

NEGLECT THE FIRE
And You Cannot Put It Out

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

There lived in a village a peasant, by the name of Ivdn Shcherbakov. He lived well; he was himself in full strength, the first worker in the village, and he had three sons, – all of them on their legs: one was married, the second about to marry, and the third a grown-up lad who drove horses and was beginning to plough. Ivdn's wife was a clever woman and a good housekeeper, and his daughter-in-law turned out to be a quiet person and a good worker. There was no reason why Ivdn should not have led a good life with his family. The only idle mouth on the farm was his old, ailing father (he had been lying on the oven for seven years, sick with the asthma).

Ivdn had plenty of everything, three horses and a colt, a cow and a yearling calf, and fifteen sheep. The women made the shoes and the clothes for the men and worked in the field; the men worked on their farms.

They had enough grain until the next crop. From the oats they paid their taxes and met all their obligations. An easy life, indeed, might Ivan have led with his children. But next door to him he had a neighbour, Gavrflo the Lamé, Gordyfy Ivanov's son. And there was an enmity between him and Ivdn.

So long as old man Gordydy was alive, and Ivdn's father ran the farm, the peasants lived in neighbourly fashion. If the women needed a sieve or a vat, or the men had to get another axle or wheel for a time, they sent from one farm to another, and helped each other out in a neighbourly way. If a calf ran into the yard of the threshing-floor, they drove it out and only said: "Don't let it out, for the heap has not yet been put away." And it was not their custom to put it away and lock it up in the threshing-floor or in a shed, or to revile each other.

Thus they lived so long as the old men were alive. But when the young people began to farm, things went quite differently.

The whole tiling began from a mere nothing. A hen of Ivan's daughter-in-law started laying early. The young woman gathered the eggs for Passion week. Every day she went to the shed to pick up an egg from the wagon-box. But, it seems, the boys scared away the hen, and she flew across the wicker fence to the neighbour's yard, and laid an egg there. The young woman heard the hen cackle, so she thought:

"I have no time now, I must get the hut in order for the holiday; I will go there later to get it."

In the evening she went to the wagon-box under the shed, to fetch

the egg, but it was not there. The young woman asked her mother-in-law and her brother-in-law if they had taken it; but Taraska, her youngest brother-in-law, said:

" Your hen laid an egg in the neighbour's yard, for she cackled there and flew out from that yard."

The young woman went to look at her hen, and found her sitting with the cock on the perch ; she had closed her eyes and was getting ready to sleep. The woman would have liked to ask her where she laid the egg, but she would not have given her any answer. Then the young woman went to her neighbour. The old woman met her.

" What do you want, young woman ?"

« Granny, my hen has been in your yard to-day, – did she not lay an egg there ? "

" I have not set eyes on her. We have hens of our own, thank God, and they have been laying for quite awhile. We have gathered our own eggs, and we do not need other people's eggs. Young woman, we do not go to other people's yards to gather eggs."

The young woman was offended. She said a word too much, the neighbour answered with two, and the women began to scold. Ivdn's wife was carrying water, and she, too, took a hand in it. Gavnlo's wife jumped out, and began to rebuke her neighbour. She reminded her of things that had happened, and mentioned things that had not happened at all. And the tongue-lashing began. All yelled together, trying to say two words at the same time. And they used bad words.

" You are such and such a one ; you are a thief, a sneak; you are simply starving your father-in-law; you are a tramp."

" And you are a beggar: you have torn my sieve; and you have our shoulder-yoke. Give me back the yoke! "

They grabbed the yoke, spilled the water, tore off their kerchiefs, and began to fight. Gavrflo drove up from the field, and he took his wife's part. Ivdn jumped out with his son, and they all fell in a heap. Ivdn was a sturdy peasant, and he scattered them all. He yanked out a piece of Gavnlo's beard. People ran up to them, and they were with difficulty pulled apart.

That's the way it began.

Gavrflo wrapped the piece of his beard in a petition and went to the township court to enter a complaint.

" I did not raise a beard for freckled Ivan to pull it out."

In the meantime his wife bragged to the neighbours that they would now get Ivan sentenced and would have him sent to Siberia, and the feud began.

