

THE TWO OLD MEN

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1885

Therefore, being wearied with his journey, sat thus on the well: and it was about the sixth hour. There cometh a woman of Samaria to draw water: Jesus saith unto her, Give me to drink. (For his disciples were gone away unto the city to buy meat.) Then saith the woman of Samaria unto him, How is it that thou, being a Jew, askest drink of me, which am a woman of Samaria? for the Jews have no dealings with the Samaritans. Jesus answered and said unto her, If thou knewest the gift of God, and who it is that saith to thee, Give me to drink; thou wouldest have asked of him, for the Father seeketh such to worship him.

(John iv. 19-23.)

I.

Two old men got ready to go to old Jerusalem to pray to God. One of them was a rich peasant; his name was Efim Tardsych Sheveldv. The other was not a well-to-do man, and his name was Elisdy Bodrdv.

Efim was a steady man: he did not drink liquor, nor smoke tobacco, nor take snuff, had never cursed in his life, and was a stem, firm old man. He had served two terms as an elder, and had gone out of his office without a deficit. He had a large family, - two sons and a married grandson, - and all lived together. As to looks he was a sound, bearded, erect man, and only in his seventh decade did a gray streak appear in his beard.

Elisey was neither wealthy nor poor; in former days he used to work out as a carpenter, but in his old age he

stayed at home and kept bees. One son was away earning money, and another was living at home. Elisdy was a good-natured and merry man. He liked to drink liquor and take snuff, and sing songs; but he was a peaceable man, and lived in friendship with his home folk and with the neighbours. In appearance he was an undersized, swarthy man, with a curly beard and, like his saint, Prophet Elisha, his whole head was bald.

The old men had long ago made the vow and agreed to go together, but Tarasych had had no time before: he had so much business on hand. The moment one thing came to an end, another began; now he had to get his grandson married, now he was expecting his younger son back from the army, and now he had to build him a new hut.

On a holiday the two old men once met, and they sat down on logs.

« Well," said Elisey, " when are we going to carry out our vow? "

Efim frowned.

"We shall have to wait," he said, " for this is a hard year for me. I have started to build a house, – I thought I could do it with one hundred, but it is going on now in the third. And still it is not done. We shall have to let it go till summer. In the summer, God willing, we shall go by all means."

" According to my understanding," said Elisey, " there is no sense in delaying. We ought to go at once. Spring is the best time."

" The time is all right, but the work is begun, so how can I drop it ?"

" Have you nobody to attend to it ? . Your son will do it." " Do it ? My eldest is not reliable, – he drinks."

" When we die, friend, they will get along without us. Let your son learn it! "

« That is so, but still I want to see things done under my eyes."

" Oh, dear man ! You can never attend to everything. The other day the women in my house were washing and cleaning up for the holidays. This and that had to be done, and everything could not be looked after. My eldest daughter-in-law, a clever woman, said: * It is a lucky thing the holidays come without waiting for us, for else, no matter how much we might work, we should never get done.'"

Tarasych fell to musing.

" I have spent a great deal of money on this building," he said, " and I can't start out on the pilgrimage with empty hands. One hundred roubles are not a trifling matter."

Elisdy laughed.

" Don't sin, friend ! " he said. " You have ten times as much as I, and yet you talk about money. Only say when we shall start. I have no money, but that will be all right."

Tarasych smiled.

" What a rich man you are ! " he said. " Where shall you get the money from ? "

" I will scratch around in the house and will get together some there; and if that is not enough, I will let my neighbour have ten hives. He has been asking me for them."

" You will have a fine swarm! You will be worrying about it."

" Worrying? Ho, my friend! about anything in life but sins, precious than the soul."

I have never worried There is nothing more

" That is so; but still, it is not good if things do not run right at home."

" If things do not run right in our soul, it is worse. We have made a vow, so let us go! Truly, let us go !"

n.

Elisey persuaded his friend to go. Efim thought and thought about it, and on the following morning he came to Elisdy.

" Well, let us go," he said, " you have spoken rightly. God controls life and death. We must go while we are alive and have strength."

A week later the old men started.

Tarasych had money at home. He took one hundred roubles with him and left two hundred with his wife.

Elisey, too, got ready. He sold his neighbour ten hives and the increase of ten other hives. For the whole he received seventy roubles. The remaining thirty roubles he swept up from everybody in the house. His wife gave him the last she had, – she had put it away for her funeral; his daughter-in-law gave him what she had.

