

THE SONG UNSUNG.

Oh the singers sing on, and their songs are sweet,
And we listen their tones to hear,
For their harmonies all are full and complete
As the days of the dying year.
And we fancy there speaks in the strains so glad
All the thrill of a master's tongue,
But the songs that are sweetest the world e'er had
Are the beautiful songs unsung.

There's a glow in the words that the lips shape
Not.
And a thrill in the tones unheard,
As of tenderest memories half forgot,
Or the thrill of a long lost bird,
And the hopes of our being are set in tune
With the songs on the winds outflung,
But they fade like the glow of a day in June,
And are lost in the songs unsung.

There is never a wish or a prayer breathed out
By the sorrowful ones of earth
But is wreathed in a circle of rhythm about,
And in melody finds its birth.
There is never a deed that is grand or true,
Or a word for the right outflung,
But is aided up yonder beyond the blue
To the beautiful songs unsung.

Oh the air is all flooded with songs unsung,
That are borne on the wind's soft wing,
And the boughs in the woods they have quivering
Hung
Since the life giving breath of spring.
In the heart of the flowers they sweetly wait
Till the Angel of Song goes by,
And the angel will tenderly them translate,
As the flowers shall fade and die.

May the singers sing on, for their songs are sweet,
And the world it is glad to hear,
And our hearts will respond with a quickening
beat,
And an echo of gay, good cheer.
But the strains that can move us with most control,
That have closest our being clung,
That are part of the life of our inmost soul,
Are the beautiful songs unsung.

—Woman's Tribune.

THE PEDDLER.

In the days of my early youth there lived a peddler called Uncle Fedia. What his real name might be, whence he came, whether he had ever had a family, or a more pretentious occupation, no one knew. There are many such beings in our land, who wander about as if belonging nowhere, and as if the Almighty had sown and then forgotten them. They seem like the sea gulls—useless birds—that roam about without ever resting.

Uncle Fedia went from one village to another, appearing among us four or five times a year with a plump pack on his thin little horse. He wore a flat cap and a long, ragged foxskin pelisse and had the cowed expression of a whipped dog; in fact, he looked more like a highway vagabond than an honest Russian peasant, for the latter always has a frank face and smiling lips, and wears a sheepskin touloupe.

None of the villagers liked Uncle Fedia, for they suspected him of being in the habit of casting spells. It was not for nothing, they said, that he kept, at the very bottom of his pack, all sorts of books, pens and ink, besides mysterious glasses, through which he could see a man three versts away! He wandered everywhere, often arriving at a hamlet after nightfall and going away before dawn. What wonder, then, that children and even cattle looked at him askance!

In the homes of the sick he was accused of more serious misdemeanors. Those who rashly gave him a night's shelter often missed various objects when he had gone on his way—silver spoons, articles of clothing, etc., and the servants always agreed in laying the thefts to his charge. He was also known to be a confirmed drunkard, having more than once been found unconscious lying between the wheels of his cart on the high road. Other men had been known to fall thus through fatigue or cold, but it was very easy to declare that the homeless peddler had been drinking.

There was hardly ever a row in a tavern but Fedia was proved to be at the bottom of it; the police, after due investigation, deciding that the trouble originated with the silent stranger who was sitting in a corner, and whose passports were, to say the least, suspicious. In consequence of these facts the peddler was often chased and hooted at in the streets, and when the children pelted him with stones he would whip up his pony and make off so meekly that every one knew that he had a bad conscience. In short it was considered impossible for any honest man to like Uncle Fedia.

However, I was sincerely fond of the old fellow. He seems to have been a part of my childhood, and will always figure in my memory in the place of honor, which is sacred to the keenest joys. As far back as I can remember, he was associated with the eve of great feast days, and I can still recall the sensation that was created by the sound of his little bell at the gateway. He would come into the warm vestibule, in his foxskin pelisse, bringing an air of cold and snow with him, and here he would open his great basket with its two compartments, and oh, what treasures were revealed!