The old man on the oven tried to persuade them to stop the first day they started to quarrel, but the young people paid no attention to him. He said to them:

" Children, you are doing a foolish thing, and for a foolish thing have you started a feud. Think of it, – the whole affair began from an egg. The children picked up the egg, – well, God be with them! There is no

profit in one egg. With God's aid there will be enough for everybody. Well, you have said a bad word, so correct it, show her how to use better words! Well, you

have had a fight, – you are sinful people. That, too,

happens. Well, go and make peace, and let there be an

end to it! If you keep it up, it will only be worse."

The young people did not obey the old man; they thought that he was not using sense, but just babbling in old man's fashion.

Ivdn did not give in to his neighbour.

" I did not pull his beard," he said. " He jerked it out himself; but his son has yanked off my shirt-button and has torn my whole shirt. Here it is."

And Ivan, too, took the matter to court. The case was heard before a justice of the peace, and in the township court. While they were suing each other, Gavrflo lost a coupling-pin out of his cart. The women in Gavriilo's house accused Ivan's son of having taken it.

" We saw him in the night," they said, " making his way under the window to the cart, and the gossip says that he went to the dram-shop and asked the dram-shopkeeper to take the pin from him."

Again they started a suit. But at home not a day passed but that they quarrelled, nay, even fought. The children cursed one another, – they learned this from their elders, – and when the women met at the brook, they did not so much strike the beetles as let loose then-tongues, and to no good.

At first the men just accused each other, but later they began to snatch up things that lay about loose. And they taught the women and children to do the same. Their life grew worse and worse. Ivan Shcherbakdv and Gavrflo the Lamé kept suing one another at the meetings of the Commune, and in the township court, and before the justices of the peace, and all the judges were tired of them. Now Gavrflo got Ivan to pay a fine, or he sent him to the lockup, and now Ivan did the same to Gav-rilo. And the more they did each other harm, the more furious they grew. When dogs make for each other, they get more enraged the more they fight. You strike a dog from

behind, and he thinks that the other dog is biting him, and gets only madder than ever. Just so it was with these peasants: when they went to court, one or the other was punished, either by being made to pay a fine, or by being thrown into prison, and that only made their rage flame up more and more toward one another.

" Just wait, I will pay you back for it!"

And thus it went on for six years. The old man on the oven kept repeating the same advice. He would say to them:

" What are you doing, my children ? Drop all your accounts, stick to your work, don't show such malice toward others, and it will be better. The more you rage, the worse will it be."

They paid no attention to the old man.

In the seventh year the matter went so far that Ivdn's daughter-in-law at a wedding accused Gavriilo before people of having been caught with horses. Gavriilo was drunk, and he did not hold back his anger, but struck the woman and hurt her so that she lay sick for a week, for she was heavy with child. Iv6n rejoiced, and went with a petition to the prosecuting magistrate.

" Now," he thought, " I will get even with my neighbour : he shall not escape the penitentiary or Siberia."

Again Ivdn was not successful. The magistrate did not accept the petition: they examined the woman, but she was up and there were no marks upon her. Ivan went to the justice of the peace; but the justice sent the case to the township court. Ivan bestirred himself in the township office, filled the elder and the scribe with half a bucket of sweet liquor, and got them to sentence Gavriilo to having his back flogged. The sentence was read to Gavriilo in the court.

The scribe read:

" The court has decreed that the peasant Gavriilo Gor-dydy receive twenty blows with rods in the township office."

Ivan listened to the decree and looked at Gavriilo, wondering what he would do. Gavriilo, too, heard the decree, and he became as pale as a sheet, and turned away and walked out into the vestibule. Ivan followed him out and wanted to go to his horse, when he heard Gavriilo say:

"Very well, he will beat my back, and it will burn, but something of his may burn worse than that."

When Ivan heard these words, he returned to the judges.

" Righteous judges ! He threatens to set fire to my house. Listen, he said it in the presence of witnesses."

Gavrilo was called in.

" Is it true that you said so ?"

" I said nothing. Flog me, if you please. Evidently I must suffer for my truth, while he may do anything he wishes."

Gavrilo wanted to say something more, but his lips and cheeks trembled. He turned away toward the wall. Even the judges were frightened as they looked at him.