Efim Tardsych left all his affairs in the hands of his eldest son: he told him where to mow, and how many fields to mow, and where to haul the manure, and how to finish the hut and thatch it. He considered everything, and gave his orders. But all the order that Elisdy gave was that his wife should set out the young brood separately from the hives sold and give the neighbour what belonged to him without cheating him, but about domestic affairs he did not even speak: " The needs themselves," he thought, " will show you what to do and how to do it. You have been farming yourselves, so you will do as seems best to you."

The old men got ready. The home folk baked a lot of flat cakes for them, and they made wallets for themselves, cut out new leg-rags, put on new short boots, took reserve bast shoes, and started. The home folk saw them off beyond the enclosure and bade them good-bye,

and the old men were off for their pilgrimage.

Elisty left in a happy mood, and as soon as he left his village he forgot all his affairs. All the care he had was how to please his companion, how to keep from saying an unseemly word to anybody, how to reach the goal in peace and love, and how to get home again. As Elisfy walked along the road he either muttered some prayer or repeated such of the lives of the saints as he knew. Whenever he met a person on the road, or when he came to a hostelry, he tried to be as kind to everybody as he could, and to say to them God-fearing words. He walked along and was happy. There was only one thing Elisfy could not do : he wanted to stop taking snuff and had left his snuffbox at home, but he hankered for it. On the road a man offered him some. He wrangled with himself and stepped away from his companion so as not to lead him into sin, and took a pinch.

Efim Tardsych walked firmly and well; he did no wrong and spoke no vain words, but there was no lightness in his heart. The cares about his home did not leave his mind. He was thinking all the time about what was going on at home, – whether he had not forgotten to give his son some order, and whether his son was doing things in the right way. 'When he saw along the road that they were setting out potatoes or hauling manure, he wondered whether his son was doing as he had been ordered. He just felt like returning, and showing him what to do, and doing it himself.

III.

The old men walked for five weeks. They wore out their home-made bast shoes and began to buy new ones. They reached the country of the Little-Russians. Heretofore they had been paying for their night's lodging and for their dinner, but when they came to the Little-Russians, people vied with each other in inviting them to their houses. They let them come in, and fed them, and took no money from them, but even filled their wallets with bread, and now and then with flat cakes. Thus the old men walked without expense some seven hundred versts. They crossed another Government and came to a place where there had been a failure of crops. There they let them into the houses and did not take any money for their night's lodging, but would not feed them. And they did not give them bread everywhere, – not even for money could the old men get any in some places. The previous year, so the people said, nothing had grown. Those who had been rich were ruined, – they sold everything ; those who had lived in comfort came down to nothing; and the poor people either entirely left the country, or turned beggars, or just managed to exist at home. In the winter they lived on chaff and orach.

One night the two old men stayed in a borough. There they bought about fifteen pounds of bread. In the morning they left before daybreak, so that they might walk a good distance before the heat. They marched some ten versts and reached a brook. They sat down, filled their cups with water, softened the bread with it and ate it, and changed their leg-rags. They sat awhile and rested themselves. ЕИзëy took out his snuff-horn. Efim Tara-sych shook his head at him.

" Why don't you throw away that nasty thing ? " he asked.

Elisey waved his hand.

" Sin has overpowered me," he said. " What shall I do?"

They got up and marched on. They walked another ten versts. They came to a large village, and passed through it. It was quite warm then. ЕМзëy was tired, and wanted to stop and get a drink, but Tardsych would not stop. Tarasych was a better walker, and ЕМзëy had a hard time keeping up with him.

" I should like to get a drink," he said.

" Well, drink ! I do not want any."

ЕМзëy stopped.

" Do not wait for me," he said. " I will just run into a hut and get a drink of water. I will catch up with you at once."

" All right," he said. And Efim Tarasych proceeded by himself along the road, while ЕМзëy turned to go into a hut.

ЕМзëy came up to the hut. It was a small clay cabin; the lower part was black, the upper white, and the clay had long ago crumbled off, – evidently it had not been plastered for a long time, – and the roof was open at one end. The entrance was from the yard. ЕМзëy stepped into the yard, and there saw that a lean, beardless man with his shirt stuck in his trousers in Little-Russian fashion was lying near the earth mound. The man had evidently lain down in a cool spot, but now the sun was burning down upon him. He was lying there awake. ЕМзëy called out to him, asking him to give him a drink, but the man made no reply. " He is either sick, or an unkind man," thought ЕМзëy, going up to the door. Inside he heard a child crvinc. He knocked with the door–

ring. " Good people!" No answer. He struck with his staff against the door. " Christian people!" No stir. " Servants of the Lord !" No reply. Elisey was on the point of going away, when he heard somebody groaning within. " I wonder whether some misfortune has happened there to the people. I must see." And Elisy went into the hut.

