STORIES FOR CHILDREN
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1869- 1872

THE FOUNDLING

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

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

" What have you brought ?"

“ A baby. I found it at our door.”

The mother said:

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

Masha began to cry, and said :

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

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

THE PEASANT AND THE CUCUMBERS

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

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

them, unawares, and shout: * Oh, there, keep a sharp lookout!'"

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

THE EIRE

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

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

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

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

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

The grandmother heard nothing, and did not wake. The elder boy, Vdnya (he was eight years old), was in the street. When he saw the smoke rolling out of the vestibule, he ran to the door, made his way through the smoke into the house, and began to waken his grandmother; but she was dazed from her sleep, and, forgetting the children, rushed out and ran to the farmyards to call the people.

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

" Run, you will burn!"

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

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

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

THE OLD HORSE

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

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

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

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

" Now gallop past us !"

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

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

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

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

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

I felt offended, and said:

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

Then the valet shook his head, and said:

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

I thought of Pimen, and listened to the valet’s words. I climbed down from the horse and, when I saw how his sweaty sides hung down, how be breathed heavily through his nostrils, and how he switched his bald tail, I understood that it was hard for the horse. Before that I used to think that it was as much fun for him as for me. I felt so sorry for Raven that I began to kiss his sweaty neck and to beg his forgiveness for having beaten him.

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

HOW I LEARNED TO RIDE

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

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

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

« May I, too, learn to ride ?"

My father said:

" You will fall down.”

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

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

When Wednesday came, all three of us were taken to the riding-school. We entered by a large porch, and from the large porch went to a smaller one. Beyond the porch was a very large room: instead of a floor it had sand. And in this room were gentlemen and ladies and just such boys as we. That was the riding-school. The ridingschool

was not very light, and there was a smell of horses, and you could hear them snap whips and call to the horses, and the horses strike their hoofs against the wooden walls. At first I was frightened and could not see things well. Then our valet called the riding-master, and said:

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

The master said:

“ All right!"

Then he looked at me, and said:

" He is very small, yet.”

But the valet said :

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

The master laughed and went away.

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

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

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

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

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

" Are you not afraid ?"

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

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

" Well, are you fast in the saddle ?"

I said:

" Yes, I am.”

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

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

“ Oh, a fine young gentleman, indeed!"

I was very glad to hear it.

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

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

" Well done, young gentleman !"

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

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

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

“ A child’s body is soft.”

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

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

THE WILLOW

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

He went into the garden and touched the soil with a stick. The earth was soft. The peasant went into the woods; here the catkins were

already swelling on the willows. The peasant thought:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

BULKA

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

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

I got him as a puppy, and raised him myself. When I went to the Caucasus, I did not want to take him along, and so went away from him quietly, ordering him to be shut up. At the first station I was about to change the relay, when suddenly I saw something black and shining coming down the road. It was Bulka in his brass collar. He was flying at full speed toward the station. He rushed up to me, licked my hand, and stretched himself out in the shade under the cart. His tongue stuck out a

BULKA AND THE WILD BOAR

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

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

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

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

they were not catching him, but only circling around him. Suddenly I heard something rustle behind me, and I saw that it was Bulka. He had evidently strayed from the hounds in the forest and had lost his way, and now was hearing their barking and making for

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

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

When I came nearer, I could make out the boar, and I heard Bulka whining shrilly. The boar grunted and made for the hound; the hound took her tail between her legs and leaped away. I could see the boar’s side and head. I aimed at his side and fired. I saw that I had hit him. The boar grunted and crashed through the thicket away from me. The dogs whimpered and barked in his track; I tried to follow them through the undergrowth. Suddenly I saw and heard something almost under my feet. It was Bulka. He was lying on his side and whining. Under him there was a puddle of blood. I thought the dog was lost; but I had no time to look after him, I continued to make my way through the thicket. Soon I saw the boar. The dogs were trying to catch him from behind, and he kept turning, now to one side, and now to another. When the boar saw me, he moved toward me. I fired a second time, almost resting the barrel against him, so that his bristles caught fire, and the boar groaned and tottered, and with his whole cadaver dropped heavily on the ground.

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

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

The boar was tied up to the horse’s tail, to pull him out of the forest, and Bulka was put on the horse, and thus taken home. Bulka

was sick for about six weeks, and got well again.

PHEASANTS

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

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

This is the way they hunt by scaring up. They let a watch-dog into the forest and follow him. When the dog finds a pheasant, he rushes for it. The pheasant flies on a tree, and then the dog begins to bark at it. The hunter follows up the barking and shoots the pheasant in the tree. This chase would be easy, if the pheasant alighted on a tree in an open place, or if it sat still, so that it might be seen. But they always alight on dense trees, in the thicket, and when they see the hunter they hide themselves in the branches. And it is hard to make one's way through the thicket to the tree on which a pheasant is sitting, and} hard to see it. So long as the dog alone barks at it, it is not afraid: it sits on a branch and preens and flaps its wings at the dog. But the moment it sees a man, it immediately stretches itself out along a bough, so that only an experienced hunter can tell it, while an inexperienced one will stand near by and see nothing.

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

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

the hunter shoots it.

MILTON AND BULKA

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

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

I was already on the point of going home, because I thought that the chase was spoiled; but Milton found a better way of cheating Bulka. This is what he did : the moment Bulka rushed ahead of him, he gave up the trail and turned in another direction, pretending that he was searching there. Bulka rushed there where Milton was, and Milton looked at me and wagged his tail and went back to the right trail. Bulka again ran up to Milton and rushed past him, and again Milton took some ten steps to one side and cheated Bulka, and again led me straight; and so he cheated Bulka all the way and did not let him spoil the chase.

THE TURTLE

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

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

puts forth its head, its legs, and its tail.

I took the turtle away from Milton, and tried to see how its back was painted, and what kind of a shell it had, and how it hid itself. When you hold it in your hands and look between the shell, you can see something black and alive inside, as though in a cellar. I threw away the turtle, and walked on, but Milton would not leave it, and carried it in his teeth behind me. Suddenly Milton whimpered and dropped it. The turtle had put forth its foot inside of his mouth, and had scratched it. That made him so angry that he began to bark ; he grasped it once more and carried it behind me. I ordered Milton to throw it away, but he paid no attention to me. Then I took the turtle from him and threw it away. But he did not leave it. He hurriedly dug a hole near it; when the hole was dug, he threw the turtle into it and covered it up with dirt.