" It would not be surprising," they thought, " if he actually did some harm to his neighbour or to himself."

And an old judge said to them:

" Listen, friends! You had better make peace with each other. Did you do right, brother Gavrilo, to strike a pregnant woman ? Luckily God was merciful to you, but think what crime you might have committed! Is that good ? Confess your guilt and beg his pardon I And he will pardon you. Then we shall change the decree."

The scribe heard that, and said:

"That is impossible, because on the basis of Article 117 there has taken place no reconciliation, but the decree of the court has been handed down, and the decree has to be executed."

But the judge paid no attention to the scribe.

" Stop currycombing your tongue. The first article, my friend, is to remember God, and God has commanded me to make peace."

And the judge began once more to talk to the peasants, but he could not persuade them. Gavrilo would not listen to him.

" I am fifty years old less one," he said, " and I have a married son. I have not been beaten in all my life, and now freckled Ivan has brought me to being beaten with rods, and am I to beg his forgiveness ? Well, he will – Ivan will remember me! "

Gavrilo's voice trembled again. He could not talk. He turned around and went out.

From the township office to the village was a distance of ten versts, and Ivan returned home late. The women had already gone out to meet the cattle. He unhitched his horse, put it away, and entered the hut. The room was empty. The children had not yet returned from the field, and the women were out to meet the cattle. Ivdn went in, sat down on a bench, and began to think. He recalled how the decision was announced to Gavrilo, and how he grew pale, and turned to the wall. And his heart was pinched. He thought of how he should feel if he were condemned to be flogged. He felt sorry for Gavrilo. He heard the old man coughing on the oven. The old man turned

around, let down his legs, and sat up. He pulled himself with difficulty up to the bench, and coughed and coughed, until he cleared his throat, and leaned against the table, and said :

" Well, have they condemned him ? "

Ivcin said:

«He has been sentenced to twenty strokes with the rods.»

The old man shook his head.

" Ivan, you are not doing right. It's wrong, not wrong to him, but to yourself. Well, will it make you feel easier, if they flog him ?"

" He will never do it again," said Ivan.

" Why not ? In what way is he doing worse than you ?"

" What, he has not harmed me ?" exclaimed Ivan. " He might have killed the woman; and he even now threatens to set fire to my house. Well, shall I bow to him for it ?"

The old man heaved a sigh, and said:

« You, Ivan, walk and drive wherever you please in the free world, and I have passed many years on the oven, and so you think that you see everything, while I see nothing. No, my son, you see nothing, – malice has dimmed your eyes. Another man's sins are in front of you, but your own are behind your back. You say that he has done wrong. If he alone had done wrong, there would be no harm. Does evil between people arise from one man only ? Evil arises between two. You see his badness, but you do not see your own. If he himself were bad, and you good, there would be no evil. Who pulled out his beard ? Who blasted the rick which was at halves ? Who is dragging him to the courts ? And yet you put it always on him. You yourself live badly, that's why it is bad. Not thus did I live, and no such thing, my dear, did I teach you. Did I and the old man, his father, live this way ? How did we live ? In neighbourly fashion. If his flour gave out, and the woman came: ' Uncle Frol, I need some flour.' – 'Go, young woman, into the granary, and take as much as you need.' If he had nobody to send out with the horses, – ' Go, Ivan, and look after his horses! ' And if I was short of anything, I used to go to him. ' Uncle Gordydy, I need this and that.' And how is it now ? The other day a soldier was talking about Plevna. Why, your war is worse than what they did at Plevna. Do you call this living ? It is a sin ! You are a peasant, a head of a house. You will be responsible. What are you teaching your women and your children ? To curse. The other day Taraska, that dirty nose, cursed Aunt Arina, and his mother only laughed at him. Is that good ? You will be responsible for it. Think of your soul. Is that right ? You say a word to me, and I answer with two; you box my ears, and I box you twice. No, my son, Christ walked over the earth and taught us fools something quite different. If a word is said to you, – keep

quiet, and let conscience smite him. That's what he, my son, has taught us. If they box your ears, you turn the other cheek to them: ' Here, strike it if I deserve it.' His own conscience will prick him. He will be pacified and will do as you wish. That's what he has commanded us to do, and not to crow. Why are you silent ? Do I tell you right ?"

