelter, took a sharp stone and tried to wrench the lock off the shackles. But the lock was a strong one and would not give way, and it was difficult to get at it. Suddenly he heard some one coming downhill, skipping lightly. "It must be Dina again," he thought.

She came up, took the stone and said, "Let me try."

She knelt down and tried to wrench the lock off, but her little hands were as slender as little twigs and there was no strength in them. She threw the stone down and burst into tears. Jilin made another attempt, while Dina squatted down beside him and put her hand on his shoulder.

Jilin looked round; to the left the sky was all red; the moon was beginning to rise. "I must cross the valley and be under shelter of the wood before the moon rises," he thought. He got up and threw away the stone. "I must go as I am in the shackles. Good-bye, Dina, dear; I shall always remember you."

Dina seized hold of him and groped about his coat with her hand to find a place to thrust some cakes into. Jilin took the cakes.

"Thank you, little one," he said. "There won't be any one to make you dolls when I am gone." He stroked her head.

Dina burst into tears and, covering her face with her hands, she fled up the hill, bounding along like a wild goat. The coins in her plait could be heard jingling in the darkness.

Jilin crossed himself, took the lock of his shackles in his hand to prevent a clatter and started on his way, dragging his shackled leg and gazing at the red in the sky where the moon was rising. This time he knew the way. He had to go straight on for six miles. If only he could reach the wood before the moon had quite risen! He forded the river. The red light over the hill had paled. He walked along the valley, looking back now and then; the moon was not yet visible. The light grew brighter and brighter; one side of the valley was quite light. The shadows crept along the foot of the hill, drawing nearer to him.

Jilin kept in the shadow. He hurried, but the moon moved faster than he; the hilltops on the right were already lit up. As he neared the wood, the moon rose over the hills, all white, and it grew as light as day. All the leaves on the trees could be seen distinctly. It was still and light on the hills; there was a dead silence, except for the murmur of the river below.

He reached the wood without meeting any one. He chose a dark spot and sat down to rest.

When he had rested a while and eaten a cake, he found a stone and once more tried to wrench the lock of the shackles. He cut his hands, but could not manage it. He rose and went on his way. After a mile he was quite worn out and his feet ached terribly. At every dozen steps or so he stopped. "It can't be helped," he thought. "I must drag myself on so long as my strength holds out, for if I once sit down I shan't be able to get up again. I can't reach the fortress to-night, that is obvious; as soon as it gets light I'll hide in the wood and go on again when it gets dark."

He walked the whole night, meeting only two Tartars, but Jilin heard them from a distance and took refuge behind a tree.

The moon began to pale; the dew fell; it was near dawn, but Jilin had not yet reached the end of the wood. "I'll walk another thirty steps or so then I'll creep into the thicket and sit down," he thought. He covered the thirty steps and saw that he had come to the edge of the wood. When he came out it was quite light. Before him stretched the steppe and to the left, near the foot of a hill, he saw a dying fire from which the smoke rose and men were sitting about it.

He looked intently; there was a flash of guns—they were soldiers, Cossacks!

Jilin was overjoyed. He summoned his remaining strength and began to descend the hill, thinking, "God forbid that any mounted Tartar should see me now in the open field; though near my own people, I could not escape."

The thought had no sooner crossed his mind than he saw three Tartars standing on a hill, not more than a few yards away. They had seen him and dashed down towards him. His heart gave a great bound. He waved his arms and shouted with all his might, "Help, help, brothers!"

The soldiers heard him; a few Cossacks sprang upon their horses and dashed forward to cut across the Tartars' path.

The Cossacks were far off and the Tartars were near, but Jilin made one last effort; lifting the shackles with his hand, he ran towards the Cossacks. He hardly knew what he was doing and crossed himself wildly, crying, "Help, brothers, help!"

The Cossacks numbered about fifteen.

The Tartars grew afraid and stopped in hesitation before they reached him. Jilin managed to get to the Cossacks. They surrounded him, asking who he was and where he came from, but Jilin was quite beside himself and could only repeat, through his tears, "Brothers, brothers!"

The soldiers came up and crowded round him, one giving him bread, another porridge, another some vodka to drink, another gave him his cloak to cover him, and another wrenched off the shackles.

The officers recognized him and took him to the fortress. His men were delighted to see him; his fellow-officers gathered about him.

Jilin told them all that had happened to him and ended by saying, "That's how I went home and got married. I wasn't meant to marry, evidently."

And Jilin remained in the army in the Caucasus. It was not until a month later that Kostilin was released, after paying a ransom of five thousand rubles. He was brought back in a half-dead condition.

EMELIAN AND THE EMPTY DRUM

Emelian was a laborer and worked for a master. He was walking through a field one day on his way to work, when a frog hopped in front of him and he just missed crushing it by stepping across. Suddenly some one called to him from behind. He turned, and there stood a beautiful maiden, who said to him, "Why don't you marry, Emelian?"

"How can I, dear maiden? I possess nothing but the clothes I stand up in, and who would have a husband like that?"

"Marry me," the maiden said.

Emelian looked at her in admiration.

"I would with pleasure," he said, "but how should we live?"

"What a thing to trouble about,

EMELIAN AND THE EMPTY DRUM.

indeed!" the maiden said. "One has only to work the more and sleep the less and one can always be clothed and fed."

"Very well; let us marry, then," Emelian said. "Where shall we live?"

"In the town."

Emelian and the maiden went to the town. She took him to a little house on the very edge and they married and set up housekeeping.

One day the King went for a drive beyond the town, and when passing Emelian's gate, Emelian's wife came out to look at him. When the King saw her he marveled.

"What a beauty!" he thought. He stopped the carriage and called her to him.

"Who are you?" he asked.

"Emelian the peasant's wife."

"How came a beauty like you to marry a peasant?" he asked. "You should have been a queen."

"Thank you for your kind words," she said; "a peasant husband is good enough for me."

The King talked to her a while and went on his way. When he returned to the palace Emelian's wife did not go out of his head for a moment. The whole night he could not sleep and kept on thinking how he could take her away from Emelian, but no possible way occurred to him. He summoned his servants and asked them to think of a way.

And the servants said to him, "Get Emelian to come and be a laborer in the palace. We will wear him out with work, then his wife will become a widow and you can have her."