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

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

BULKA AND THE WOLF

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

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

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

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

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

I ran into the house, grasped a loaded gun, and ran into the street. They were all standing at the gate of the yard where the pig was squealing, and cried to me: " Here!" Milton rushed after me, — no doubt he thought that I was going out to hunt with the gun ; but Bulka pricked his short ears, and tossed from side to side, as though to ask me whom he was to clutch. When I ran up to the wicker

fence, I saw a beast running straight toward me from the other side of the yard. That was the wolf. He ran up to the fence and jumped on it. I stepped aside and fixed my gun. The moment the wolf jumped down from the fence to my side, I aimed, almost touching him with the gun, and pulled the trigger; but my gun made " Click " and did not go off. The wolf did not stop, but ran across the street.

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

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

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

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

In any case I poured some powder on Bulka’s wound,

and set it on fire. The powder flashed up and burned out the sore spot.

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

WHAT HAPPENED TO BtJLKA IN PYATIG6RSK

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

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

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

The city itself is on the mountain, but at the foot of it there is a suburb. I lived in that suburb in a small house. The house stood in a yard, and before the windows was a small garden, and in the garden stood the landlord’s beehives, not in hollow stems, as in Russia, but

in round, plaited baskets. The bees are there so gentle that in the morning I used to sit with Bulka in that garden, amongst the beehives.

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

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

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

“ What is this ?"

She said:

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

« So they would kill Bulka, too, if they caught him ?"

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

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

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

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

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

BtJLKA’S AND MILTON’S END

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

Biilka, too, did not live long after the prisoners had caught him. Soon after his salvation from the prisoners he began to feel unhappy, and started to lick everything that he saw. He licked my hands, but not as formerly when he fawned. He licked for a long time, and pressed his tongue against me, and then began to snap. Evidently he felt like biting my hand, but did not want to do so. I did not give him my hand. Then he licked my boot and the foot of a

table, and then he began to snap at these things. That lasted about two days, and on the third he disappeared, and no one saw him or heard of him.

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

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

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

THE GRAY HARE

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

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

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

When the carts passed by, the hare leaped across the road and softly made for the threshing-floor. A dog saw the hare from a cart. He began to bark and darted after the hare. The hare leaped toward the

threshing-floor over the snow-drifts, which held him back; but the dog stuck fast in the snow after the tenth leap, and stopped. Then the hare, too, stopped and sat up on his hind legs, and then softly went on to the threshing-floor.

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

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

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

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

GOD SEES THE TRUTH, BUT DOES NOT TELL AT ONCE

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

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

One day in the summer Aksenov went to the Nizhni-Novgorod fair. As he bade his family good-bye, his wife said to him:

“ Ivdn Dmitrievich, do not start to-day! I have had a bad dream about you.”

Aksdnov laughed, and said:

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

His wife said:

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

that your head was all gray.”

Aksdnov laughed.

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

And he bade his family farewell, and started.

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

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

Aks6nov told him everything as it was, and said:

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

But the officer kept asking him questions:

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

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

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

Then the officer called the soldiers, and said:

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

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

" Whose knife is this ? "

Aksenov looked, and saw that they had taken out a blood-stained knife from his bag, and he was frightened.

" How did the blood get on the knife ?"

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

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

Then the chief said:

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

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

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

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

« What shall I do?"

He said:

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

His wife said that she had already petitioned the Tsar, but that the petition had not reached him. Aksenov said nothing, and only lowered

his head. Then his wife said:

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

And she looked over his hair, and said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

In Siberia, Aksenov passed twenty-six years at bard labour. His hair turned white like snow, and his beard grew long, narrow, and gray. All his mirth went away. He stooped, began to walk softly, spoke little, never laughed, and frequently prayed to God.

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

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

Once they brought some new prisoners to the prison. In the evening the old prisoners gathered around the new men, and asked them from what town they came, or from what village, and for what acts they had been sent up. Aksenov, too, sat down on the bed-boards near the new prisoners and, lowering his head, listened to what they were saying. One of the new prisoners was a tall, soundlooking old man of

about sixty years of age, with a gray, clipped beard. He was telling them what he had been sent up for:

“ Yes, brothers, I have come here for no crime at all. I had unhitched a driver’s horse from the sleigh. I was caught. They said, ‘ You stole it.’ And I said, ‘ I only wanted to get home quickly, for I let the horse go. Besides, the driver is a friend of mine. I am telling you the truth.’— ‘ No,' they said, ‘ you have stolen it.’ But they did not know what I had seen stealing, or where I had been stealing. There were crimes for which I ought to have been sent up long ago, but they could not convict me, and now I am here contrary to the law. ‘ You are lying,— you have been in Siberia, but you did not make a long visit there —’ ”

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

“ I am from the city of Vladimir, a burgher of that place. My name is Makdr, and by my father Semenovich."

Aksenov raised his head, and asked:

“Semenovich, have you not heard in Vladimir about the family of Merchant Aksenov? Are they alive ?"

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

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

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

Makdr Semenovich said:

" For what sins ? ”

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

When Makar Semenovich heard that, he looked at Aksenov, clapped his knees with his hands, and said:

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

He was asked what he was marvelling at, and where he had seen Aksenov, but Makdr Semenovich made no reply, and only said :

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

And these words made Aksenov think that this man might know

something about who had killed the merchant. He said:

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

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

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

Makar Semenovich laughed and said:

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

The moment Aksenov heard these words, he thought that that was the man who had killed the merchant. He got up and walked away. All that night Aksenov could not fall asleep. He felt sad, and had visions: now he saw his wife such as she had been when she bade him farewell for the last time, as he went to the fair. He saw her, as though she was alive, and he saw her face and eyes, and heard her speak to him and laugh. Then he saw his children such as they had been then, — just as little, — one of them in a fur coat, the other at the breast. And he thought of himself, such as he had been then, — gay and young; he recalled how he had been sitting on the porch of the hostelry, where he was arrested, and had been playing the guitar, and how light his heart had been then. And he recalled the pillory, where he had been whipped, and the executioner, and the people all around, and the chains, and the prisoners, and his prison life of the last twenty-six years, and his old age. And such gloom came over him that he felt like laying hands on himself.