Ivdn was silent, and he listened.

The old man coughed again, and with difficulty coughed up the phlegm, and began to speak again:

" Do you think Christ has taught us anything bad ? He has taught us for our own good. Think of your earthly life: are you better off, or worse, since that Plevna of yours was started ? Figure out how much you have spent on these courts, how much you have spent in travelling and in feeding yourself on the way ? See what eagles of sons you have! You ought to live, and live well, and go up, but your property is growing less. Why ? For the same reason. From your pride. You ought to be ploughing with the boys in the field and attend to your sowing, but the fiend carries you to court or to some pettifogger. You do not plough in time and do not sow in time, and mother earth does not bring forth anything. Why did the oats not do well this year ? When did you sow them ? When you came back from the city. And what did you gain from the court ? Only trouble for yourself. Oh, son, stick to your business, and attend to your field and your house, and if any one has offended you, forgive him in godly fashion, and things will go better with you, and you will feel easier at heart."

Ivdn kept silence.

" Listen, Ivan ! Pay attention to me, an old man. Go and hitch the gray horse, and drive straight back to the office: squash there the whole business, and in the morning go to Gavrflo, make peace with him in godly fashion, and invite him to the holiday " (it was before Lady-day), " have the samovar prepared, get a half bottle, and make an end to all sins, so that may never happen again, and command the women and children to live in peace."

Ivan heaved a sigh, and thought: " The old man is speaking the truth," and his heart melted. The only thing he did not know was how to manage things so as to make peace with his neighbour.

And the old man, as though guessing what he had in mind, began once more:

" Go, Ivdn, do not put it off! Put out the fire at the start, for when it bums up, you can't control it."

The old man wanted to say something else, but did not finish, for the women entered the room and began to prattle like magpies. The news had already reached them about how Gavrflo had been sentenced to be flogged, and how he had threatened to set fire to the house.

They had found out everything, and had had time in the pasture to exchange words with the women of Gavnilo's house. They said that Gavnilo's daughter-in-law had threatened them with the examining magistrate. The magistrate, they said, was receiving gifts from Gavrflo. He would now upset the whole case, and the teacher had already written another petition to the Tsar about Ivan, and that petition mentioned all the affairs, about the coupling-pin, and about the garden, – and half of the estate would go back to him. Ivan listened to their talk, and his heart was chilled again, and he changed his mind about making peace with Gavrflo.

In a farmer's yard there is always much to do. Ivan did not stop to talk with the women, but got up and went out of the house, and walked over to the threshing-floor and the shed. Before he fixed everything and started back again, the sun went down, and the boys returned from the field. They had been ploughing up the field for the winter crop. Ivan met them, and asked them about their work and helped them to put up the horses. He laid aside the torn collar and was about to put some poles under the shed, when it grew quite dark. Ivan left the poles until the morrow; instead he threw some fodder down to the cattle, opened the gate, let Taraska out with the horses into the street, to go to the night pasture, and again closed the gate and put down the gate board.

" Now to supper and to bed," thought Ivan. He took the torn collar and went into the house. He had entirely forgotten about Gavnilo, and about what his father had told him. As he took hold of the ring and was about to enter the vestibule, he heard his neighbour on the other side of the wicker fence scolding some one in a hoarse voice.

" The devil take him!" Gavnilo was crying to some one. " He ought to be killed."

These words made all the old anger toward his neighbour burst forth in Ivan. He stood awhile and listened to Gavrflo's scolding. Then Gavnilo grew quiet, and Ivan went into the house.

He entered the room. Fire was burning within. The young woman was sitting in the corner behind the spinning-wheel ; the old woman was getting supper ready; the eldest son was making laces for the bast shoes, the second was at the table with a book, and Tardska was getting ready to go to the night pasture.

In the house everything was good and merry, if it were not for that curse, – a bad neighbour.

Ivan was angry when he entered the room. He knocked the cat down from the bench and scolded the women because the vat was not in the right place. Ivan felt out of humour. He sat down, frowning, and began to mend the collar. He could not forget Gavrflo's words, with which he had threatened him in court, and how he had said about somebody, speaking in a hoarse voice: " He ought to be killed."