The whole household would assemble as he displayed his wares. The servant

maids, with glistening eyes, would hustle each other in their eagerness to see more closely and to handle the ribbons, laces and embroidered handkerchiefs.

As for me, I always waited with impatience for the opening of the lowest case of all, where the playthings were kept, and if I had no money Uncle Fedia seemed to read my despairing glance and often gave me credit for a pocket knife or a brightly colored picture from Souzdal. Later, it was always he who brought me books, gunpowder and fish bait. At sight of such proofs of our amicable relations my father would frown sternly and make a sign to our old major domo, who would immediately assume a bulldog air of watchfulness, and when all the purchases were made Uncle Fedia, without a moment's delay, would pack up his goods and go out, closely watched as he passed through the court yard, and no one ever helped him to lift his heavy pack into the cart. I more than once thought of taking the old man's part, but my courage failed me, and I knew, moreover, that it would be useless to strive against the general prejudice.

The last time Uncle Fedia came to our house was on a stormy Sunday evening. As he was going away, he looked up at the sky and asked me timidly whether he might be allowed to pass the night in our stable with his horse. My mother, however, turned pale at the suggestion, and my father refused in a peremptory tone. The old man went on his way without another word, and I ran after him and whispered:

"Uncle Fedia, the mill is open; you could take shelter there."
"Thanks, child," he answered, "but I shall soon reach town."
"But suppose the storm overtakes you?"

"It will not matter, child; there would be no one to grieve for Uncle Fedia," he said sadly.

I had never known him to give utterance to so many words in a breath before, and I turned back, thinking that he could not be such a bad man as people said.

The next day, however, I felt ashamed of my decision, for my father came into my room exclaiming in an excited tone: "I congratulate you upon your protegee. Thanks be to heaven that I did not listen to you yesterday!"

And he told me that during the night some one had set fire to a house in the neighborhood whose owner was hard on the peasantry and cordially disliked by them. My father made sure that the old peddler was the culprit, and Uncle Fedia was arrested the next day.

There was not sufficient proof against him, however, so he was released, and suspicion fell upon a woman named Akonlina, who had been employed in our neighbor's house. She had been discharged for impertinence on the evening before the fire, and, after uttering sundry threats, had gone toward her home. She had not, however, appeared in the little cabin until morning, and now was unable to give a satisfactory account of her whereabouts during the night.

Three months later the trial took place. My father was called as a witness, Akonlina having formerly been his tenant, and yielding to my boyish entreaties he took me to town with him. On arriving he left me with the horses and carriage at the inn, and told me to wait there patiently until his return. But this being too much for my curiosity I slipped out behind him, followed him down the street and crept into the courtroom. Here I crouched unnoticed in a corner near the doorway and listened to the proceedings with the liveliest interest.

It was a very bare looking room, with a long row of benches on each side, a platform at one end, where sat the judges, and just overhead on the white-washed wall was a large, round clock, with a crucifix hanging above it.

The hall was full of people. On the right sat the nobles, land owners and city officials; on the left were the peasants of Ivanofka, where the fire had taken place, and of our village. On the prisoners' bench sat Akonlina, and just behind her one of her relations was holding an infant, and at the same time trying to keep two little girls amused. These were Akonlina's children.

Every eye was fixed upon the accused. She was young, strong and straight—neither pretty nor plain, but a true Russian type, with a round, flat face, bright color, and a dull, stubborn expression. She seemed to pay no heed to what the clerk was saying in his sleepy voice, and looked at neither the judges nor the audience, but kept her eyes fixed upon the great clock, whence she occasionally glanced at the door, as if anxiously expecting an arrival.

The testimony against her was overwhelming. She was of a turbulent, intractable disposition, but worked hard to support her children, having recently lost her husband, a worthless fellow who had died of drink. After

being discharged by the lady of Ivanofka she had been heard to use threatening language while stopping at the mill to buy some straw, and had appeared in our village the next day tired and muddy and affecting to be ignorant of the fire in the night.