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

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

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

Once, in the night, he walked all over the prison, and saw dirt falling from underneath one bedplace. He stopped to see what it was. Suddenly Makar Semenovich jumped up from under the bed and looked at Aksdnov with a frightened face. Aksenov wanted to pass on, so as not to see him; but Makar took him by his arm, and told him that he had dug a passage way under the wall, and that he each day carried the dirt away in his boot-legs and poured it out in the open, whenever they took the convicts out to work. He said:

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

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

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

On the following day, when the convicts were taken out to work, the soldiers noticed that Makdr Semenovich was pouring out the dirt, and so they began to search in the prison, and found the hole. The chief came to the prison and began to ask all who had dug the hole. Everybody denied it. Those who knew had not seen Makar

Semenovich, because they knew that for this act he would be whipped half-dead. Then the chief turned to Aksenov. He knew that Aksenov was a just man, and said:

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

Makdr Sem4novich stood as though nothing had happened and looked at the chief, and did not glance at Aksenov. Aksenov’s arms and lips trembled, and he could not utter a word for a long time. He thoughts " If I protect him, why should I forgive him, since he has ruined me ? Let him suffer for my torments! And if I tell on him, they will indeed whip him to death. And suppose that I have a wrong suspicion against him. Will that make it easier for me ?"

The chief said once more:

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

Aksenov looked at Makar Semenovich, and said:

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

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

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

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

Makar Semenovich was silent. Aksenov raised himself, and said:

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

Makdr bent down close to Aks4nov, and said to him in a whisper :

“ Ivan Dmitrievich, forgive me !"

Aksenov said:

“ For what shall I forgive you ?"

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

Aksenov was silent and did not know what to say. Makar Semenovich slipped down from the bed, made a low obeisance, and said:

" Ivan Dmitrievich, forgive me, forgive me for God’s sake! I will declare that it was I who killed the merchant, — you will be forgiven. You will return home.”

Aksenov said:

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

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

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

When Aksenov heard Makar Semenovich crying, he began to weep himself, and said:

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

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

Makdr Semenovich did not listen to Aksenov, but declared his guilt. When the decision came for Aksenov to leave, — he was dead.

HUNTING WORSE THAN SLAVERY

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

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

should he down again.

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

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

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

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

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

But I said:

" What is the use of discussing the matter ? Do as vou please, but I will go with Demyan along the track. If we overtake him, so much is gained; if not, — I have nothing else to do to-day anyway, and it is not yet late."

And so we did.

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

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

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

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

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

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

We went away from the track, to the left. We walked about five

hundred steps and there we again saw the track before us. We again followed the track, and this took us to the road. We stopped on the road and began to look around, to see in what direction the bear had gone. Here and there on the road we could see the bear's paws with all the toes printed on the snow, while in others we could see the tracks of a peasant's bast shoes. He had, evidently, gone to the village.

We walked along the road. Demyan said to me:

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

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

" That is another bear."

Demyan looked at it, and thought awhile.

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

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

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

We started to surround him, going through the dense pine forest. I was getting tired, and it was now much harder to travel. Now I would strike against a juniperbush, and get caught in it; or a small pine-tree would get under my feet; or the snow-shoes would twist, as I was not used to them; or I would strike a stump or a block under the sno\y. I was beginning to be worn out. I took off my fur coat, and the sweat was just pouring down from me. But Demyan sailed along as in a boat. It looked as though the snow-shoes walked under him of their own accord. He neither caught in anything, nor did his shoes turn on him.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

again, — just as though the sky were walking round and round.

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

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

“ Where is Demyan ? "

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

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

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

We travelled about three versts by the road, and reached the forest. We saw a blue smoke in a hollow, and peasants, men and women, were there with clubs.

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

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

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

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

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

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

I examined my two guns and cocked them, and began to think where to

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

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

" Start it now, start it!"

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

The bear was in the circle. Demydn was driving him. In the circuit the people shouted, and only my companion and I stood still, did not speak or move, and waited for the bear. I stood, and looked, and listened, and my heart went pitapat. I was clutching my gun and trembling. Now, now he will jump out, I thought, and I will aim and shoot, and he will fall — Suddenly I heard to the left something tumbling through the snow, only it was far away. I looked into the tall pine forest: about fifty steps from me, behind the trees, stood something large and black. I aimed and waited. I thought it might come nearer. I saw it move its ears and turn around. Now I could see the whole of him from the side. It was a huge beast. I aimed hastily. Bang! I heard the bullet strike the tree. Through the smoke I saw the bear make back for the cover and disappear in the forest. “Well,” I thought, “ my business is spoiled : he will not run up to me again; either my companion will have a chance to shoot at him, or he will go through between the peasants, but never again toward me.” I reloaded the gun, and stood and listened. The peasants were shouting on all sides, but on the right, not far from my companion, I heard a woman yell, “ Here he is ! Here he is! Here he is ! This way! This way ! Oi, oi, oi! Ai, ai, ai!"

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

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

What was that ? Suddenly I heard something in front of me: somebody was flying like a whirlwind, and scattering the snow near by, and panting. I looked ahead of me, but he was making headlong toward me

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

He raised his head, dropped his ears, showed his teeth, — and straight toward me. I grasped the other gun ; but before I had it in my hand, he was already on me, knocked me down, and flew over me. " Well," I thought," that is good, he will not touch me." I was just getting up, when I felt something pressing against me and holding me down. In his onrush he ran past me, but he turned around and rushed against me with his whole breast. I felt something heavy upon me, something warm over my face, and I felt him taking my face into his jaws. My nose was already in his mouth, and I felt hot, and smelled his blood. He pressed my shoulders with his paws, and I could not stir. All I could do was to pull my head out of his jaws and press it against my breast,'and I turned my nose and eyes away. But he was trying to get at my eyes and nose. I felt him strike the teeth of his upper jaw into my forehead, right below the hair, and the lower jaw into the cheek-bones below the eyes, and he began to crush me. It was as though my head were cut with knives. I jerked and pulled out my head, but he chawed and chawed and snapped at me like a dog. I would turn my head away, and he would catch it again. " Well," I thought, " my end has come." Suddenly I felt lighter. I looked up, and he was gone: he had jumped away from me, and was running now.