The King followed their advice. He sent a messenger to tell Emelian that he was to come and be a yard-porter in the palace and bring his wife to live with him there.

The messenger came to Emelian and repeated the King's words. And Emelian's wife said to her husband, "It can't be helped; you must go. You can work there in the day and return to me at night."

Emelian went away. When he came to the palace the King's steward said to him, "Why have you come without your wife?"

“Why should I drag her about with me? She has a home of her own.”

In the King’s yard Emelian was given enough work for two men. Emelian set about it, not expecting to get it all finished, but behold! before evening came it was all done. The steward, seeing that he had got through the work, gave him four times as much for the morrow.

Emelian went home. The house was scrubbed and cleaned, the fire lighted, the bread baked, the supper cooked. His wife was sitting at the table sewing, waiting for him. She flew to the door to meet him, then laid the supper and fed him well; afterwards she began to ask him about his work.

“It’s rather bad,” he said; “they set me tasks beyond my strength; they wear me out with too much work.”

“Don’t you think about the work,” she said, “don’t look back to see how much you have done, nor look ahead to see how much there is left. Just keep straight on and all will be done in time.”

Emelian went to bed. In the morning he again set out to the palace. He began his work and did not look round once, and behold! by evening it was all finished; he went home when it was still light.

Again they increased Emelian’s work, but Emelian finished it all in time and went home for the night as usual. A week passed. The King’s servants saw that they could not get the better of Emelian by giving him rough work so they gave him difficult work instead, but even that did not help. No matter what they set him to do—carpentering, stone-cutting, thatching—he got everything done in time and went home for the night to his wife. Another week passed.

The King summoned his servants and said, “Is it for nothing that I keep you? Two weeks have passed and still I do not see the fruits of your work. You promised to wear Emelian out with work and each night from my window I see him going home singing to himself. Are you making sport of me, eh?”

The King’s servants began to excuse themselves. “We are doing the best we can. We thought at first to wear him out with rough work, but you can’t get him anyhow. We set him all kinds of tasks, such as sweeping, but he doesn’t know what it means to be tired. Then we gave him difficult work, thinking that he wouldn’t have brains enough to do it, yet still, we couldn’t get the better of him. No matter what the work, he tackles it and gets it all done in time. He must either be extraordinarily strong or his wife must be a witch. We are sick of him ourselves. We want to set him such a task that he cannot possibly do. We thought of asking him to build a temple in a single day. You must send for him and command him to build a temple opposite the palace in a single day, and if he fails to do it, we can cut off his head for disobedience.”

The King sent for Emelian.

“Build me a new temple in the square opposite the palace; by to-morrow evening it must all be finished. If you do it, I will reward you; if not, I will cut off your head.”

Emelian listened to the King’s words; then turned and went his way home. When he got there he said to his wife, “Make yourself ready, wife; we must run away or else we are both lost.”

“Why,” she said, “have you grown so fainthearted that you want to run away?”

“How can I help it when the King commanded me to build a temple to-morrow before nightfall? If I fail to do it, he will have my head cut off. There is only one way out. We must run away while there is yet time.”

The wife did not approve of his words.

“The King has many soldiers; we shall not be able to escape them. And while you have strength enough you must obey the King’s command.”

“But how can I obey if it’s beyond my strength?”

“My dear, don’t get excited. Have your supper and go to bed; get up early in the morning and you’ll manage in good time.”

Emelian went to bed. His wife woke him in the morning.

“Go,” she said; “make haste and finish the temple. Here are nails and a hammer. There is still a day’s work for you left to do.”

Emelian set out. When he came to the square, there in the middle stood a new temple not quite finished. Emelian set to work to finish it and by the evening it was all done.

The King awoke and looking out of the palace window he saw a new temple in the square. Emelian was busy around, knocking a nail in here and there. The King was not pleased with the temple; he was annoyed that he had no pretext for cutting off Emelian’s head and taking his wife for himself.

Again the King summoned his servants.

“Emelian has done this task too,” he said, “and I have no reason for cutting off his head. This was not difficult enough; we must give him something more difficult still. You decide what it shall be, or else I’ll have your heads cut off first.”

And the servants bethought them to set Emelian to make a river that was to wind round the palace and have ships sailing on it.

The King summoned Emelian and set him the new task.

“If you could make a temple in a single night,” he said, “you can do this too. See that it is all finished by to-morrow, or else I shall cut off your head.”

Emelian’s spirits fell lower than ever and he went home to his wife in a sad mood.

“Why so sad?” asked his wife. “Has the King set you a new task?”

Emelian told her what it was.

“We must run away,” he concluded.

And the wife said, “We cannot escape the soldiers. You must obey.”

“But how can I?”

“My dear, don’t worry. Have your supper and go to bed. Get up early in the morning and all will be ready in time.”

Emelian went to bed. In the morning his wife woke him.

“Go to the palace,” she said; “everything is finished. Only by the harbor, opposite the palace, there is a little mound that wants leveling; take the spade and level it.”

Emelian set out. He came to the town and there around the palace a river flowed with ships sailing on it. Emelian went up to the harbor opposite the palace and he saw an uneven place and began to level it.

The King awoke and looking out of his palace window he saw a river where there was not one before and ships were sailing on it and Emelian was leveling a little mound with his spade. And the King was alarmed. He took no pleasure in the river or the ships, he was only annoyed that he could not cut off Emelian’s head. “There is no task he cannot do,” he thought. “What shall we do now?”

And the King summoned his servants and conferred with them.

“Think of a task,” he said, “that will be beyond Emelian’s strength, for so far he has done everything we have thought of and I cannot take away his wife.”

And the courtiers thought for a long time, then came to the King and said, “You must summon Emelian and say to him, ‘Go to—I don’t know where, and bring me—I don’t know what.’ He

won't be able to escape you then, for wherever he goes you can say it was not the right place and whatever he brings was not the right thing. Then you can cut off his head and take away his wife."

The King was pleased with the idea. He sent for Emelian and said to him, "Go to—I don't know where, and bring me—I don't know what. And if you don't, I'll cut off your head."

Emelian went back to his wife and told her what the King had said. The wife reflected.