The old woman got Taraska something to eat. When he was through with

his supper, he put on a fur coat and a caftan, girded himself, took a piece of bread, and went out to the horses. The eldest brother wanted to see him off, but Ivan himself got up and went out on the porch. It was pitch-dark outside, the sky was clouded, and a wind had risen. Ivan stepped down from the porch, helped his little son to get on a horse, frightened a colt behind him, and stood looking and listening while Taraska rode down the village, where he met other children, and until they all rode out of hearing. Ivan stood and stood at the gate, and could not get Gavrflo's words out of his head, "Something of yours may burn worse."

"He will not consider himself," thought Ivan. "It is dry, and a wind is blowing. He will enter somewhere from behind, the scoundrel, and will set the house on fire, and he will go free. If I could catch him, he would not get away from me."

This thought troubled Ivan so much that he did not go back to the porch, but walked straight into the street and through the gate, around the corner of the house.

"I will examine the yard, - who knows?"

And Ivdn walked softly down along the gate. He had just turned around the corner and looked up the fence, when it seemed to him that something stirred at the other end, as though it got up and sat down again. Ivan stopped and stood still, - he listened and looked: everything was quiet, only the wind rustled the leaves in the willow-tree and crackled through the straw. It was pitch-dark, but his eyes got used to the darkness: Ivdn could see the whole corner and the plough and the penthouse. He stood and looked, but there was-no one there.

"It must have only seemed so to me," thought Ivan, "but I will, nevertheless, go and see," and he stole up along the shed. Ivan stepped softly in his bast shoes, so that he did not hear his own steps. He came to the corner, when, behold, something flashed by near the plough, and disappeared again. Ivan felt as though something hit him in the heart, and he stopped. As he stopped he could see something flashing up, and he could see clearly some one in a cap squatting down with his back toward him, and setting fire to a bunch of straw in his hands. He stood stock-still.

"Now," he thought, "he will not get away from me. I will catch him on the spot."

Before Ivan had walked two lengths of the fence it grew quite bright, and no longer in the former place, nor was it a small fire, but the flame licked up in the straw of the penthouse and was going toward the roof, and there stood Gavriilo so that the whole of him could be seen.

As a hawk swoops down on a lark, so Ivan rushed up against Gavriilo the Lame.

" I will twist him up," he thought, " and he will not get away from me."

But Gavriilo the lame evidently heard his steps and ran along the shed with as much speed as a hare.

" You will not get away," shouted Ivan, swooping down on him.

He wanted to grab him by the collar, but Gavrflo got away from him, and Ivdn caught him by the skirt of his coat. The skirt tore off, and Ivan fell down.

Ivan jumped up.

" Help ! Hold him !" and again he ran.

As he was getting up, Gavrflo was already near his yard, but Ivan caught up with him. He was just going to take hold of him, when something stunned him, as though a stone had come down on his head. Gavriilo had picked up an oak post near his house and hit Ivan with all his might on the head, when he ran up to him.

Ivan staggered, sparks flew from his eyes, then all grew dark, and he fell down. When he came to his senses, Gavrflo was gone. It was as light as day, and from his yard came a sound as though an engine were working, and it roared and crackled there. Ivan turned around and saw that his back shed was all on fire and the side shed was beginning to burn; the fire, and the smoke, and the burning straw were being carried toward the house.

" What is this ? Friend ! " cried Ivan. He raised his hands and brought them down on his calves. " If I could only pull it out from the penthouse, and put it out! What is this? Friends!" he repeated. He wanted to shout, but he nearly strangled, – he had no voice. He wanted to run, but his feet would not move, – they tripped each other up. He tried to walk slowly, but he staggered, and he nearly strangled. He stood still again and drew breath, and started to walk. Before he came to the shed and reached the fire, the side shed was all on fire, and he could not get into the yard. People came running up, but nothing could be done. The neighbours dragged their own things out of their houses, and drove the cattle out. After Ivan's house, Gavrflo's caught fire; a wind rose and carried the fire across the street. Half the village burned down.