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

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

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

Suddenly we heard, "Here he is! Here he is!" We saw the bear running once more against us. We grasped our guns, but before we fired he ran past us. The bear was mad: he wanted to bite me again, but when he saw so many people he became frightened. We saw by the track that the bear was bleeding from the head. We wanted to follow him up, but my head hurt me, and so we drove to town to see a doctor.

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

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

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

A PRISONER OF THE CAUCASUS

L

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

" Is your gun loaded ?"

«It is.”

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

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

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

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

But Kostylin said:

" What is the use of looking ? Let us ride on 1"

Zhilin paid no attention to him.

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

And he turned his horse to the left, up-hill. The horse under Zhilin was a thoroughbred (he had paid a hundred roubles for it when it was

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

Zhilin got within a horse’s length from him, when they shot at him from behind and hit the horse. The horse dropped on the ground while going at full speed, and fell on Zhilin’s leg.

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

Zhilin looked back at his horse. The dear animal was lying just as it had fallen down, and only twitched its legs and did not reach the

ground with them; in its head there was a hole, and from it the black blood gushed and wet the dust for an ell around.

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

The Tartars took off the saddle and the trappings.

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

Zhilin was sitting back of the Tartar, and shaking and striking with his face against the stinking Tartar's back. All he saw before him was the mighty back, and the muscular neck, and the livid, shaved nape of his head underneath his cap. Zhilin's head was bruised, and the blood was clotted under his eyes. And he could not straighten himself on the saddle, nor wipe off his blood. His arms were twisted so badly that his shoulder bones pained him.

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

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

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

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

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

II.

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

Through the chink Zhilin saw the road : it went downhill ; on the

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

Then two boys rode by, taking the horses to water. The muzzles of the horses were wet. Then there ran out some other shaven boys, in nothing but their shirts, with no trousers; they gathered in a crowd, walked over to the shed, picked up a stick, and began to poke it through the chink. When Zhilin shouted at the children, they screamed and started to run back, so that their bare knees glistened in the sun.

Zhilin wanted to drink, – his throat was all dried up. He thought: " If they woilld only come to see me !" He heard them open the shed. The red Tartar came in, and with him another, black-looking fellow, of smaller stature.

His eyes were black and bright, his cheeks ruddy, his small beard clipped; his face looked jolly, and he kept laughing all the time. This swarthy fellow was dressed even better: he had on a silk half-coat, of a blue colour, embroidered with galloons. In his belt there was a large silver dagger; his slippers were of red morocco and also embroidered with silver. Over his thin slippers he wore heavier shoes. His cap was tall, of white astrakhan.

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

Zhilin did not understand a thing and said:

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

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

Zhilin showed with his lips and hands that he wanted something to drink.

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

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

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

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

The Tartars went away and locked the door.

After awhile the Nogay came to Zhilin, and said:

“ Ai-da, master, ai-da!"

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

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

Zhilin entered the house. It was a good livingroom,— the walls were plastered smooth with clay. Along the front wall lay coloured cushions, and at the sides hung costly rugs; on the rugs were guns, pistols, swords, — all in silver. By one wall there was a small stove, on a level with the floor. The floor was of dirt and as clean as a threshing-floor, and the whole front corner was carpeted with felt; and over the felt lay rugs, and on the rugs cushions. On these rugs sat the Tartars, in their slippers without their outer shoes: there were the swarthy fellow, the red Tartar, and three guests. At their backs were feather cushions, and before them, on a round

board, were millet cakes and melted butter in a bowl, and Tartar beer, " buza," in a small pitcher. They were eating with their hands, and their hands were all greasy from the butter.

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

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

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

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

" Soldier Uruss! Goot Gruss! "

The interpreter said:

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

Zhilin thought awhile and said :

" How much ransom does he want ?"

The Tartars talked together; then the interpreter said:

" Three thousand in silver."

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

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

" How much will you give ? "

Zhilin thought awhile, and said:

" Five hundred roubles."

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

But the red Tartar only scowled and clicked his tongue.

They grew silent, and the interpreter said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

" Give one thousand roubles ! "

Zhilin stuck to what he bad said:

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

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

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

Abdul jumped up, and pointed to Kostylin, and said something. The interpreter translated it, and said that both of them belonged to

the same master, and that the one who would first furnish the money would be the first to be released.

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

So Zhilin said:

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

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

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

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

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

" You goot, me goot! "

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

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

in.

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

" You, Ivan, goot, me, Abdul, goot! "

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

Kostylin wrote home a second letter. He was waiting for the money to

come, and felt lonesome. He sat for days at a time in the shed counting the days before the letter would come, or he slept. But Zhilin knew that his letter would not reach any one, and so he did not write another.

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

And he watched and thought of how to get away.

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

One day he made a doll, with a nose, and hands, and legs, in a Tartar shirt, and put the doll on the roof. The Tartar maidens were going for water. His master's daughter, Dina, saw the doll, and she called up the Tartar girls. They put down their pitchers, and looked, and laughed. Zhilin took down the doll and gave it to them. They laughed, and did not dare take it. He left the doll, and went back to the shed to see what they would do.

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

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

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

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

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

" It is good!"

Dina was very happy. .

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

From that time she brought him milk every day on the sly. The Tartars make cheese-cakes from goat milk, and dry them on the roofs, — and so she brought him those cakes also. One day the master killed a sheep, so she brought him a piece of mutton in her sleeve. She would throw it down and run away.

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

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

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

" Ai, Uruss ! Ai, Ivan!"

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

" Let me have it! I will fix it! ”

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

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

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

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

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

The red Tartar did not like Zhilin. Whenever he saw him, he frowned and turned away, or called him names. There was also an old man; he did not five in the village, but came from farther down the mountain. Zhilin saw him only when he came to the mosque, to pray to God. He was a small man; his cap was wrapped with a white towel. His beard and moustache were clipped, and they were as white as down;

his face was wrinkled and as red as a brick. His nose was hooked, like a hawk’s beak, and his eyes were gray and mean-looking; of teeth he had only two tusks. He used to walk in his turban, leaning on a crutch, and looking around him like a wolf. Whenever he saw Zhilin, he grunted and turned away.

