STRAWBERRIES.

BY COUNT LEO TOLSTOY.

"THE RUSSIAN PEOPLE HAS SPECIAL QUALITIES."

THE VALET HAD A LONG HUNT FOR THE GUEST'S HAT AND UMBRELLA.

IT was a hot June day. The air was still. The foliage of the forest was shining, thick and green. Rare were the yellowed leaves that fell from the branches and the lindens. Odorous flowers enameled the eglantine thickets; the clearings were carpeted with lucern; the wheat, thick, bending, undulating was ripe to bursting.

In the fields, the moor-hen cried. In the oats and the barley quail whistled and deported by turns. The nightingale in the wood emitted only an occasional trill. The heat was dry. The dust on the roads was a finger deep where undisturbed and, under the slightest whiff of wind, it rose in dense clouds which drifted sometimes to the right and sometimes to the left.

The peasants are completing their buildings and hauling manure; the hungry cattle are waiting under the burning sun for their provender; the cows and the young calves accompanied by the cowherds are hurrying to their stables switching their tails. Small boys are guarding the horses on the roadsides. Women are dragging sacks of grass pulled in the woods. Little girls and maidens race together to thickets where nestle the strawberries they will sell to the city people who have come into the country for the summer. These last, who occupy villas of pretentious architecture, are either strolling under parasols in light, elegant, costly costumes along their graveled walks or they are sitting in the shade of groves which are fitted with tables, and, overcome by the heat, are drinking tea or cooling beverages.

Near the superb villa of Nicholas Semionowitch, adorned with a tower, a veranda, little balconies, a gallery—all fresh, new and spick and span, stands a carriage drawn by three horses wearing bells, which, for 15 roubles the round trip, has brought a gentleman from St. Petersburg. This gentleman, a politician, tolerant, very much in view, who serves on all the committee and all the commissions, who composes with great tact the memorials to the sovereign and who calls himself a faithful subject, this gentleman has come to pass the day (for, as an exceedingly busy man, he never gives more than a day) with his friend, a playmate of his boyhood, and almost of the same party. They differ only regarding the manner in which constitutional principles should be applied.

The St. Petersburgian is first of all a European with a slight penchant for socialism. He draws enormous salaries in the positions he fills. Nicholas Semionovitch, on the contrary, is a true Russian, orthodox, somewhat Slavophile and possesses several thousand deciatines of land.

They have dined in the garden; they have been served a dinner of five courses; but, by reason of the heat, they have eaten almost nothing, so that the pains of the cook, who receives 40 roubles a month, and the labor of his scullions, who have been particularly zealous out of respect for the guest, have practically gone for nothing. These diners have relished only the cold soup, the fresh salmon and the parti-colored ices, attractive in form, ornamented with filaments of sugar and surrounded by tiny cakes.

The other diners were the physician, a very liberal man; the tutor of the children; a student, a fierce revolutionary Socialist whom only Nicholas Semionovitch can hold in check; Mary, the wife of Nicholas Semionovitch, and the three children, of whom the smallest did not appear until dessert. The dinner was a trifle dull; first because Mary, an excessively nervous woman was anxious about the stomach of Gorga (the pet name of Nicholas, the youngest child) and secondly, because the moment the conversation touched on politics, the student, in order to show that he was not afraid to express his opinions before anybody, took part in the conversation; thereupon, the guest became silent and Nicholas Semionovitch endeavored to calm the revolutionist.

They sat down to the table at 7 o'clock. After dinner the friends installed themselves on the veranda and sipped, as they talked, white wine diluted with iced mineral water.

Their first disagreement was over the methods of elections. Was indirect representation to be preferred or not to be preferred to universal suffrage? They were debating very warmly when they were called into the dining-room (protected against flies by muslin screens) for the tea.

During the serving of the tea, the conversation became general. Mary was scantly interested in it, all absorbed as she was by the signs of the derangement of Goga's stomach.

They talked of painting. Mary attempted to prove that there is in the decadent school an indefinable but undeniable something. At the moment, she was not even thinking of decadent painting; she was merely repeating what she had heard said many times before.