IV.

Elisey turned the ring, – the door was not locked. He pushed the door open and walked through the vestibule. The door into the living-room was open. On the left there was an oven; straight ahead was the front corner; in the corner stood a shrine and a table;

beyond the table was a bench, and on it sat a bareheaded old woman, in nothing but a shirt; her head was leaning on the table, and near her stood a lean little boy, his face as yellow as wax and his belly swollen, and he was pulling the old woman's sleeve, and crying at the top of his voice and begging for something.

Elisey entered the room. There was a stifling air in the house. He saw a woman lying behind the oven, on the floor. She was lying on her face without looking at anything, and snoring, and now stretching out a leg and again drawing it up. And she tossed from side to side, – and from her came that oppressive smell: evidently she was very sick, and there was nobody to take her away. The old woman raised her head, when she saw the man.

"What do you want?" she said, in Little-Russian. "What do you want? We have nothing, my dear man."

Elisey understood what she was saying: he walked over to her.

"Servant of the Lord," he said, "I have come in to get a drink of water."

"There is none, I say, there is none. There is nothing here for you to take. Go!"

Elisey asked her:

"Is there no well man here to take this woman away?"

"There is nobody here: the man is dying in the yard, and we here."

The boy grew quiet when he saw the stranger, but when the old woman began to speak, he again took hold of her sleeve.

"Bread, granny, bread!" and he burst out weeping.

Just as Elisey was going to ask the old woman another question, the man tumbled into the hut; he walked along the wall and wanted to sit down on the bench, but before reaching it he fell down in the corner, near the threshold. He did not try to get up, but began to speak. He would say one word at a time, then draw his breath, then say something again.

"We are sick," he said, "and – hungry. The boy is starving." He indicated the boy with his head and began to weep.

Elisdy shifted his wallet on his back, freed his arms, let the wallet down on the ground, lifted it on the bench, and untied it. When it was open, he took out the bread and the knife, cut off a slice, and gave it to the man. The man did not take it, but pointed to the boy and the girl, to have it given to them. • Elisey gave it to the boy. "When the boy saw the bread, he made for it, grabbed the slice with both his hands, and stuck his nose into the bread. A girl crawled out from behind the oven and gazed at the bread. Elisfy gave

her, too, a piece. He cut off another slice and gave it to the old woman. She took it and began to chew at it.

" If you would just bring us some water," she said. " Their lips are parched. I wanted to bring some yesterday or to-day, – I do not remember when, – but I fell down and left the pail there, if nobody took it away."

Elisdy asked where their well was. The old woman told him where. Elisfy went out. He found the pail, brought some water, and gave the people to drink. The children ate some more bread with water, and the old woman ate some, but the man would not eat.

" My stomach will not hold it," he said.

The woman did not get up or come to: she was just tossing on the bed place. Elisey went to the shop, and bought millet, salt, flour, and butter. He found an axe, chopped some wood, and made a fire in the oven. The girl helped him. Elisfy cooked a soup and porridge, and fed the people.

V.

The man ate a little, and so did the old woman, and the girl and the little boy licked the bowl clean and embraced each other and fell asleep.

The man and the old woman told Elisey how it had all happened.

" We lived heretofore poorly," they said, " but when the crop failed us, we ate up in the fall everything we had. When we had nothing left, we began to beg from our neighbours and from good people. At first they gave us some, but later they refused. Some of them would have been willing to give us to eat, but they had nothing themselves. Besides we felt ashamed to beg: we owed everybody money and flour and bread. I looked for work," said the man, " but could find none. People were everywhere looking for work to get something to eat. One day I would work, and two I would go around looking for more work. The old woman and the girl went a distance away to beg, but the alms were poor, – nobody had any bread. Still, we managed to get something to eat: we thought we might squeeze through until the new crop; but in the spring they quit giving us alms altogether, and sickness fell upon us. It grew pretty bad: one day we would have something to eat, and two we went without it. We began to eat grass. And from the grass, or from some other reason, the woman grew sick. She lay down, and I had no strength, and we had nothing with which to improve matters."

" I was the only one," the old woman said, " who worked: but I gave out and grew weak, as I had nothing to eat. The girl, too, grew weak

and lost her courage. I sent her to the neighbours, but she did not go. She hid herself in a corner and would not go. A neighbour came in two days ago, but when she saw that we were hungry and sick, she turned around and went out. Her husband has left, and she has nothing with which to feed her young children. So we were lying here and waiting for death."