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

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

“ Why did you go to the old man ?"

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

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

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

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

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

IV.

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

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

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

Zhilin began to persuade him.

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

He persuaded the boy, and they went together. As he looked up the mountain, it looked near, but with the stocks it was hard to walk; he walked and walked, and climbed the mountain with difficulty. Zhilin sat down and began to look at the place. To the south of the shed there was a ravine, and there a herd of horses was grazing, and in a hollow could be seen another village. At that village began a steeper mountain, and beyond that mountain there was another mountain. Between the mountains could be seen a forest, and beyond it again the mountains, rising higher and higher. Highest of all, there were white mountains, capped with snow, just like sugar loaves. And one snow mountain stood with its cap above all the rest. To the east and the west there were just such mountains; here and there smoke rose from villages in the clefts.

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

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

two mountains, he had to run.

The sun was beginning to go down. The snow-capped mountains changed from white to violet; it grew dark in the black mountains; vapour arose from the clefts, and the valley, where our fortress no doubt was, gleamed in the sunset as though on fire. Zhilin began to look sharply,— something was quivering in the valley, like smoke rising from chimneys. He was sure now that it must be the Russian fortress.

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

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

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

" Allah ! " (That means " God.") He said that one word, and again they lowered their heads and kept silence for a long time; they sat without stirring. Again the mullah raised his head :

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

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

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

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

Next morning Zhilin saw the red Tartar take a mare out of the village, and three Tartars followed him. They went outside the village; then the red-haired Tartar took off his coat, rolled up his sleeves, — he had immense arms, — and took out his dagger and whetted it on a steel. The Tartars jerked up the mare's head, and the red-haired man walked over to her, cut her throat, threw her down, and began to flay her, — to rip the skin open with his fists. Then came women and girls, and they began to wash the inside and the entrails. Then they chopped up the mare and dragged the flesh to the house. And the whole village gathered at the house of the red-haired Tartar to celebrate the dead man's wake.

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

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

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

" I know it."

" But we cannot reach it in the night."

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

Kostylfn thought awhile:

" Well, let us go 1 "

V.

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

When all grew quiet, Zhilin crawled through the hole and got out. He whispered to Kostylfn to crawl out. Kostylfn started to come out,

but he caught a stone with his foot, and it made a noise. Now their master had a dappled watch-dog, and he was dreadfully mean ; his name was Illy ashin. Zhilin had been feeding him before. When Ulyashin heard the voice, he began to bark and rushed forward, and with him other dogs. Zhilin gave a low whistle and threw a piece of cake to the dog, and the dog recognized him and wagged his tail and stopped barking.

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

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

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

Zhilin got up and said to his companion :

" Now, my friend, let us start! "

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

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

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

«Take them off! You will find it easier without them.”

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

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

Kostylfn said nothing, but he groaned as he walked. They walked for a long time through a ravine. Suddenly they heard dogs barking. Zhilfn stopped and looked around; he groped with his hands and

climbed a hill.

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

But Kostylfn said:

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

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

Aud Zhilin ran back, and to the left, up the mountain into the forest. Kostylin kept falling behind and groaning. Zhilin hushed him, and walked on.

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

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

Kostylin fell down in fright. But Zhilin laughed and said:

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

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

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

Zhilin begged him to go on.

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

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

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

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

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

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

They ran off the road, sat down in the bushes, and waited. Zhilin crept up to the road, and saw a Tartar on horseback, driving a cow before him, and mumbling something to himself. The Tartar passed by them. Zhilin went back to Kostylin.

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

Kostylin tried to get up, but fell down.

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

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

“ Oh, it hurts!"

Zhilin was frightened.

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

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

He took Kostylin on his back, put his hands on Kos-tytin's legs, walked out on the road, and walked on.

" Only be sure,” he said, " and do not choke me with your hands, for Christ’s sake. Hold on to my shoulders !" It was hard for Zhilin: his feet, too, were blood-stained, and he was worn out. He kept bending down, straightening up Kostylin, and throwing him up, so that he might sit higher, and dragged him along the road.

Evidently the Tartar had heard Kostylin’s shout. Zhilin heard some one riding from behind and calling in his language. Zhilin made for the brush. The Tartar pulled out his gun and fired; he screeched in his fashion, and rode back along the road.

" Well,” said Zhilin, " we are lost, my friend! That dog will

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

Kostylin said:

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

But the old man said:

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

They all went their way. The master walked over to Zhilin and said:

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

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

VI.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

“ Who wants to kill me ?"

“ My father, — the old men tell him to. I am sorry for you.”

So Zhilin said:

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

She shook her head, to say that she could not. He folded his hands, and began to beg her:

" Dina, if you please ! Dear Dina, bring it to me!"

“I cannot,” she said. “The people are at home, and they would see me.”

And she went away.

Zhilin was sitting there in the evening, and thinking what would happen. He kept looking up. The stars could be seen, and the moon was not yet up. The mullah called, and all grew quiet. Zhilin was beginning to fall asleep; he thought the girl would be afraid.

Suddenly some clay fell on his head. He looked up and saw a long pole coming down at the end of the ditch. It tumbled, and descended, and came down into the ditch. Zhilin was happy; he took hold of it and let it down, — it was a stout pole. He had seen it before on his master’s roof.

He looked up: the stars were shining high in the heavens, and over the very ditch Dina’s eyes glistened in the darkness. She bent her face over the edge of the ditch, and whispered: “ Ivan, Ivan!" and waved her hands in front of her face, as much as to say: “Speak softly!"

“ What is it ?" asked Zhilin.

" They are all gone. There are two only at the house.” So Zhilin said:

" Kostylfn, come, let us try for the last time; I will give you a lift.”

Kostylfn would not even listen.

“ No,” he said, “ I shall never get away from here. Where should I go, since I have no strength to turn around ?"

" If so, good-bye! Do not think ill of me!"

He kissed Kostylfn.

He took hold of the pole, told Dina to hold on to it, and climbed up. Two or three times he slipped down: the stocks were in his way. Kostylfn held him up, and he managed to get on. Dina pulled him by the shirt with all her might, and laughed.