For the guest, the subject was totally devoid of interest, but he had heard decadent painting ridiculed and he talked about it with such a display of knowledge that no one would have suspected him of being indifferent, not only to the decadent school of painting, but to every other school.

Nicholas Semionovitch knew by the look on his wife that something was troubling her, and he feared some sort of a disagreeable scene. Besides, it did not amuse him to assist at the desmemberment of what she had said already a hundred times.

The splendid bronze chandelier was lighted in the dining-room and Venetian lanterns in the court. The children were sent to bed after the little patient had been worked over a trifle.

The guest, Nicolas Semionovitch and the doctor went out on the veranda again. The valet brings candles fitted with little shades, mineral water and wine, and toward midnight the conversation begins to grow animated. They asked each other what measures the government ought to take at this highly important turning point in the history of Russia. The guest and the host did not cease for a moment to talk and smoke.

Outside, near the porte-cochere, might be heard the tinkling of the bells of the harnessed horses, which had not been fed, and the movements of the old postillion, who now yawned and now snored. This postillion had worked more than 20 years for the same employer, and sent all his wages to his brother in the country except the three to five roubles spent for drink.

When from several quarters the cocks began to call and challenge each other, the coachman awoke and began to ask himself if he had not been forgotten. He descended from his seat and entered the villa. He perceived his passenger seated, eating something, and talking between mouthfuls. He did not dare show himself, and went in quest of a valet.

The valet, in livery, was sleeping in the chair in the hall. The postillion woke him. The valet, an ancient serf, who supported by his earnings (the place was advantageous; 15 rubles per month and about 100 rubles fees in a year) his numerous family—five girls and two boys—jumped up, shook himself, stretched and went to tell his master that the postillion was getting nervous.

When the valet approached the talkers, the discussion was in full swing. The doctor, who had joined the group, was taking part in it also.

"I cannot admit," said the guest, "that the Russian people ought to develop along other lines. What is needed, before anything else, is liberty, political liberty. . . . . the safeguard of the rights of others."

The guest felt that he was getting sadly tangled, and was not saying what he meant to say, but in the heat of the discussion he could not find the right words.

"Without doubt," said Nicholas Semionovitch, who was listening to his interlocutor, being solely intent on expressing the thought which lay close to his heart, "without doubt. . . . but the end can be reached by another path, not through a majority vote, but by a general agreement. Look at the decision of the mir!"

"Ah, this mir!"

"It cannot be denied," said the doctor, "that the Slavic race is peculiarly constituted. I would not affirm, for instance, that the Polish right of veto is the ideal. . . . . ."

"Permit me to finish my thought," said Nicholas Semionovitch. "The Russian people has special qualities. These qualities. . . . . ."

He was interrupted by the arrival of the servant, who approached with his eyes half open.

"The coachman is getting uneasy," said the valet.

"Tell him that I am going to leave soon, and that I will pay him for his time what is proper."

"Very well, sir."

The valet withdrew, and Nicholas Semionovitch was able to continue the development of his idea. But the guest and the doctor had heard it a score of times already (at least, so it seemed to them), and they began to contradict him, especially the guest, by citing examples drawn from history. He was exceedingly well versed in history. The doctor sided with the guest, whose erudition he admired, and he was enchanted to have made his acquaintance.

The conversation ran on. The dawn began to appear behind the wood on the other side of the road and the nightingale to sing; and still the group continued to smoke and talk, to talk and smoke. They would be talking yet, perhaps, if the chambermaid had not appeared.

She was an orphan, who, to earn her living, had been obliged to enter domestic service. She had served first in the house of a merchant. One of the employes had seduced her and she had become a mother. But her child died. Then she entered the service of a functionary, whose son, a collegian, had allowed her no peace. Finally she had entered as second chambermaid the service of Nicholas Semionovitch, where she was happy. Here her wages were paid her regularly and she had a safe home.

She came to say that madame desired the doctor and Nicholas Semionovitch.

"What is the matter?" demanded the latter.