When Elisey heard what they said, he changed his mind about catching up with his companion, and remained there overnight. In the morning Elisdy got up and began to work about the house as though he were the master. He set bread with the old woman and made a fire in the oven. He went with the girl to the neighbours to fetch what was necessary. Everything he wanted to pick up was gone: there was nothing left for farming, and the clothes were used up. Elisdy got everything which was needed: some things he made himself, and some he bought. Elisdy stayed with them one day, and a second, and a third. The little boy regained his strength, and he began to walk on the bench and to make friends with ЕМзëy. The girl, too, became quite cheerful and helped him in everything. She kept running after Elisfy : " Grandfather, grandfather !"

The old woman got up and went to her neighbour. The man began to walk by holding on to the wall. Only the woman was lying down. On the third day she came to and asked for something to eat.

" Well," thought Elisey, " I had not expected to lose so much time. Now I must go."

VI.

The fourth day was the last of a fast, and Elisey said to himself:

«I will break fast with them. I will buy something for them for the holidays, and in the evening I must leave.»

Elisdy went once more to the village and bought milk, white flour, and lard. He and the old woman cooked and baked a lot of things, and in the morning Elisey went to mass and came back and broke fast with the people. On that day the woman got up and began to move about. The man shaved himself, put on a clean shirt, – the old woman had washed it for him, – and went to a rich peasant to ask a favour of him. His mowing and field were mortgaged to the rich man, so he went to ask him to let him have the mowing and the field until the new crop. He came back gloomy in the evening, and burst out weeping. The rich man would not show him the favour; he had asked him to bring the money.

Elisdy fell to musing.

" How are they going to live now ? People will be going out to mow,

but they cannot go, for it is all mortgaged. The rye will ripen and people will begin to harvest it (and there is such a fine stand of it!), but they have nothing to look forward to, – their desyatina is sold to the rich peasant. If I go away, they will fall back into poverty.”

And Elisdy was in doubt, and did not go away in the evening, but put it off until morning. He went into the yard to sleep. He said his prayers and lay down, but could not fall asleep.

“ I ought to go, – as it is I have spent much time and money; but I am sorry for the people. You can’t help everybody. I meant to bring them some water and give each a slice of bread, but see how far I have gone. Now I shall have to buy out his mowing and field. And if I buy out the field, I might as well buy a cow for the children, and a horse for the man to haul his sheaves with. Brother Elisdy Kuzmich, you are in for it! You have let yourself loose, and now you will not straighten out things.”

Elisey got up, took the caftan from under his head, and unrolled it; he drew out his snuff-horn and took a pinch, thinking that he would clear his thoughts, but no, – he thought and thought and could not come to any conclusion. He ought to get up and go, but he was sorry for the people. He did not know what to do. He rolled the caftan up under his head and lay down to sleep. He lay there for a long time, and the cocks crowed, and then only did he fall asleep. Suddenly he felt as though some one had wakened him. He saw himself all dressed, with his wallet and staff, and he had to pass through a gate, but it was just open enough to let a man squeeze through. He went to the gate and his wallet caught on one side, and as he was about to free it, one of his leg-rags got caught on the other side and came open. He tried to free the legrag, but it was not caught in the wicker fence : it was the girl who was holding on to it, and crying, “ Grandfather, grandfather, bread!” He looked at his foot, and there was the little boy holding on to it, and the old woman and the man were looking out of the window. Elisey awoke, and he began to speak to himself in an audible voice:

“ I will buy out the field and the mowing to-morrow, and will buy a horse, and flour to last until harvest-time, and a cow for the children. For how would it be to go beyond the sea to seek Christ and lose him within me ? I must get the people started.”

And Elisey fell asleep until morning. He awoke early. He went to the rich merchant, bought out the rye and gave him money for the mowing. He bought a scythe, – for that had been sold, too, – and brought it home. He sent the man out to mow, and himself went to see the peasants: he found a horse and a cart for sale at the innkeeper’s. He bargained with him for it, and bought it; then he bought a bag of flour, which he put in the cart, and went out to buy a cow. As he was walking, he came across two Little-Russian women, and they were talking to one another. Though they were talking in their dialect, he could make out what they were saying about him :

" You see, at first they did not recognize him; they thought that he was just a simple kind of a man. They say, he went in to get a drink, and he has just stopped there. What a lot of things he has bought them ! I myself saw him buy a horse and cart to-day of the innkeeper. Evidently there are such people in the world. I must go and take a look at him."

When Elisey heard that, he understood that they were praising him, and so he did not go to buy the cow. He returned to the innkeeper and gave him the money for the horse. He hitched it up and drove with the flour to the house. When he drove up to the gate, he stopped and climbed down from the cart. When the people of the house saw the horse, they were surprised. They thought that he had bought the horse for them, but did not dare say so. The master came out to open the gates.