Zhilin took the pole, and said:

" Take it to where you found it, for if they see it, they will beat you.”

She dragged the pole away, and Zhilin went down-hill. He crawled down an incline, took a sharp stone, and tried to break the lock of the stocks. But the lock was a strong one, and he could not break it. He heard some one running down the hill, leaping lightly. He thought it was Dina. Dina ran up, took a stone, and said:

" Let me do it!"

She knelt down and tried to break it; but her arms were as thin as rods, — there was no strength in them. She threw away the stone, and began to weep. Zhilin again worked on the lock, and Dina squatted near him, and held on to his shoulder. Zhilin looked around; on the left, beyond the mountain, he saw a red glow, — the moon was rising.

" Well,” he thought, " before the moon is up I must cross the ravine and get to the forest.”

He got up, threw away the stone, and, though in the stocks, started to go.

" Good-bye, Dina dear 1 I will remember you all my life.”

Dina took hold of him; she groped all over him, trying to find a place to put the cakes. He took them from her.

“Thank you,” he said, “you are a clever girl. Who will make dolls for you without me ?" And he patted her on the head.

Dina began to cry. She covered her eyes with her hands, and ran up-

hill like a kid. In the darkness he could hear the ornaments in the braid striking against her shoulders. '

Zhilin made the sign of the cross, took the lock of his fetters in his hand, that it might not clank, and started down the road, dragging his feet along, and looking at the glow, where the moon was rising. He recognized the road. By the straight road it would be about eight versts. If he only could get to the woods before the moon was entirely out! He crossed a brook, – and it was getting light beyond the mountain. He walked through the ravine; he walked and looked, but the moon was not yet to be seen. It was getting brighter, and on one side of the ravine everything could be seen more and more clearly. The shadow was creeping down the mountain, up toward him.

Zhilin walked and kept in the shade. He hurried on, but the moon was coming out faster still; the tops of the trees on the right side were now in the light. As he came up to the woods, the moon came out entirely from behind the mountains, and it grew bright and white as in the daytime. All the leaves could be seen on the trees. The mountains were calm and bright; it was as though everything were dead. All that could be heard was the rippling of a brook below.

He reached the forest, – he came across no men. Zhilin found a dark spot in the woods and sat down to rest himself.

He rested, and ate a cake. He found a stone, and began once more to break down the lock. He bruised his hands, but did not break the lock. He got up, and walked on. He marched about a verst, but his strength gave out, – his feet hurt him so. He would make ten steps and then stop. " What is to be done ?" he thought. " I will drag myself along until my strength gives out entirely. If I sit down, I shall not be able to get up. I cannot reach the fortress, so, when day breaks, I will lie down in the forest for the day, and at night I will move on."

He walked the whole night. He came across two Tartars only, but he heard them from afar, and so hid behind a tree.

The moon was beginning to pale, and Zhilin had not yet reached the edge of the forest.

" Well," he thought, " I will take another thirty steps, after which I will turn into the forest, where I will sit down."

He took the thirty steps, and there he saw that the forest came to an end. He went to the edge of it, and there it was quite light. Before him lay the steppe and the fortress, as in the palm of the hand, and to the left, close by at the foot of the mountain, fires were burning and going out, and the smoke was spreading, and men were near the camp-fires.

He took a sharp look at them: the guns were glistening, – those were Cossacks and soldiers.

Zhilin was happy. He collected his last strength and walked down-hill. And he thought: " God forfend that a Tartar rider should see me in the open! Though it is not far off, 1 should not get away."

No sooner had he thought so, when, behold, on a mound stood three Tartars, not more than 150 fathoms away. They saw him, and darted toward him. His heart just sank in him. He waved his arms and shouted as loud as he could :

" Brothers ! Help, brothers ! ”

Our men heard him, and away flew the mounted Cossacks. They started toward him, to cut off the Tartars.

The Cossacks had far to go, but the Tartars were near. And Zhilin collected his last strength, took the stocks in his hand, and ran toward the Cossacks. He was beside himself, and he made the sign of the cross, and shouted :

“ Brothers ! Brothers ! Brothers ! "

There were about fifteen Cossacks.

The Tartars were frightened, and they stopped before they reached him. And Zhilin ran up to the Cossacks.

The Cossacks surrounded him, and asked:

" Who are you ? Where do you come from? "

But Zhilin was beside himself, and he wept, and muttered :

" Brothers ! Brothers !"

The soldiers ran out, and surrounded Zhilin: one gave him bread, another gruel, a third vodka; one covered him with a cloak, another broke off the lock.

The officers heard of it, and took him to the fortress. The soldiers were happy, and his companions came to see him.

Zhilin told them what had happened, and said:

" So I have been home, and got married! No, evidently that is not my fate.”

And he remained in the service in the Caucasus. Not till a month later was Kostylin ransomed for five thousand. He was brought back more dead than alive.

ERMA K

In the reign of Ivan Vasilevich the Terrible there were the rich

merchants, the Strogandvs, and they lived in Perm, on the river Kama. They heard that along the river Kama, in a circle of 140 versts, there was good land: the soil had not been ploughed for centuries, the forests had not been cut down for centuries. In the forests were many wild animals, and along the river fish lakes, and no one was living on that land, but only Tartars passed through it.

The Strogandvs wrote a letter to the Tsar:

" Give us this land, and we will ourselves build towns there and gather people and settle them there, and will not allow the Tartars to pass through it."

The Tsar agreed to it, and gave them the land. The Stroganovs sent out clerks to gather people. And there came to them a large number of roving people. Whoever came received from the Stroganovs land, forest, and cattle, and no tenant pay was collected. All they had to do was to live and, in case of need, to go out in mass to fight the Tartars. Thus the land was settled by the Russian people.

About twenty years passed. The Stroganovs grew richer yet, and that land, 140 versts around, was not enough for them. They wanted to have more land still. About one hundred versts from them were high mountains, the Ural Mountains, and beyond them, they had heard, there was good land, and to that land there was no end. This land was ruled by a small Siberian prince, Kuchum by name. In former days Kuchum had sworn allegiance to the Russian Tsar, but later he began to rebel, and he threatened to destroy Strogaudv's towns.