"Nicholas Nikolaievitch is not well," replied the maid (Nicholas Nikolaievitch was Goga, who had overeaten the strawberries).

"Well, in any event, it is time to go," said the guest. "Look, it is daylight. We have parted well," he added, smiling, content with himself and with his companions, who had permitted him to talk so much and so long. And he took his leave of them.

The valet, dragging his benumbed legs with difficulty, had a long hunt for the guest's hat and umbrella, which had been mislaid in some corner or other. The valet counted on a good fee, but the guest, always generous, being in the habit of giving at least a rouble, worn out by the conversation, forgot all about the fee, and it was not until he was on his way that it occurred to him that he had not given anything to the valet. "Bah! so much the worse!"

The coachman mounted his box, picked up the reins, seated himself to one side, and the carriage moved away. The bells tinkled and the St. Petersburgian, gently rocked by the highly elastic springs, mused on the poverty of ideas and the narrowness of his friends.

Nicholas Semionovitch, who did not immediately join his wife, thought the same thing. "This Petersburgian narrowness, is frightful! They cannot shake it off!" he said to himself.

He did not hurry to go to his wife, for he foresaw trouble of some sort.

Strawberries were at the root of all the trouble. Some of the village children, the afternoon before, had brought some to the house, and Nicholas Semionovitch, without bargaining, had bought two platefuls of the fruit, which was not very ripe. The children had run up to him at once and had eaten all the berries. Mary was in her room at the time, and when she learned that strawberries had been given to Goga, she was very angry, since the child's stomach was already out of order. She began heaping reproaches on her husband, who retorted in the same tone, and the result was almost a quarrel.

The wife, wearing a wrapper of flowered silk, of which she was very fond, but to hich she gave scarcely a thought now, was in the children's room; she was holding a candle for the doctor, who, with a very grave air, was examining the child.

"Yes," she exclaimed, in an important tone, "it is those accursed strawberries!"

"Why, precisely strawberries?" queried Nicholas Semionovitch, timidly.

"Why? You gave them to him to eat, and I have been up all night with him and the child is going to die!"

"No, he will not die," said the doctor, smiling; "a little bismuth and all will be well. We will give him some right away."

"He was gone to sleep again," said she.

"Well, then, no bismuth. I will come tomorrow."

"Thank you."

The doctor went away, but it was long before Nicholas Semionovitch succeeded in calming his wife. When he finally got to sleep, it was already broad day.

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At almost the same hour the peasants and the children of the neighboring village were returning to their homes, after guarding the cattle all night. Some were on horseback; others led their horses by the bridle, while the colts ran behind.

Taraska Regounor, a barefooted boy of 12 years, in a short pelisse and a cap, mounted on a mare and holding by the bridle a gelding bay like his dam, was galloping toward the village ahead of all the others. A black dog ran gayly before the horses, turning round often to look at them. A young bay stallion pranced, proudly kicking out now to the right and now to the left. Taraska, arrived at his iza, hitched the horses near the door and entered the hall.

"Oh! still sleeping!" cried he to his sisters and to his brother, who slept on the floor in the hall. The mother, who slept with them was already up to milk the cow.

Little Liga jumped up, shook out with her two hands her towsled blonde mane, and Fedka, who was sleeping beside her, her head buried in a pelisse, rubbed her eyes.

The night before the children had decided to go strawberrying, and Taraska had promised to wake his sister and his little brother as soon as he returned from his night watch, and he had kept his word. During the night, sitting at the base of a thicket, he had fought against sleep; but now he was completely awake and was eager to be off at once with the other children strawberrying. His mother gave him a pitcher of milk. He cut himself a piece of bread and sat down to the table to eat.

When, clad only in a shirt and a pair of pantaloons, he started with long strides up the road (leaving behind him the tracks of his bare feet, which mingled with other similar tracks, bigger or smaller than his own, with the toes plainly imprinted), the red and white spots of the clothes of the little girls standing out against the fresh verdure of the wood, were already to be seen in the distance. (The night before, each had made ready a little basket and a jar, and without wasting any time, without even stopping to take bread, after making two signs of the cross, they had set out.)