" Grandfather, where did you get that horse ?"

" I bought it," he said. " I got it cheap. Mow some grass and put it in the cart, so that the horse may have some for the night. And take off the bag !"

The master unhitched the horse, carried the bag to the granary, mowed a lot of grass, and put it into the cart. They lay down to sleep. Elisey slept in the street, and thither he had carried his wallet in the evening. All the people fell asleep. Elisey got up, tied his wallet, put on his shoes and his caftan, and started down the road to catch up with Efim.

VII.

Elisey had walked about five versts, when day began to break. He sat down under a tree, untied his wallet, and began to count his money. He found that he had seventeen roubles twenty kopeks left.

" Well," he thought, " with this sum I cannot travel beyond the sea, but if I beg in Christ's name, I shall only increase my sin. Friend Efim will reach the place by himself, and will put up a candle for me. But I shall evidently never fulfil my vow. The master is merciful, and he will forgive me."

Elisdy got up, slung his wallet over his shoulders, and turned back. He made a circle around the village so that people might not see him. And soon he reached home. On his way out he had found it hard: it was hard keeping up with Efim ; but on his way home God made it easy for him, for he did not know what weariness was. Walking was just play to him, and he swayed his staff, and made as much as seventy versts a day.

Elisey came back home. The har vest was all in. The home folk were

glad to see the old man. They asked all about him, why he had left his companion and why he had not gone to Jerusalem, but had returned home. Elisey did not tell them anything.

" God did not grant me that I should," he said. " I spent my money on the way, and got separated from my companion. And so I did not go. Forgive me for Christ's sake."

He gave the old woman what money he had left. He asked all about the home matters: everything was right; everything had been attended to and nothing missed, and all were living in peace and agreement.

Efim's people heard that very day that EH3ëy had come back, and so they came to inquire about their old man. And Elisey told them the same story.

" You see," he said, " the old man started to walk briskly, and three days before St. Peter's day we lost each other. I wanted to catch up with him, but it happened that I spent all my money and could not go on, so I returned home."

The people marvelled how it was that such a clever man had acted so foolishly as to start and not reach the place and merely spend his money. They wondered awhile, and forgot about it. Elisey, too, forgot about it. He began to work about the house: he got the wood ready for the winter with his son, threshed the grain with the women, thatched the sheds, gathered in the bees, and gave ten hives with the young brood to his neighbour. When he got all the work done, he sent his son out to earn money, and himself sat down in the winter to plait bast shoes and hollow out blocks for the hives.

VIII.

All that day that Elisey passed with the sick people, Efim waited for his companion. He walked but a short distance and sat down. He waited and waited, and fell asleep ; when he awoke, he sat awhile, – but his companion did not turn up. He kept a sharp lookout for him, but the sun was going down behind a tree, and still Elisey was not there.

" I wonder whether he has not passed by me," he thought. " Maybe somebody drove him past, and he did not see me while I was asleep. But how could he help seeing me ? In the steppe you can see a long distance off. If I go back, he may be marching on, and we shall only get farther separated from each other. I will walk on, – we shall meet at the resting-place for the night."

When he came to a village, he asked the village officer to look out for an old man and bring him to the house where he stayed. Elisey did not come there for the night. Efim marched on, and asked

everybody whether they had seen a bald-headed old man. No one had seen him. Efim was surprised and walked on.

" We shall meet somewhere in Odessa," he thought, " or on the boat," and then he stopped thinking about it.

On the road he fell in with a pilgrim. The pilgrim, in calotte, cassock, and long hair, had been to Mount Athos, and was now going for the second time to Jerusalem. They met at a hostelry, and they had a chat and started off together.

Odessa without any accident. They

— many pilgrims there, and they had come together from all directions. Again Efim asked about Elisey, but nobody had seen him.

Efim provided himself with a passport, — that cost five roubles. He had forty roubles left for his round trip, and he bought bread and herring for the voyage. The ship was loaded, then the pilgrims were admitted, and Tarasych sat down beside the pilgrim he had met. The anchors were weighed, they pushed off from the shore, and the ship sailed across the sea.

During the day they had good sailing; in the evening a wind arose, rain fell, and the ship began to rock and to be washed by the waves. The people grew excited; the women began to shriek, and such men as were weak ran up and down the ship, trying to find a safe place. Efim, too, was frightened, but he did not show it: where he had sat down on the floor on boarding the ship by the side of Tambov peasants, he sat through the night and the following day; all of them held on to their wallets and did not speak. On the third day it grew calmer. On the fifth day they landed at Constantinople.