"Well," she said. "Be it on the King's own head what his courtiers have taught him. We must act with cunning now."

She sat and thought it over for a while; then said to her husband, "You must go a long way to our old grandmother, a peasant soldier's mother, and ask her to help you. She will give you something which you must take straight to the palace and I will be there already. I cannot escape them now; they will take me by force, but only for a short while. If you do what grandmother tells you, you will soon set me free."

And the wife prepared Emelian for the journey and gave him a bundle and a spindle.

"Give grandmother this spindle," she said; "by this she will know that you are my husband."

And the wife showed him the way. Emelian left the town and saw some soldiers drilling. He stopped and watched them. The soldiers finished their drill and sat down to rest. Emelian approached them and asked, "Can you tell me, mates, how to get to—I don't know where and bring back—I don't know what."

The soldiers were perplexed at his words.

"Who sent you?" they asked.

"The King," he said.

"We too," they said, "since the day we became soldiers want to go to—we don't know where and find—we don't know what, but we've never been able to find it and so cannot help you."

Emelian sat with the soldiers awhile then went on his way. He wandered and wandered till he came to a wood. In the wood was a cottage and in the cottage sat an old woman, a peasant soldier's mother, spinning at her wheel, and she wept as she spun and moistened her fingers with the tears that flowed from her eyes.

"Who are you?" she cried in anger when she saw Emelian.

Emelian gave her the spindle and said that his wife had sent him. The old woman instantly softened and began to ask him questions. And Emelian told her his whole story of how he had married the maiden and gone to live in the town, and how he had been taken to the King's as a yard-porter, and of the work he had done in the palace, and the temple he had built in a night, and the river and ships he had made, and that now the King had sent him to—I don't know where to bring back—I don't know what.

The old woman listened to what he had to say and ceased her weeping. She began to mutter to herself, "The time has come, I see. Very well," she said aloud; "sit down, my son, and have something to eat."

Emelian had something to eat and the old woman said to him, "Here is a ball of thread; roll it before you and follow wherever it leads. You will have to go a long way, to the very sea. When you come to the sea you will see a large town. Ask to be allowed to stay the night in the outermost house and look for what you want there."

"But by what signs shall I know it, grandmother?"

"When you see that which men listen to more than to father or mother, that will be the thing you want. Seize it and take it to the King. He will tell you you haven't brought the right thing,

and you must say to him, 'If it is not the right thing then I must break it.' Then strike this thing; carry it out to the river; break it and throw it into the water. Then you will get back your wife and dry up my tears."

Emelian took leave of the grandmother and went where the ball of thread took him to. The ball rolled and rolled till it brought him to the sea, where there was a large town. Emelian knocked at a house and asked to be allowed to stay the night. The people let him in. He went to bed. In the morning he woke early and heard the father of the house trying to wake his son to chop some wood. The son would not listen to him. "It is early yet," he said, "there's plenty of time."

And he heard the mother near the stove say, "Do go, my son. Your father's bones ache; surely you wouldn't let him go? Get up."

The son only smacked his lips and went to sleep again. He had no sooner fallen asleep than there was a banging and a rumbling in the street. The son jumped up, dressed and ran out. Emelian ran out after him to see what it was that a son obeyed more than father or mother.

When Emelian got outside he saw a man coming up the street carrying some round object on his belly that he was beating with sticks. It was this thing that had made the noise and that the son had obeyed. Emelian approached and examined it. The thing was round like a small tub with skin drawn tightly on either side of it.

"What is this thing called?" he asked.

"A drum," they said.

"Is it empty?"

"Yes," they said.

Emelian wondered and asked the people to give him the thing, but they would not. Emelian gave up asking and followed the drummer. He walked about the whole day and when the drummer went to bed at night, Emelian seized the drum and ran away with it. He ran and ran until he came to his own town. He wanted to give his wife a surprise, but she was not at home. She had been taken to the King the day after Emelian had left.

Emelian went to the palace and asked to be announced as the man who had gone to—I don't know where and brought back—I don't know what. The King was informed of his return and he ordered Emelian to come to him on the morrow. Emelian again demanded to see the King, saying, "I have brought back what I was ordered to; let the King come out to me, or I will go in to him myself."

The King came out.

"Where have you been?" he asked.

Emelian told him.

"That was not the place," he said. "And what have you brought?"

Emelian wanted to show him, but the King would not even look.

"That was not the thing," he said.

"If it is not the thing," Emelian said, "I must break it and let it go to the devil."

Emelian came out of the palace and struck the drum. He had no sooner done so than all the King's troops gathered around him. They saluted Emelian and waited for his commands. From the window of his palace the King called to the troops, forbidding them to follow Emelian, but the troops would not listen to the King and followed Emelian. When the King saw this he ordered Emelian's wife to be given back to him and he begged Emelian to give him the drum.

"I can't," Emelian said. "I was told to break it and throw the bits into the river."

Emelian took the drum to the river and the soldiers followed him. Emelian struck the drum and broke it into little bits which he threw into the water and the troops all scattered and dispersed. And Emelian took his wife back home.

From that day the King left off worrying him and Emelian and his wife lived happily ever after.

Part 4: The Great Bear

A long, long time ago there was a big drought on the earth. All the rivers dried up and the streams and wells, and the trees withered and the bushes and grass, and men and beasts died of thirst.

One night a little girl went out with a pitcher to find some water for her sick mother. She wandered and wandered everywhere, but could find no water, and she grew so tired that she lay down on the grass and fell asleep. When she awoke and took up the pitcher she nearly upset the water it contained. The pitcher was full of clear, fresh water. The little girl was glad and was about to put it to her lips, but she remembered her mother and ran home with the pitcher as fast as she could. She hurried so much that she did not notice a little dog in her path; she stumbled over it and dropped the pitcher. The dog whined pitifully; the little girl seized the pitcher.

She thought the water would have been upset, but the pitcher stood upright and the water was there as before. She poured a little into the palm of her hand and the dog lapped it and was comforted. When the little girl again took up the pitcher, it had turned from common wood to silver. She took the pitcher home and gave it to her mother.