All they saved from Ivdn's house was the old man, who was pulled out, and everybody jumped out in just what they had on. Everything else was burned, except the horses in the pasture: the cattle were burned, the chickens on their roosts, the carts, the ploughs, the harrows, the women's chests, the grain in the granary, – everything was burned.

Gavriilo's cattle were saved, and they dragged a few things out of his house.

It burned for a long time, all night long. Ivdn stood near his yard, and kept looking at it, and saying:

"What is this? Friends! If I could just pull it out and put it out!"

But when the ceiling in the hut fell down, he jumped into the hottest place, took hold of a brand, and wanted to pull it out. The women saw him and began to call him back, but he pulled out one log and started for another: he staggered and fell on the fire. Then his son rushed after him and dragged him out. Ivan had his hair and beard singed and his garments burnt and his hands blistered, but he did not feel anything.

"His sorrow has bereft him of his senses," people said.

The fire died down, but Ivan was still standing there, and saying:

"Friends, what is this? If I could only pull it out." In the morning the elder sent his son to Ivan.

"Uncle Ivan, your father is dying: he has sent for you, to bid you good-bye."

Ivan had forgotten about his father, and did not understand what they were saying to him.

"What father?" he said. "Send for whom?"

"He has sent for you, to bid you good-bye. He is dying in our house. Come, Uncle Ivan!" said the elder's son, pulling him by his arm.

Ivdn followed the elder's son.

When the old man was carried out, burning straw fell on him and scorched him. He was taken to the elder's house in a distant part of the village. This part did not burn.

When Ivan came to his father, only the elder's wife was there, and the children on the oven. The rest were all at the fire. The old man was lying on a bench, with a taper in his hand, and looking toward the door. When his son entered, he stirred a little. The old woman went up to him and said that his son had come. He told her to have him come closer to him. Ivan went up, and then the old man said:

"What have I told you, Ivan? Who has burned the village?"

"He, father," said Ivan, "he, – I caught him at it. He put the fire to the roof while I was standing near. If I could only have caught the burning bunch of straw and put it out, there would not have been anything."

"Ivan," said the old man, "my death has come, and you, too, will die. Whose sin is it?"

Ivan stared at his father and kept silence; he could not say a word.

" Speak before God: whose sin is it ? What have I told you ? "

It was only then that Ivan came to his senses, and understood everything. And he snuffled, and said :

" Mine, father." And he knelt before his father, and wept, and said:
" Forgive me, father! I am guilty toward you and toward God."

The old man moved his hands, took the taper in his left hand, and was moving his right hand toward Ids brow, to make the sign of the cross, but he did not get it so far, and he stopped.

" Glory be to thee, O Lord ! Glory be to thee, O Lord !" he said, and his eyes were again turned toward his son.

" Ivan ! Oh, Ivdn !"

" What is it, father ?"

" What is to be done now ? "

Ivan was weeping.

" I do not know, father," he said. " How am I to live now, father ?"

The old man closed his eyes and lisped something, as though gathering all his strength, and he once more opened his eyes and said:

"You will get along. With God's aid will you get along." The old man was silent awhile, and he smiled and said :

" Remember, Ivan, you must not tell who started the fire. Cover up another man's sin ! God will forgive two sins."

And the old man took the taper into both hands, folded them over his heart, heaved a sigh, stretched himself, and died.

Ivan did not tell on Gavrflo, and nobody found out how the fire had been started.

And Ivan's heart was softened toward Gavrflo, and Gavrflo marvelled at Ivdn, because he did not tell anybody. At first Gavrflo was afraid of him, but later he got used to him. The peasants stopped quarrelling, and so did their families. While they rebuilt their homes, the two families lived in one house, and when the village was built again, and the farmhouses were built farther apart, Ivan and Gavrflo again were neighbours, living in the same block.

And Ivdn and Gavrflo lived neighbourly together, just as their fathers had lived. Ivan Shcherbakdv remembered his father's

injunction and God's command to put out the fire in the beginning. And if a person did him some harm, he did not try to have his revenge on the man, but to mend matters; and if a person called him a bad name, he did not try to answer with worse words still, but to teach him not to speak badly. And thus he taught also the women folk and the children. And Ivdn Shcher-bakdv improved and began to live better than ever.