Some of the pilgrims went ashore there, to visit the Cathedral of St. Sophia, which now the Turks hold; Tarasych did not go, but remained on board the ship. All he did was to buy some white bread. They remained there a day, and then again sailed through the sea. They stopped at Smyrna town, and at another city by the name of Alexandria, and safely reached the city of Jaffa. In Jaffa all pilgrims go ashore : from there it is seventy versts on foot to Jerusalem. At the landing the people had quite a scare: the ship was high, and the people were let down into boats below; but the boats were rocking all the time, and two people were let down past the boat and got a ducking, but otherwise all went safely.

When all were ashore, they went on afoot; on the third day they reached Jerusalem at dinner-time. They

stopped in a suburb, in a Russian hostelry; there they had their passports stamped and ate their dinner, and then they followed a pilgrim to the holy places. It was too early yet to be admitted to the Sepulchre of the Lord, so they went to the Monastery of the Patriarch. There all the worshippers were gathered, and the female sex was put apart from the male. They were all ordered to take off

their shoes and sit in a circle. A monk came out with a towel, and began to wash everybody's feet. He would wash, and rub them clean, and kiss them, and thus he went around the whole circle. He washed Efim's feet and kissed them. They celebrated vigils and matins, and placed a candle, and served a mass for the parents. There they were fed, and received wine to drink.

On the following morning they went to the cell of Mary of Egypt, where she took refuge. There they placed candles, and a mass was celebrated. From there they went to Abraham's Monastery. They saw the Sebak garden, the place where Abraham wanted to sacrifice his son to God. Then they went to the place where Christ appeared to Mary Magdalene, and to the Church of Jacob, the brother of the Lord. The pilgrim showed them all the places, and in every place he told how much money they ought to give. At dinner they returned to the hostelry. They ate, and were just getting ready to lie down to sleep, when the pilgrim, who was rummaging through his clothes, began to sigh.

" They have pulled out my pocketbook with money in it," he said. " I had twenty-three roubles, - two ten-rouble bills, and three in change."

The pilgrim felt badly about it, but nothing could be done, and all went to sleep.

As Efim went to sleep, a temptation came over him.

" They have not taken the pilgrim's money," he thought, "he did not have any. Nowhere did he offer anything. He told me to give, but he himself did not offer any. He took a rouble from me."

As Efim was thinking so, he began to rebuke himself:

« How dare I judge the man, and commit a sin. I will not sin." The moment he forgot himself, he again thought that the pilgrim had a sharp eye on money, and that it was unlikely that they had taken the money from him. "He never had any money," he thought. "It's only an excuse."

They got up before evening and went to an early mass at the Church of the Resurrection, - to the Sepulchre of the Lord. The pilgrim did not leave Efim's side, but walked with him all the time.

They came to the church. There was there collected a large crowd of worshippers, Greeks, and Armenians, and Turks, and Syrians. Efim came with the people to the Holy Gate. A monk led them. He took them past the Turkish guard to the place where the Saviour was taken from the cross and anointed, and where candles were burning in nine large candlesticks. He showed and explained everything to them. Efim placed a candle there. Then the monks led Efim to the right over steps to Golgotha, where the cross stood; there Efim prayed; then Efim was shown the cleft where the earth was rent to the lowermost regions; then he was shown the place where Christ's hands and feet

had been nailed to the cross, and then he was shown Adam's grave, where Christ's blood dropped on his bones. Then they came to the rock on which Christ sat when they put the wreath of thorns on his head; then to the post to which Christ was tied when he was beaten. Then Efim saw the stone with the two holes, for Christ's feet. They wanted to show him other things, but the people hastened away: all hurried to the grotto of the Lord's Sepulchre. Some foreign mass was just ended, and the Russian began. Efim followed the people to the grotto.

He wanted to get away from the pilgrim, for in thought he still sinned against him, but the pilgrim stuck to him, and went with him to mass at the Sepulchre of the Lord. They wanted to stand close to it, but were too late. There was such a crowd there that it was not possible to move forward or back. Efim stood there and looked straight ahead and prayed, but every once in awhile he felt his purse, to see whether it was in his pocket. His thoughts were divided; now he thought that the pilgrim had deceived him; and then he thought, if he had not deceived him, and the pocketbook had really been stolen, the same might happen to him.

X.

Efim stood there and prayed and looked ahead into the chapel where the Sepulchre itself was, and where over the Sepulchre thirty-six lamps were burning. Efim looked over the heads to see the marvellous thing: under the very lamps, where the blessed fire was burning, in front of all, he saw an old man in a coarse caftan, with a bald spot shining on his whole head, and he looked very much like Elisdy Bodrov.