The mother said, "I shall die just the same; you had better drink it," and she handed the pitcher to the child. In that moment the pitcher turned from silver to gold. The little girl could no longer contain herself and was about to put the pitcher to her lips, when the door opened and a stranger entered who begged for a drink. The little girl swallowed her saliva and gave the pitcher to him. And suddenly seven large diamonds sprang out of the pitcher and a stream of clear, fresh water flowed from it. And the seven diamonds began to rise, and they rose higher and higher till they reached the sky and became the Great Bear.

Part 5: Three Questions

It once occurred to a King that if he knew the right moment when to begin on any work and the right kind of people to have or not to have dealings with and the thing to do that was more important than any other thing, he would always be successful.

And he proclaimed throughout his kingdom that he would give a great reward to any one who could tell him what was the right moment for any action, and who were the most essential of all people, and what was the most essential thing of all to do.

Many learned men came to the King and answered his questions in different ways.

In answer to the first question some said that to know the right time for any action, one must draw up a time-table of all the days, months and years and observe it strictly, then one could do everything at the proper time. Others said that it was impossible to decide beforehand the proper time for any action; the only thing one could do was to waste no time in vain amusements, but to pay attention to what was going on around one, and to do the thing that came to hand. A third said that however attentive the King might be to what went on around him, one man alone could not decide the proper time for every action and that he needed a council of wise men to advise him. Still a fourth maintained that as certain action had to be decided at once and could not wait a council the proper thing to do was to find out beforehand what was going to happen so as to be always prepared. But as only magicians knew what was going to happen, then it followed that in order to find out the proper time for any action one must consult the magicians.

The second question, too, was answered in various ways. Some said that the most essential people to the King were his helpers and ministers; others said priests; still others that the most essential people to the King were doctors; a fourth party said that the most essential people to the King were soldiers.

To the third question about the most important occupation, some declared it was science, others, the art of war, and others, divine worship.

The answers being different, the King agreed with none of them and gave no man the promised reward. But still wishing to find out the answers to his questions, he resolved to consult a hermit who was famous throughout the land for his wisdom.

The hermit lived in a wood which he never left, and received none but common folk. For this reason the King put on simple garments, and, dismissing his bodyguard before he reached the hermit's cell, he climbed down from his horse and went the rest of the way alone and on foot.

He found the hermit digging a bed in front of the hermitage. When the hermit saw the King, he greeted him and went on with his digging. He was frail and thin and each time he dug his spade into the ground and turned over a little soil, he gasped for breath.

The King approached him and said, "I have come, oh, wise hermit, to ask you to give me the answers to these three questions—what hour must one remember and not allow to slip by, so as not to regret it afterwards? What people are the most essential and with whom should one or should one not have dealings? What things are the most essential to do and which of those things must one do first of all?"

The hermit heard what the King had to say, but made no reply. He spat on his hand and went on with his digging.

“You are tired,” the King said; “give me the spade and I will do the digging for you.”

The King took the spade and began to dig, but after a while he stopped and repeated his question. The hermit made no reply, but stretched out his hand for the spade.

“You rest now,” he said, “and I will work.”

But the King would not give up the spade and went on with the digging. One hour passed and another; the sun began to set behind the trees when the King stuck his spade into the ground and said, “I came to you, wise man, to find the answers to my three questions. If you cannot answer them, then tell me and I will go my way home.”

“Some one is running hither,” the hermit said. “Let us see who it is.”

The King turned and saw a bearded man running towards them. The man’s hands were clasped over his stomach and the blood flowed from beneath them. He fell at the King’s feet and lay motionless, rolling his eyes and moaning faintly.

The King and the hermit unfastened the man’s clothes. He had a large wound in his stomach. The King bathed it as well as he could with his handkerchief and bandaged it with the hermit’s towel. The blood did not cease to flow, and several times the King had to remove the bandages, soaked with warm blood, and rebathe and rebandage the wound.

When the blood ceased to flow, the wounded man came to himself and asked for some water. The King brought some fresh water and raised it to the wounded man’s lips.

The sun had quite set meanwhile and it began to get cold. The King, with the hermit’s help, carried the wounded man into the cell and put him on the bed. The wounded man shut his eyes and went to sleep. The King was so tired with the walk and the work that he curled up by the door and fell into a sound sleep. He slept through the whole mild summer night, and when he awoke in the morning he could not make out where he was and who was the strange bearded man staring at him from the bed with glistening eyes.

“Forgive me,” the bearded man said in a faint voice, when he saw that the King was awake and observing him.

“I don’t know you and have nothing to forgive you for,” the King said.

“You don’t know me, but I know you. I am your enemy who vowed to be revenged on you for having executed my brother and taken away my property: I knew that you went alone to the hermit and resolved to kill you on your way back. But the day passed and you did not come. I lost patience and came out to find you, when I stumbled upon your bodyguard. They recognized me and wounded me. I escaped from them, but would have died from loss of blood had you not bound my wound. I wanted to kill you and you saved my life. If I continue to live I will serve you as your most faithful slave should you desire it, and I will order my sons to do likewise. Forgive me.”

The King was very glad that he had been able to make peace with his enemy so easily, and not only forgave him but promised to return his property and to send him his own servants and physician.

Taking leave of the wounded man the King came out of the cell and sought for the hermit with his eyes. Before going away he wanted to ask him for the last time to answer his three questions. The hermit was on his knees by the beds they had dug yesterday, sowing vegetable seeds.

The King approached him and said, “For the last time, wise man, I ask you to answer my questions.”

“But they are answered already,” the hermit said, squatting on his emaciated legs and looking at up the King, who stood before him.

“How?” the King asked.

“Don’t you see?” the hermit began; “had you not pitied my weakness yesterday and dug these beds for me and gone back alone, the man would have attacked you and you would have regretted that you had not stayed with me. The important hour at the time was when you dug these beds, and I was the most essential person to you, and the most essential act was to do me a kindness. And later, when the man ran up, the most important hour was when you looked after him, for, had you not bandaged his wound, he would have died without making his peace with you. He was the most essential man to you at that time, and what you did for him was the most essential thing to be done. Always bear in mind that the most important time is *now*, for it is the only time we have any power over ourselves; the most essential man is the one with whom you happen to be at the moment, because you can never be sure whether you will ever have relations with any one else, and the most essential thing to do is a kindness to that man, for it was for this purpose we were sent into the world.”