Akonlina declared that she had slept in a barn belonging to a cousin of hers named Anton Petrovitch. Unfortunately this person had lately left the country and gone to seek his fortune at Odessa, whence he was supposed to have embarked as a sailor in a foreign ship. Inquiry proved fruitless respecting his whereabouts, but that fact was thought to be of but little consequence, as the woman's statement was evidently a false one.

The punishment for incendiarism is banishment to Siberia, but before sentence was passed a number of witnesses were to be examined.

Akonlina paid little or no attention to the examination of the witnesses, but kept looking from the clock to the door, and it was evident that only one fact was clear to her dull understanding—Anton Petrovitch was the one person who could save her, and she clung tenaciously to the idea that Anton Petrovitch would enter by that door and say the necessary words before it was too late. People had told her that her cousin was reported to have perished by shipwreck in the distant sea, but that could not be. God was too just to let her suffer for the want of a few words. Messages had been sent to Odessa, and she clung desperately to the hope that Anton would be found. But as the clock's hands moved round and the time went by the hope began to weaken.

The president of the court put more questions to the accused for the last time.

"I am innocent," was her reply, repeated again and again. "I know nothing about the fire; I was not near the place at all. When Anton Petrovitch comes he will tell you. I know nothing about it—I am innocent."

The judges retired for a few minutes. When they returned the president rose, holding a paper in his hands.

Then Akonlina knew that all was over. A shudder passed through her frame. She stretched out her hands and convulsively patted the heads of her children; then, falling upon her knees, she raised her clasped hands toward the crucifix on the wall and wildly exclaimed:

"Christ, my Saviour, save me! Lord, have pity upon me and my children!"

At the sound of her prayer and at sight of her supplicating attitude all the country people present fell on their knees with one accord and reverently made the sign of the cross. A sort of stupor seized the large assembly, lords and judges seemed struck dumb, and the silence was so profound that I could plainly hear the ticking of the great clock upon the wall as the pendulum swung back and forth unceasingly, like the measure of eternal justice. The clock was the first to break the silence—striking the hour of noon with its grave, harsh voice, while every one listened breathlessly. The sound roused Akonlina, and she turned toward the door with a last agonizing look. Many an eye followed hers, and I think that no one would have been astonished to see Anton Petrovitch enter at that moment. But the door remained closed, and now, for the first time, I perceived the old peddler standing near it, clad in his ragged pelisse.

His small, blinking eyes wandered round the room, his gaze resting timidly upon the judges, then passing on to Akonlina and her children. As he looked at the little ones an expression of gentle kindness came into his face, such as I had often seen when I had no money, and he gave me the pictures from Souzdal. When the president began to read the sentence Uncle Fedia listened for a minute, looked up at the crucifix and down at the children, then slowly, and taking care to disturb no one, he made his way to the platform and stood twisting his cap in his fingers.

"What do you want?" asked the president of the court as he stopped in the middle of his reading.

"I beg your pardon, sir," said the old man, "this woman is innocent. I set the house on fire."

The judges and the people looked at him in amazement, and the president asked him some questions. His replies were given awkwardly, but left no room for doubt as to his guilt. He said that he had spent the first part of the night in question in the old mill, and had seen Akonlina going with her bundle of straw toward Anton Petrovitch's barn. Soon after midnight he had made his way to Ivanofka and set fire to the house out of revenge, the owner having caused him to be cruelly beaten a year before. As a proof he mentioned a small pot of tar which had been found at Ivanofka and which he had bought the day previous.

A feeling of relief spread among the audience when it became evident that the poor woman was not to suffer unjustly, and every one seemed glad to find that the first suspicions against the

peddler were correct. A new sentence was drawn up, and as he stood waiting to hear it read Uncle Fedia dropped his head in shame at seeing every eye fixed upon him in scorn and reproach.