" He resembles Elisey," he thought. " But how can it be he? He could not have got here before me. The previous ship started a week ahead of us. He could not have been on that ship. On our ship he was not, for I saw all the pilgrims."

Just as Efim was thinking this, the old man began to pray, and made three bows: once in front of him, to God, and twice to either side, to all the Orthodox people. And as the old man turned his head to the right, Efim recognized him. Sure enough, it was Bodrov: it was his blackish, curly beard, and the gray streak on his cheeks, and his brows, his eyes, his nose, and full face, – all his. Certainly it was he, Elisey Bodrov.

Efim was glad that he had found his companion, and he marvelled how Elisdy could have got there ahead of him.

" How in the world did Bodrov get to that place in front ?" he thought. "No doubt he met a man who knew how to get him there. When all go out, I will hunt him up, and I will drop the pilgrim in the

colette, and will walk with him. Maybe he will take me to the front place."

Efim kept an eye on Elisdy, so as not to lose him. When the masses were over, the people began to stir. As they went up to kiss the Sepulchre, they crowded and pushed Efim to one side. He was frightened lest his purse should be stolen. He put his hand to his purse and tried to make his way out into the open. When he got out, he walked and walked, trying to find Elisdy, both on the outside and in the church. In the church he saw many people in the cells: some ate, and drank wine, and slept there, and read their prayers. But Elisey was not to be found. Efim returned to the hostelry, but he did not find his companion there either. On that evening the pilgrim, too, did not come back. He was gone, and had not returned the rouble to Efim. So Efim was left alone.

On the following day Efim went again to the Sepulchre of the Lord with a Tambov peasant, with whom he had journeyed on the ship. He wanted to make his way to the front, but he was again pushed back, and so he stood at a column and prayed. He looked ahead of him, and there in front, under the lamps, at the very Sepulchre of the Lord, stood Elisey. He had extended his hands, like a priest at the altar, and his bald spot shone over his whole head.

" Now," thought Efim, " I will not miss him."

He made his way to the front, but Elisey was not there. Evidently he had left. On the third day he again went to the Sepulchre of the Lord, and there he saw Elisfy standing in the holiest place, in sight of everybody, and his hands were stretched out, and he looked up, as though he saw something above him. And his bald spot shone over his whole head.

" Now," thought Efim, " I will certainly not miss him ; I will go and stand at the entrance, and then he cannot escape me."

Efim went out and stood there for a long time. He stood until after noon: all the people had passed out, but Elisfy was not among them.

Efim passed six weeks in Jerusalem, and visited all the places, Bethlehem, and Bethany, and the Jordan, and had a stamp put on a new shirt at the Lord's Sepulchre, to be buried in it, and filled a bottle of Jordan water, and got some earth, and candles with blessed fire, and in eight places inscribed names for the mass of the dead. He spent all his money and had just enough left to get home on, and so he started for home. He reached Jaffa, boarded a ship, landed at Odessa, and walked toward his home.

XI.

Efim walked by himself the same way he had come out. As he was getting close to his village, he began to worry again about how things were going at his house without him. In a year, he thought, much water runs by. It takes a lifetime to get together a home, but it does not take long to ruin it. He wondered how his son had done without him, how the spring had opened, how the cattle had wintered, and whether the hut was well built. Efim reached the spot where the year before he had parted from Elisfy. It was not possible to recognize the people. Where the year before they had suffered want, now there was plenty. Every tiling grew well in the field. The people picked up again and forgot their former misery. In the evening Efim reached the very village where the year before Elisey had fallen behind. He had just entered the village, when a little girl in a white shirt came running out of a hut.

" Grandfather, grandfather! Come to our house ! "

Efim wanted to go on, but the girl would not let him. She took hold of his coat and laughed and pulled him to the hut. A woman with a boy came out on the porch, and she, too, beckoned to him:

" Come in, grandfather, and eat supper with us and stay overnight!"

Efim stepped in.

" I can, at least, ask about Elisey," he thought. " This is the very hut into which he went to get a drink."

Efim went inside. The woman took off his wallet, gave liim water to wash himself, and seated him at the table. She fetched milk, cheese, cakes, and porridge, and placed it all on the table. Tardsych thanked her and praised the people for being hospitable to pilgrims. The woman shook her head.

"We cannot help receiving pilgrims," she said. "We received life from a pilgrim. We lived forgetting God, and God punished us in such a way that all of us were waiting for death. Last summer we came to such a point that we were all lying down sick and starved. We should certainly have died, but God sent us an old man like you. He stepped in during the daytime to get a drink; when he saw us, he took pity on us and remained at our house. He gave us to eat and to drink, and put us on our feet again. He cleared our land from debt, and bought a horse and cart and left it with us."