Part 6: The Godson

I

A son was born to a poor peasant. He rejoiced and went to a neighbor to ask him to stand as godfather to the boy. The neighbor refused. He did not want to be godfather to a poor man's son. So the peasant went to another neighbor and he, too, refused. He walked from house to house, but could find no one who would be godfather to his son, so he set out to another village. On his way he met a stranger, who stopped him and said, "Good day, peasant; where are you going to?"

"God has given me a child," the peasant said, "to gladden my sight in my youth, to comfort me in my old age and to pray for my soul when I die. No one in our village will be godfather to him, so I am going to seek one elsewhere."

"Let me be his godfather," the stranger said.

The peasant rejoiced. He thanked the stranger and said, "But whom shall I ask to be his godmother?"

"Go into the town," the stranger said; "in the square you will see a stone house with shop windows; go in and ask the merchant to let his daughter stand as godmother to your son."

The peasant was doubtful.

"But how can I ask a rich merchant? He will be too proud to let his daughter come to a poor man like me."

"That won't be your fault; go and ask him. Have everything ready by the morning and I'll come to the christening."

The peasant went home, then drove into the town to the merchant. He had no sooner stopped in the yard than the merchant came out.

"What do you want?" he asked.

"God has given me a child," the peasant said, "to gladden my sight in my youth, to comfort me in my old age and to pray for my soul when I die. Will you be kind enough to let your daughter come and be godmother to the child?"

"When is the christening?"

"To-morrow morning."

"Very well; go, in God's name. To-morrow my daughter will be at the church."

The next day the godmother and godfather came; the child was christened, but directly after the christening the godfather disappeared. No one knew who he was and no one saw him from that day.

II

The child grew up to the parents' great joy; and he was strong and industrious and clever and humble. When he was ten years old the parents sent him to school, and what it took others five

years to learn the boy learned in one. And there was no one in the village who could teach him more.

Easter came round and the boy went to his godmother to give her the Easter greeting. When he returned home he said, "Father and mother, where does my godfather live? I should like to give him the Easter greeting, too."

And the father said, "We don't know where your godfather lives, dear son. We, too, have worried over that. We have not seen him since you were christened. We have not heard of him and don't know where he lives, nor whether he is alive at all."

The boy bowed to his father and mother.

"Let me go," he said, "to seek my godfather. I want to find him and give him the Easter greeting."

The father and mother gave their consent and the boy set out to find his godfather.

III

The boy left the house and set out on his way. About midday he met a stranger and the stranger stopped and said, "Good day to you, boy. Where are you going?"

And the boy said, "I went to my godmother to give her the Easter greeting and when I returned home I asked my parents where my godfather lived, because I wanted to give him the greeting too, but my parents said, 'We don't know where your godfather lives, dear son. We have not heard of him since you were christened and we don't know anything about him, or whether he is alive at all.' And I wanted to see my godfather, so I am going to find him."

"I am your godfather," the stranger said.

The boy rejoiced and gave him the Easter greeting.

"Where are you going to, godfather? If you are going in our direction come in to us, or if you are going home, may I come with you?"

And the stranger said, "I have no time to come to you now, because I have some business in the villages. I shall not be home until to-morrow, then you can come to me if you like."

"But how shall I find you, godfather?"

"Walk straight towards the east until you come to a wood in the midst of which you will find a clearing. Sit down to rest in that clearing and look about you to see what is happening. When you come out of the wood you will see a garden and in the garden is a house with a golden roof. That is my house. Go in at the gate; I will meet you there myself."

Saying these words the godfather vanished from the godson's sight.

IV

The boy followed the godfather's directions. He wandered and wandered till he came to a wood and found the clearing, and in the midst of the clearing stood a pine tree to a branch of which a heavy block of oak was attached with string, and beneath the block was a trough of honey. As the boy was wondering why the honey and the block were there, a crackling was heard among the trees and out came a family of bears. The mother came in front and a yearling and some cubs followed behind. The mother, sniffing the air, went straight to the trough, the cubs following. She thrust her muzzle into the honey and called to the cubs to do the same. They scampered up and thrust in their muzzles. The block swung back a little and returning, hit against the cubs. When

the mother saw this, she shoved the block away with her paw. The block swung back further, and returning more forcibly struck one cub on the back, another on the head. The cubs jumped away, howling with pain. The mother bear growled, and seizing the block in her fore-paws, flung it away from her violently. The block flew up high. The yearling ran up to the trough, thrust his muzzle into the honey, the other cubs followed him, but no sooner had they got there than the block swung back, struck the yearling on the head and killed him. The mother-bear growled more angrily as she seized the block and flung it away with all her might. The block flew higher than the branch, the string it was tied to even slackened; the mother-bear and the cubs came up to the trough; the block flew higher and higher, then stopped and began to descend; the lower it got the swifter became its course. It crashed down on the mother-bear's head. She fell over; her legs twitched and she died. The cubs ran away into the wood.

V

The boy wondered and went on further. He came to a large garden and in the garden was a high house with a golden roof. At the gate stood his godfather, smiling. He greeted his godson, made him come inside the gate and took him round the garden. He had never even dreamed of such beauty and joy as there was in that garden.

The godfather took the boy into the house and he found that more wonderful still. The godfather showed him all the rooms—one more beautiful than the other—then he brought him to a sealed door. “Do you see this door?” he asked. “It is not locked, only sealed. It can be opened, but I forbid you to do it. You can live here and go where you like and do what you like; taste of every pleasure; I forbid you only one thing—to pass that door. But if it should happen that you do go in, remember what you saw in the wood.” With these words the godfather went away, and the godson was left alone. His life was so full of pleasure and such a happy one that when he had been there thirty years it seemed to him no more than three hours. Thus the thirty years passed and the godson came to the sealed door, thinking, “I wonder why my godfather forbade me to go into this room? I will go in and see what is there.”

He pushed the door; the seal gave way and the door opened. The godson went in and saw that the room was large and more beautiful than all the others, and in the middle of it stood a golden throne. The godson wandered and wandered over the room; then he stopped by the throne, mounted the steps and sat down. He saw a scepter by the throne and he took it up in his hand. He had no sooner touched the scepter than the walls of the room rolled asunder. The godson looked about and saw the whole world and everything people were doing in it. Straight before him was the sea and ships sailing on it. To the right were foreign lands, where heathens lived. To the left were Christians, but not Russians. On the fourth side were our own Russian people.