So the Stroganovs wrote to the Tsar:

"You have given us land, and we have conquered it and turned it over to you; now the thievish Tsarling Kuchum is rebelling against you, and wants to take that land away and ruin us. Command us to take possession of the land beyond the Ural Mountains; we will conquer Kuchum, and will bring all his land under your rule."

The Tsar assented, and wrote back:

" If you have sufficient force, take the land away from Kuchum. Only do not entice many people away from Russia."

When the Strogandvs got that letter from the Tsar, they sent out clerks to collect more people. And they ordered them to persuade mostly the Cossacks from the Vdlga and the Don to come. At that time many Cossacks were roving along the Vdlga and the Don. They used to gather in bands of two, three, or six hundred men, and to select an atamdn, and to row down in barges, to capture ships and rob them, and for the winter they stayed in little towns on the shore.

The clerks arrived at the Volga, and there they asked who the famous Cossacks of that region were. They were told:

"There are many Cossacks. It is impossible to live for them. There

is Mishka Cherkdshenin, and Sary-Azman; but there is no fiercer one than Ermak Timo-fAch, the atamdn. He has a thousand men, and not only the merchants and the people are afraid of him, but even the Tsarian army does not dare to cope with him."

And the clerks went to ErmLk the atamdn, and began to persuade him to go to the Strogandvs. Ermak received the clerks, listened to their speeches, and promised to come with his people about the time of the Assumption of the Blessed Virgin.

Near the holiday of the Assumption there came to the Strogandvs six hundred Cossacks, with their atamdn, Ermdk Timof&ch. At first Stroganov sent them against the neighbouring Tartars. The Cossacks annihilated them. Then, when nothing was doing, the Cossacks roved in the neighbourhood and robbed.

So Strogandv sent for Ermak, and said:

«I will not keep you any longer, if you are going to be so wanton."

But Ermak said:

" I do not like it myself, but I cannot control my people, they are spoiled. Give us work to do !"

So Stroganov said:

"Go beyond the Ural and fight Kuchum, and take possession of his land. The Tsar will reward you for it."

And he showed the Tsar's letter to Errndk. Ermdk rejoiced, and collected his men, and said:

"You are shaming me before my master, — you are robbing without reason. If you do not stop, he will drive you away, and where will you go then ? At the Volga there is a large Tsarian army; we shall be caught, and then we shall suffer for our old misdeeds. But if you feel lonesome, here is work for you."

And he showed them the Tsar's letter, in which it said that Stroganov had been permitted to conquer land beyond the Ural. The Cossacks had a consultation, and agreed to go. Ermdk went to Strogandv, and they began to deliberate how they had best go.

They discussed how many barges they needed, how much grain, cattle, guns, powder, lead, how many captive Tartar interpreters, and how many foreigners as masters of gunnery.

Stroganov thought:

" Though it may cost me much, I must give them everything or else they will stay here and will ruin me."

Strogandv agreed to everything, gathered what was needed, and fitted

out Ermak and the Cossacks.

On the 1st of September the Cossacks rowed with Ermdk up the river Chusovaya on thirty-two barges, with twelve men in each. For four days they rowed up the river, and then they turned into Serdbryanaya River. Beyond that point it was impossible to navigate. They asked the guides, and learned that from there they had to cross the mountains and walk overland about two hundred versts, and then the rivers would begin again. The Cossacks stopped, built a town, and unloaded all their equipment; they abandoned the boats, made carts, put everything upon them, and started overland, across the mountains. All those places were covered with forest, and nobody was living there. They marched for about ten days, and struck the river Zharovnya. Here they stopped again, and made themselves boats. They loaded them, and rowed down the river. They rowed five days, and then came more cheerful places, — meadows, forests, lakes. There was a plenty of fish and of animals, and animals that had not been scared by hunters. They rowed another day, and sailed into the river Tura. Along the Tura they came on Tartar people and towns.

Ermak sent some Cossacks to take a look at a town, to see what it was like, and whether there was any considerable force in it. Twenty Cossacks went there, and they frightened all the Tartars, and seized the whole town, and captured all the cattle. Some of the Tartars they killed, and others they brought back alive.

Ermak asked the Tartars through his interpreters what kind of people they were, and under whose rule they were living. The Tartars said that they were in the Siberian kingdom, and that their king was Kuchum.

Erm6k let the Tartars go, but three of the more intelligent he took with him, to show him the road.

They rowed on. The farther they rowed, the larger did the river grow; and the farther they went, the better did the places become.

They met more and more people; only they were not strong men. And all the towns that were near the river the Cossacks conquered.

In one town they captured a large number of Tartars and one old man who was held in respect. They asked him what kind of a man he was. He said:

“ I am Tauzik, a servant of my king, Kuchum, who has made me a commander in this town.”

Erinak asked Tauzik about his king; how far his city of Sibir was; whether Kuchum had a large force; whether he had much wealth. Tauzik told him everything. He said:

“ Kuchum is the first king in the world. His city of Sibir is the largest city in the world. In that city,” he said, “ there are as many people and as many cattle as there are stars in the heaven.

There is no counting his force, and not all the kings of the world can conquer him.”

But Ermak said:

“ We Russians have come here to conquer your king and to take his city, and to put it into the hands of the Russian Tsar. We have a large force. Those who have come with me are only the advance-guard; those that are rowing down behind us in barges are numberless, and all of them have guns. Our guns pierce trees, not like your bows and arrows. Just look !”

And Ermak fired at a tree, and pierced it, and the Cossacks began to shoot on all sides. Tauzik in fright fell on his knees. Ermak said to him:

“Go to your King Kuchum and tell him what you have seen! Let him surrender, and if he does not, we will destroy him.”

And be dismissed Tauzik.

The Cossacks rowed on. They sailed into the river Tobol, and were getting nearer to the city of Sibir. They sailed up to the small river Babasan, and there they saw a small town on its bank, and around the town a large number of Tartars.

They sent an interpreter to the Tartars, to find out what kind of people they were. The interpreter returned, and said:

" That is Kuchum’s army that has gathered there. The leader of that army is Kuchum’s own son-in-law, Mamet-kul. He has commanded me to tell you that you must return, or else he will destroy you.”

ErmLk gathered his Cossacks, landed on the bank, and began to shoot at the Tartars. The moment the Tartars heard the shooting, they began to run. The Cossacks ran after them, and killed some, and captured others. Ma-metkul barely escaped.