The old woman entered the room, and interrupted her speech:

" We do not know," she said, " whether he was a man or an angel of the Lord. He was good to us all, and pitied us, and then went away without giving his name, so that, we do not know for whom to pray to God. I see it as though it happened just now: I was lying down and waiting for death to come; I looked up and saw a man come in, – just a simple, bald-headed man, – and ask for a drink. I, sinful woman, thought that he was a tramp, but see what he did! When he saw us he put down his wallet, right in this spot, and opened it."

The girl broke in.

" No, granny," she said," first he put his wallet in the middle of the room, and only later did he put it on the bench"

And they began to dispute and to recall his words and deeds: where he had sat down, and where he had slept, and what he had done, and what he had said to each.

Toward evening the master of the house came home on a horse, and he, too, began to tell about Elisdy, and how he had stayed at their house.

'< If he had not come to us," he said, " we should all of us have died in sin. We were dying in despair, and we murmured against God and men. But he put us on our feet, and through him we found out God, and began to believe in good people. May Christ save him! Before that we lived like beasts, and he has made men of us."

They gave Efim to eat and to drink, and gave him a place to sleep, and themselves went to bed.

As Efim lay down, he could not sleep, and Elisdy did not leave his mind, but he thought of how he had seen him three times in Jerusalem in the foremost place.

" So this is the way he got ahead of me," he thought. " My work may be accepted or not, but his the Lord has accepted."

In the morning Efim bade the people good-bye: they filled his wallet with cakes and went to work, while Efim started out on the road.

XII.

Efim was away precisely a year. In the spring he returned home.

He reached his house in the evening. His son was not at home, – he was in the dram-shop. He returned intoxicated, and Efim began to ask him about the house. He saw by everything that the lad had got into bad ways without him. He had spent all the money, and the business he had neglected. His father scolded him, and he answered his father with rude words.

" You ought to have come back yourself," he said. " Instead, you went away and took all the money with you, and now you make me responsible."

The old man became angry and beat his son.

The next morning Efim Tardsych went to the elder to talk to him about his son. As he passed Elisdy's farm, Elisey's wife was standing on the porch and greeting him:

" Welcome, friend !" she said. " Did you, dear man, have a successful journey ?"

Efim Tarasych stopped.

" Thank God," he said, " I have been at Jerusalem, but I lost your husband on the way. I hear that he is back."

And the old woman started to talk to him, for she was fond of babbling.

«He is back, my dear; he has been back for quite awhile. He returned soon after Assumption day. We were so glad to see him back. It was lonely without him. Not that we mean Iris work, – for he is getting old. But he is the head, and it is jollier for us. How happy our lad was! Without him, he said, it was as without light for the eyes. It was lonely without him, my dear. We love him so much ! "

" Well, is he at home now ? "

"At home he is, neighbour, in the apiary, brushing in the swarms. He says it was a fine swarming season. The old man does not remember when there has been such a lot of bees. God gives us not according to our sins, he says. Come in, dear one! He will be so glad to see you."

Efim walked through the vestibule and through the yard to the apiary, to see Elisey. When he came inside the apiary, he saw Elisey standing without a net, without gloves, in a gray caftan, under a birch-tree, extending his arms and looking up, and his bald spot shone over his whole head, just as he had stood in Jerusalem at the Lord's Sepulchre, and above him, through the birch-tree, the sun glowed, and above his head the golden bees circled in the form of a wreath, and did not sting him. Efim stopped.

Elisey's wife called out to her husband:

" Your friend is here."

Elisdy looked around. He was happy, and walked over toward his friend, softly brushing the bees out of his beard.

" Welcome, friend, welcome, dear man ! Did you have a successful journey ? "

" My feet took me there, and I have brought you some water from the river Jordan. Come and get it! But whether the Lord has received my work – "

" Thank God ! Christ save you! "

Efim was silent.

"I was there with my feet, but in spirit you were there, or somebody else - "

" It is God's work, my friend, God's work."

" On my way home I stopped at the hut where I lost you."

Elisey was frightened, and he hastened to say:

" It is God's work, my friend, God's work. Well, won't you step in ? I will bring some honey."

And Elisdy changed the subject, and began to speak of home matters.

Efim heaved a sigh. He did not mention the people of the hut to Elisdy, nor what he had seen in Jerusalem. And he understood that God has enjoined that each man shall before his death carry out his vow - with love and good deeds.