“I will look and see what is happening at home,” he said. “I wonder if the corn is good this year?”

He looked at his father's fields and saw the sheaves standing in them. He began to count the sheaves to see if the harvest had been good, when he saw a cart coming over the field with a peasant sitting in it. He looked closer and saw that it was Vasily, a thief. Vasily stopped by the sheaves and began putting them into the cart. The godson could not endure this and cried aloud, “Father, they are stealing your sheaves!”

The father awoke in the night. "I dreamed that some one was stealing my sheaves," he said; "I will go and see." He got upon his horse and rode out.

When he got to the fields he saw Vasily and called aloud for help. Some peasants came up. Vasily was beaten, bound and taken to prison.

The godson then looked towards the town where his godmother lived and saw that she had married a merchant. She was lying in bed and her husband got up to leave her to go to another woman. And the godson cried aloud to his godmother, "Get up! Your husband is going to do something wicked!"

The godmother jumped up, dressed and set out to find her husband. She brought him to shame, beat the other woman and would not take her husband back again.

The godson looked again towards his home and saw his mother lying in the house and that a robber had stolen in and was breaking open a trunk. The mother awoke and cried out in terror. The robber raised his ax, and was about to kill her, but the godson could endure no more; he thrust the scepter straight into the robber's temple and killed him on the spot.

VI

He had no sooner slain the robber than the walls rose up again and the room became as before.

The door opened and the godfather entered. He approached the godson, took him by the hand, led him from the throne and said, "You did not obey my commands. You did one wrong thing in opening the forbidden door, another when you mounted the throne and took my scepter into your hand, and a third wrong, which has added to the evil in the world. Had you sat on the throne an hour longer, you would have ruined half mankind."

And the godfather once more led the godson up to the throne and he took the scepter in his hand and the walls rolled asunder.

And the godfather said, "See what you have done to your father. Vasily sat in prison for a year and learned every kind of wickedness and came out completely corrupted. See, he has driven off two of your father's horses and is now setting fire to his barns. This is what you have done to your father."

As soon as the godson saw his father's barns burst into flame the godfather hid the view from his sight and bade him look in another direction.

"See," he said; "it is now a year since your godmother's husband left her, and he goes after other women and his wife has taken to drink and his former mistress has fallen to still lower depths. This is what you have done to your godmother."

This sight, too, he hid from the godson's gaze and bade him look towards his own home. His mother was weeping and saying, "It would have been better if the robber had killed me than that I should have so many sins on my soul."

"This is what you have done to your mother."

This sight, too, the godfather shut out and bade the godson look below. And he saw two keepers guarding the robber in a dungeon.

And the godfather said, "This man has killed nine people. He should have atoned for his sins himself, but in killing him you have taken them upon your own soul. Now you must answer for all his sins. This is what you have done to yourself. When the mother-bear first pushed the block aside she merely disturbed her cubs; when she pushed it a second time, she killed her yearling;

when she pushed it a third time, she was killed herself. You have done exactly the same. I give you a term of thirty years. Go into the world and atone for the robber's sins; if you fail to do so, you will have to take his place."

"But how shall I atone for his sins?" the godson asked.

And the godfather said, "When you have rid the world of as much evil as you brought into it, then you will have atoned for your own and the robber's sins."

And the godson asked, "How can I rid the world of evil?"

And the godfather said, "Walk straight towards the east until you come to some fields on which you will find some people. Take note of what they are doing and teach them what you know, then go on further, observing everything on the way. On the fourth day you will come to a wood in which you will find a cell, and in this cell a hermit lives. Tell this hermit all that has happened and he will instruct you in what you are to do. When you have done all that the hermit has told you, you will have atoned for your own and the robber's sins."

With these words the godfather put the godson out at the gate.

VII

And the godson set out, thinking as he walked, "How can I rid the world of evil? People rid the world of evil by banishing evil men or putting them in prison or executing them. But how can I rid the world of evil without taking other men's sins upon myself?" And the godson wondered and wondered, but could come to no decision.

He wandered and wandered till he came to a field on which tall rich corn was growing, ready to be harvested. And the godson saw a calf that had strayed in among the corn and he saw men on horseback chasing the calf this way and that and trampling down the corn. Each time the calf was about to come out of the corn some one rode up and the calf got frightened and ran back again, the men after it. In the road stood a woman, crying, "They will chase my calf to death!"

And the godson said to the men, "What are you doing? Come out of the corn and let the woman call to her calf."

The men did so. The woman came up to the edge of the field and called to the calf, who pricked up its ears, listening awhile, then it ran towards her and buried its nose in her skirts, nearly knocking her down. The men were glad, and the woman was glad, and the calf, too, was glad.

The godson went on his way thinking, "I see that evil breeds evil. The more people try to drive away evil, the more the evil grows, which shows that it is impossible to drive out evil by evil. But how can one drive it out? I don't know. It is well that the calf obeyed its mistress; if it had not done so, how should we have got it out of the corn?"

And the godson wondered and wondered, but could come to no decision and went on further.

VIII

He wandered and wandered till he came to a village where he asked to be allowed to stay the night at the first house. The mistress let him in. Besides herself no one was in the house. The mistress was busy cleaning.

When the godson came in he climbed on to the stove and began watching to see what the mistress was doing. She had finished cleaning the floor and was scrubbing the table. She scrubbed it and wiped it with a dirty cloth. She rubbed the cloth one way, but the table would not come clean. The cloth left streaks of dirt. She rubbed it the other way—the first streaks came out, new ones were made. She rubbed it lengthwise again and the same thing happened. The dirty cloth rubbed out one streak of dirt and left another. The godson watched for some time and then said, “What are you doing, mistress?”

“Don’t you see that I’m cleaning the house for the festival? I can’t get the table clean, anyhow. The dirt will not come off and I’m quite worn out.”

“You should rinse out the cloth, then wipe the table.”

The mistress did as he told her and the table came clean. “Thank you,” she said, “for your lesson.”