He was sentenced to the mines of Siberia, but his time was limited to ten years in consideration of his having voluntarily confessed his guilt. The guards led him away, and as he passed me I put a few rubles in his hand and whispered:

"Good-by, poor Uncle Fedia."
"Thanks, child," he answered. "It does not matter about me; there is no one to grieve for me."

The next minute I had lost sight of him. The time passed by, and six years later I returned to my home for the summer vacation.

One morning while we were at breakfast in the garden we saw the priest of the parish hurrying toward us in great excitement.

"What do you think has happened?" he cried.

"I know," replied my father. "The miller fell from a ladder last night and has died of his injuries."

"You do not know the most terrible part of the matter," said the priest. "I was sent for by the dying man, and he told me his dreadful secret. 'Father,' said he, 'I committed a great sin six years ago—I set fire to Ivanofka.' 'What?' I cried; 'it was the peddler, Fedia.' But he interrupted me, saying: 'I set fire to the house to revenge myself on the owner, who had caused me to be taken as a soldier. Uncle Fedia passed a night in the mill after selling me a pot of tar. I thought that he suspected me then, and on the day of the trial he came to me and said with an earnest air:

"There is going to be a terrible piece of business; they are going to condemn Akonlina to Siberia. Perhaps she is innocent. I would not listen, but threatened him so fiercely that he went away frightened. Ah! what a good man he was—he pitied the woman and her little children and sacrificed himself to save them. Oh, miserable wretch that I am! how can I hope to obtain pardon!' He died a few minutes after his confession."

Without losing a moment we took the priest to the governor of the province, and the latter on hearing the declaration wrote to the authorities in Siberia.

Months of fruitless correspondence ensued. Owing to the lack of particulars furnished them they could not make sure as to which convict our magistrate referred. At last the governor general of Siberia closed the correspondence, refusing to investigate further.

"Do you suppose it possible," he wrote, "for me to trace a man named Fedia throughout the Russian possessions in Asia? Do you think there is only one vagabond of that name? During the past year two Fedias died in the hospital at Tomsk and three at Tobolsk, not to mention several in other places."

When the failure of the search became known Akonlina brought a basket of fresh eggs to the priest, and asked him to celebrate divine service for the soul of poor Uncle Fedia. The widow, with her children and all the villagers, went to the church at the appointed hour, and as we knelt there I seemed to see the old man in his ragged pelisse shrinking before the angry faces in the court room. Many persons who had frowned at him that day were in the church, and they now shed tears as they thought of him dying in a hospital at Tomsk or Tobolsk—heaven alone knows where.—Translated from the Russian

An account which recently appeared in The Novoe Vremya of a balloon voyage from St. Petersburg to a point not far beyond Lake Ladoga conveys a striking picture of the benighted condition of the Russian peasantry, even within a few hundred miles of the capital. The balloon in question, containing a Col. Pomostzeff and Count Covanko, descended at a place called Moustoi, in the government of Oletz, 300 versts from St. Petersburg, and this is what followed:

There was a general panic. The peasants thought the anti-Christ was descending from the sky, and that the end of the world was come. Women screamed, children cried and all the inhabitants were well nigh out of their wits from fear. Soon from the wood came the women who had been gathering mushrooms, running as fast as their legs could carry them. "A house," they cried, "has come down from the sky with wonderful strangers in it!"

The peasants thereupon hid themselves in the village as best they could, with the exception of a few bold fellows, who took their hatchets and cudgels and proceeded cautiously to the forest. It was long before these latter, who assisted to convey the apparatus to the village, could prevail upon their fellow villagers to come out of their hiding places.

The aeronauts spent the night in this village, and in the morning marched back, the balloon being packed on a sledge, because there was not a wheeled

TAKEN FROM THE GERMAN.



THIS BOY HAVING HEARD SO MUCH OF THE SUPERIOR QUALITIES OF WHALEN'S SHIELD CHEWING TOBACCO, CAN NO LONGER RESIST THE TEMPTATION TO ROB ONE OF OUR GERMAN-AMERICAN CITIZENS OF HIS CHEWING TOBACCO.

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