The Cossacks sailed on. They sailed into a broad, rapid river, the Irtysh. Down Irtysh River they sailed for a day, and came to a fair town, and there they stopped. The Cossacks went to the town. As they were coming near, the Tartars began to shoot their arrows, and they wounded three Cossacks. Then Ermak sent an interpreter to tell the Tartars that they must surrender the town, or else they would all be killed. The interpreter went', and he returned, and said:

" Here lives Kuchum’s servant, Atik Murza Kachara. He has a large force, and he says that he will not surrender the town.”

ErmLk gathered the Cossacks, and said:

“ Boys, if we do not take this town, the Tartars will rejoice, and will not let us pass on. The more we strike them with terror, the easier will it be. Land all, and attack them all at once !"

So they did. There were many Tartars there, and they were brave.

When the Cossacks rushed at them, the Tartars began to shoot their arrows. They covered the Cossacks with them. Some were killed, and some wounded.

The Cossacks became enraged, and when they got to the Tartars, they killed all they could lay their hands on.

In this town the Cossacks found much property, — cattle, rugs, furs, and honey. They buried the dead, rested themselves, took away much property, and sailed on. They did not sail far, when they saw on the shore, like a city, an endless number of troops, and the whole army surrounded by a ditch and the ditch protected by timber. The Cossacks stopped. They deliberated. Ermdk gathered a circle about him.

" Well, boys, what shall we do ?"

The Cossacks were frightened. Some said that they ought to sail past, while others said that they ought to go back.

And they looked gloomy and began to scold Ermdk. They said:

" Why did you bring us here ? Already a few of ours have been killed, and many have been wounded; and all of us will perish here.”

They began to weep.

But Ermdk said to his sub-ataman, Ivan Koltso:

" Well, Vdnya, what do you think ? ”

And Koltso said :

" What do I think ? If they do not kill us to-day, they will to-morrow; and if not to-morrow, we shall die anyway on the oven. In my opinion, we ought to go out on the shore and rush in a body against the Tartars. Maybe God will give us victory.”

Ermak said:

" You are a brave man, Vanya! That is what must be done. Oh, you boys! You are not Cossacks, but old women. All you are good for is to catch sturgeon and frighten Tartar women. Can’t you see for yourselves ? If we turn back we shall be destroyed; and if we stay here, they will destroy us. How can we go back ? After a little work, it will come easier. Listen, boys! My father had a strong mare. Down-hill she would pull and on an even place she would pulL But when it came to going up-hill, she became stubborn and turned back, thinking that it would be easier. But my father took a club and belaboured her with it. She twisted and tugged and broke the whole cart. My father unhitched her from the cart and gave her a

terrible whacking. If she had pulled the cart, she would have suffered no torment. So it is with us, boys. There is only one thing left for us to do, and that is to make straight for the Tartars.”

The Cossacks laughed, and said:

" Timof&ch, you are evidently more clever than we are. You have no business to ask us fools. Take us where you please. A man does not die twice, and one death cannot be escaped.”

And Erm6k said:

" Listen, boys! This is what we shall do. They have not yet seen us alL Let us divide into three parts. Those in the middle will march straight against them, and the other two divisions will surround them on the right and on the left. When the middle detachment begins to walk toward them, they will think that we are all there, and so they will leap forward. Then we will strike them from the sides. That’s the way, boys! If we beat these, we shall not have to be afraid of anybody. We shall ourselves be kings.”

And so they did. When the middle detachment with Ermdk advanced, the Tartars screamed and leaped forward ; then they were attacked by Ivdn Koltso on the right, and by Meshcheryakov the ataman on the left. The Tartars were frightened, and ran. The Cossacks killed a great many of them. After that nobody dared to oppose Ermdk. And thus he entered the very city of Sibir. And there Ermdk settled down as though he were a king.

Then kinglets came to see Ermak, to bow to him. Tartars began to settle down in Sibir, and Kuchum and his son-in-law Mametkul were afraid to go straight at him, but kept going around in a circle, wondering how they might destroy him.

In the spring, during high water, the Tartars came running to Ermak, and said:

" Mametkul is again going against you: he has gathered a large army, and is making a stand near the river Vagdy.”

Ermak made his way over rivers, swamps, brooks, and forests, stole up with his Cossacks, rushed against Mametkul, killed a large number of Tartars, and took Mametkul alive and brought him to Sibir. After that there were only a few unruly Tartars left, and Ermdk went that summer against those that had not yet surrendered ; and along the Irtysh and the Ob Ermak conquered so much land that one could not march around it in two months.

When Ermdk had conquered all that land, he sent a messenger to the Stroganovs, and a letter:

" I have taken Kuchum’s city,” he said, " and have captured Mametkul, and have brought all the people here under my rule. Only I have lost many Cossacks. Send people to us that we may feel more

cheerful. There is no . end to the wealth in this country.”

He sent to them many costly furs, — fox, marten, and sable furs.

Two years passed after that. Ermak was still holding Sibir, but no aid came from Russia, and few Russians were left with Ermak.

One day the Tartar Karacha sent a messenger to Ermdk, saying:

" We have surrendered to you, but now the Nogays are oppressing us. Send your brave men to aid us! We shall together conquer the Nogays. And we swear to you that we shall not insult your brave men.”

Ermdk believed their oath, and sent forty men under Ivan Koltsd. When these forty men came there, the Tartars rushed against them and killed them, so there were still fewer Cossacks left.

Another time some Bukhara merchants sent word to Ermdk that they were on their way to the city of Sibir with goods, but that Kuchum had taken his stand with an army and would not let them pass through.

Erm^k took with him fifty men and went out to clear the road for the Bukhara merchants. He came to the Irtish River, but did not find the Bukharans. He remained there over night. It was a dark night, and it rained. The Cossacks had just lain down to sleep, when suddenly the Tartars rushed out and threw themselves on the sleepy men and began to strike them down. Ermdk jumped up and began to fight. He was wounded in the hand. He ran toward the river. The Tartars after him. He into the river. That was the last time he was seen. His body was not recovered, and no one found out how he died.

The following year came the Tsar’s army, and the Tartars were pacified.