In the morning the godson took leave of the mistress and went on further. He wandered and wandered till he came to a wood where he saw some peasants making hoops. He approached them and saw them struggling and struggling, but they could not bend the wood. He looked closer and saw that the block on which they were working was not firmly fixed. And the godson said, “What are you doing, brothers?”

“Making hoops, as you see. We have steamed the wood twice, yet cannot bend it. We are quite worn out.”

“You should fix the block more firmly, mates. It moves round with you as it is.”

The peasants did so and their work went smoothly afterwards.

The godson stayed the night with them, then went on his way. He walked the whole of that day and the night and just before daybreak he came upon some shepherds encamped for the night, and joined them. They had settled their cattle and were trying to light a fire. They took some dry twigs and lighted them, and not giving them time to burn up, they put some damp brushwood on top and smothered the fire. The shepherds took some more dry twigs and lighted them, and again they smothered the fire with damp brushwood. For a long time they struggled, but could get no fire.

And the godson said, “Don’t be in such a hurry to put on the brushwood, but wait until the twigs have caught well. When the fire gets hot then you can put on the brushwood.”

The shepherds did as he told them. When the twigs had caught well, they put on the brushwood, and in a few minutes they had a blazing fire.

The godson stayed with them for a while then went on further. He wondered what these three things he had seen might mean, but could not understand, nor see the reason of them.

IX

The godson wandered and wandered until nightfall, when he came to a wood, and in the wood was a cell. He went up to the cell and knocked at the door.

A voice from within asked, “Who is that?”

“A great sinner. I have come to atone for the sins of another.”

And the hermit asked, “What are these sins you have taken upon yourself?”

And the godson told him everything about his godfather and the mother-bear and the cubs and about the throne in the sealed room, and about his godfather’s commands, and about the

peasants who had trampled the corn in the field, and the calf that had come to its mistress at her call.

"I know now," he said, "that you cannot drive out evil by evil, but I don't know how it can be driven out and I want you to tell me."

And the hermit said, "Tell me what else you have seen on the way?"

The godson told him about the woman and how she had tried to clean the table, and of the peasants who had tried to make the hoops, and the shepherds who had tried to light a fire.

The hermit waited until he had finished, then he went into his cell and brought out a jagged ax.

"Come," he said.

The hermit walked away from the cell and pointed to a tree. "Cut it down," he said.

The godson felled it.

"Chop it into three parts."

The godson chopped it into three parts. The hermit again went into his cell and brought out a light.

"Set fire to those three logs," he said.

The godson made a fire and burnt the three logs till only three pieces of charcoal were left.

"Now plant them half into the ground, like this."

The godson planted them.

"Do you see a river there by that hill? Fetch some water in your mouth and water them. Water this one in the way you taught the woman to clean, this one in the way you taught the hoopers, and this one in the way you taught the shepherds. When the three pieces of charcoal grow into apple-trees you will know how to rid the world of evil, and will then have atoned for your sins."

With these words the hermit went into his cell. The godson pondered and pondered and could not understand what the hermit had said, but he did what the hermit had told him.

X

The godson went to the river, filled his mouth with water and watered one piece of charcoal; then he went again and again, until he had watered the other two. The godson was tired and hungry. He went to the hermit's cell to ask for some food. When he opened the door there was the hermit lying dead on a bench. The godson looked about the cell and found some rusks, which he ate; then he discovered a spade and went out to dig a grave for the old man. By night he carried water to water the pieces of charcoal, and by day he dug the grave. He had no sooner finished it and was about to bury the hermit, when some people came from the village to bring the hermit food.

When the people heard that the hermit was dead they asked the godson to take his place. They buried the hermit, left the bread with the godson and went away, promising to bring him more food later on.

And the godson fell into the hermit's place and he lived and nourished himself with the food people brought him, and went on watering the pieces of charcoal as the hermit had bidden him do.

The godson lived thus for a year and many people began to visit him. He grew famous throughout the country as a saint who saved his soul by carrying water in his mouth from beneath a hill,

and watering stumps of charcoal. People flocked to him. Rich merchants brought him gifts, but the godson used nothing but what he needed, giving the rest to the poor.

And the godson began to live thus—for half the day he carried water in his mouth to water the pieces of charcoal, for the other half he rested and received people.

And the godson came to think that he had been told to live thus and that in this way he would atone for his sins.

The godson lived thus for another year, not missing a single day for watering the charcoal, yet not a single piece had begun to sprout.

One day when he was sitting in his cell he heard a horseman gallop past, singing to himself. The hermit came out to see what manner of man he was. And he saw that the man was young and strong and was dressed in fine clothes and seated on a spirited horse.

The godson stopped him and asked him who he was and where he was going. The man pulled up.

“I am a robber,” he said; “I roam the highway and kill whomever I have a mind to. The more men I kill the merrier are my songs.”

The godson was horrified and thought, “How can one destroy evil in such a man? It is well to talk to the people who come to me; they repent of their own accord, but this man glories in the evil he does.” The godson said nothing to him and turned away, thinking, “What shall I do? If this robber makes up his mind to stay here, he will scare away my people and no one will come to see me. They will lose some good thereby, and I shall have nothing to live on.”

And the godson stopped and said to the robber, “People come to me not to boast of the evil they do, but to repent and pray for their sins to be forgiven them. You repent likewise, if you have the fear of God in your heart, and if you do not seek repentance, go away from this place and do not come back again, so as not to hinder me or scare away my people. If you fail to listen to my words God will punish you.”

The robber laughed.

“I am not afraid of your God and I won’t listen to you. You are not my master to order me about. You live by your piety, I by my robbery. We must all live. Teach the women who come to you, but let me alone. Since you have dared to mention the name of God to me I will kill two extra people to-morrow. I would kill you now, only I don’t want to soil my hands, but take care never to cross my path again.”

The robber threatened him thus and rode away. He did not come again and the godson lived in the hermitage as before for another eight years.

XI

One night the godson set out to water his pieces of charcoal and when he had finished he sat down in his cell to rest. He peered along the path now and again to see if any visitor was coming, but no one came that day. The godson sat alone until evening and he grew lonesome and weary and began to think about his life. He recollected how the robber had reproached him for living by his piety. He began to look back upon his life. “I am not living as the hermit told me,” he thought. “The hermit imposed a penance on me and I have used it as a means of earning my bread and even gaining fame thereby. I have been so led astray over it that I am even dull when people do not come to see me, and when they do come, I rejoice when they praise my saintliness. This is

not the way one must live. I have been blinded by fame. Not only have I not atoned for past sins but have taken new ones upon myself. I will go away to another place far into the wood, where the people will not find me, and I will live alone there and atone for my past sins, taking care not to commit new ones.”

Thinking thus the godson took a bag of rusks and a spade, and he left the cell and set out down a ravine to build himself a mud hut in the thicket and disappear from people’s sight.

The godson was walking along with his bag and spade when the robber jumped out upon him. The godson was afraid and would have run away, but the robber stopped him.

“Where are you going?” he asked.

The godson told him that he wanted to go away from people and bury himself in a wild part of the wood where no one would come to him.

The robber wondered.

“But what will you live on if no one comes to see you?”

The godson had not thought of that, but now the robber had mentioned it he remembered that he had to eat.

“On what God gives,” he said.

The robber made no reply and went his way.

“Why didn’t I say anything to him about his life?” the godson thought. “He may be repentant now. He seemed softer of manner and did not threaten to kill me to-day.” And he called to the robber saying, “It is time you repented. You cannot get away from God.”

The robber turned his horse round, seized a knife from his girdle and brandished it aloft. The godson took fright and ran away into the wood.

The robber did not trouble to go after him, he merely said, “I have let you off twice, old man; take care not to come my way a third time, or I’ll kill you.”

With these words the robber rode away.

That evening the godson went to water his pieces of charcoal and behold! one of the pieces had sprouted! A young apple-tree had shot forth.

XII

The godson hid himself from the eyes of men and began to live alone. His rusks were all gone. “I must hunt for some roots,” he thought, but he had no sooner gone out than he saw a bag of rusks hanging on the branch of a tree. He took the bag and began to eat.

When that was all gone he found another bag in the very same place. Thus the godson lived. He had only one care—his fear of the robber. When he heard him coming he hid himself, thinking, “If he kills me I shall not be able to atone for my sins.”

Another ten years passed. One apple-tree grew up, the other pieces of charcoal remained as they were before.

One day the godson went out early to do his watering. He moistened the soil around the stumps until he was tired and sat down to rest. As he rested he thought, “I have sinned greatly in fearing death. If it be God’s will I will atone for my sins by death even.”

The thought had no sooner occurred to him than he heard the robber come along cursing at some one. And the godson thought, “Besides God no one can do me either good or evil.” And he went to meet the robber. He saw that the robber was not alone. On the saddle, behind him,

was another man, and this man's hands were bound and his mouth was gagged. The man made no sound and the robber kept on abusing him. The godson approached the robber and stopped before his horse.

"Where are you taking this man to?" he asked.

"Into the wood. He is a merchant's son and won't tell me where his father's money is hidden. I will keep him prisoner until he tells me."

The robber was about to go on, but the godson would not let him, seizing the horse by the bridle.

"Let the man go," he said.

The robber grew angry and raised his arm to strike him.

"Do you want to share his fate? I told you I would kill you. Let go!"

The godson was not afraid.

"I won't let go," he said. "I'm not afraid of you; I only fear God. He tells me not to let go. Set the man free."

The robber frowned; he seized the knife from his girdle, cut the cords and released the merchant's son.

"Be gone, the two of you!" he said, "and don't come across my path a second time!"

The merchant's son fled. The robber was about to go, but the godson stopped him and once more beseeched him to abandon his wicked life. The robber stood and listened without saying a word, then turned and rode away.

In the morning the godson went to water his pieces of charcoal. Behold! another one had burst forth, another apple-tree had grown!

XIII

Ten more years passed. The godson lived desiring nothing, afraid of nothing, and a feeling of gladness always at his heart. And he thought one day, "What blessings the good Lord gives us! And we torment ourselves for nothing. People should live in joy and happiness." And he remembered the evil men suffered and how they tormented themselves and he grew to pity them. "It is in vain that I live as I do," he thought; "I must go among people and tell them what I know."

The thought had no sooner occurred to him than he heard the robber come along, but he took no notice of him, thinking, "What is the use of talking to that man? He will not understand."

This was his first thought, but in a little while he repented of it and went out in the road. The robber sat on his horse, frowning and looking at the ground. When the godson saw him, a feeling of pity came over him; he rushed up and seized the robber's knee.

"My dear brother," he said, "take pity on your soul! Don't you know that the spirit of God is in you? You torment yourself and others, and as time goes on your torments will grow worse, and God loves you and wants to heap His blessings upon you. Don't destroy yourself, brother; change your way of life."

The robber frowned and turned away. "Leave me alone," he said.

The godson clutched the robber's knee still firmer and the tears stood in his eyes. The robber raised his eyes to his, gazed into them for a long time, then climbed down from his horse and fell on his knees before the godson.

“You have subdued me, old man,” he said. “For twenty years I struggled against you, but you have won. I am powerless before you. Do what you want with me. When you spoke to me the first time, I grew more hardened still. I only began to take your words to heart when you went away from people and I knew that you needed nothing from them. It was then I began to supply you with rusks.”

And the godson recollected that the woman had only managed to clean the table after she had washed the cloth. When he ceased to care for himself and cleansed his heart, he was able to cleanse the hearts of others.

And the robber continued, “And my heart turned when I saw that you had no fear of death.”

And the godson remembered that the hoops began to bend the hoops only when they had made the block firm. When he ceased to fear death and established his life firmly in God he had been able to subdue this man’s wild heart.

And the robber said, “And the heart in me melted altogether when I saw that you pitied me and wept before me.”

The godson rejoiced. He led the robber to the place where his pieces of charcoal were planted and behold! a third apple-tree had grown. And the godson remembered that when the shepherds had allowed their dry twigs to catch well, a big fire blazed up. It was only when his heart grew warm that he had been able to kindle the heart of another.

And the godson rejoiced that he had now atoned for all his sins.

He told the robber everything and died. The robber buried him and began to live as the godson had told him, and to teach other men what he knew.

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