Taraska joined them in the great wood soon after they had left the road. Everything was covered with dew—the grass, the bushes and the lowest branches of the trees. The bare legs of the little girls, drenched and chilled by the dew, were soon warmed by their walking, now on the humid grass and now on the dry soil. The strawberries were especially abundant in the coppices. Here, where the grass, not very high, mingled with the young shoots, the strawberries lay hidden—whitish, pinkish and, in spots, completely red. Squatting on the ground, the little girls picked berry after berry; and with their tiny brown fingers they put the least perfect ones into their mouths and the rest into their baskets.

"Olga, here are heaps of them! You wouldn't believe it!"

"No, no! You're wrong!"

"Aou!" cried from time to time the children, hidden from each other by the thicket.

Taraska went off by himself to a coppice on the farther side of a ravine consisting of young walnuts and planes, which were already as tall as a man. The grass there was ranker and thicker and the berries there were bigger and juicier than elsewhere.

"Groushka!"

"Aou!"

"And the wolf!"

"What wolf! Why do you frighten me? But I'm not afraid!" answered Groushka, and, troubled by the thought of the wolf, she ate berry after berry and the best.

"Taraska has gone into the ravine. Taraska! Aou!"

"Aou!" answered Taraska, from the ravine. "Come here!"

"We are coming. Over there, there are more."

And the little girls went down the bank of the ravine, holding on by the sapling twigs. On the other side they found a clearing studded with strawberries. Quickly they became silent so as to work better with their hands and mouths. Suddenly they heard a rustling, which appeared something terrible to them in the midst of this silence, and they saw the grass and the twigs tremble. Groushka was wild with fright, and spilled half of the berries she had picked.

"Mamma!" she shrieked, beginning to weep.

"It is a hare! A hare, Taraska! A hare! There it is!" cried little Olga, pointing to a brown back and a pair of ears half hidden by the grass. "What is the matter with you?" she demanded of Groushka, when the hare had disappeared.

"I thought it was the wolf," answered Groushka, passing quickly from fright and tears to a joyous laugh.

"The wolf! You are a stupid!"

"I had a blue fright!" said Groushka, bursting into a laugh, sonorous as a bell.

They picked all the berries there and moved on. The sun was already up; it covered the verdure with brilliant spots or with shade, and made the dew, with which the little girls were now drenched to the waist, glisten. They were near the further edge of the forest, but they kept moving on in a hope of finding more strawberries. All of a sudden, from several directions at once, came the "Aou!" of a band of women and girls who had come out from the village later than they in search of berries. At the lunch hour the baskets and the jars were already half full.

The little girls met there Akoulina, their aunt, who was also out strawberry-picking. Behind Akoulina trotted, on his big, bandy legs, a very little boy with a big belly, who was bareheaded and whose only garment was a shirt. "He is always clinging to my heels," said Akoulina to the little girls, taking the youngster in her arms. "I have nobody to mind him."

"We were frightened just now by a hare—a big one; he ran away. You ought to have seen him."

"Ah! ah!" said Akoulina. Then she put the child down on the ground again.

Soon the little girls left Akoulina and resumed their picking.

"Now we will rest a little bit," said Olga, sitting down in the thick shade of a walnut tree. "Oh, how tired I am! Why didn't we bring some bread? I would be glad enough to eat some now."

"So would I," said Groushka.

"Why is Aunt Akoulina calling so loud? Do you hear her?"

"Aou! Aunt Akoulina!"

"Aou!" answered the aunt.

"What is it?"

"Isn't the little boy with you?" called Aunt Akoulina from the direction of the ravine.

"No."

Immediately after the branches parted noisily for the passage of Aunt Akoulina herself, her skirt tucked up above her knees and her basket in her hand.

"You haven't seen the little boy?"

"No."

"But this is terrible! Miehka!"

"Mi-i-i-ieh-ka!"

No answer.

"Oh! what a shame! He has gone astray! He will be lost in the big wood!"

Olga jumps up quickly and runs off with Groushka to look for the child on one side of the wood; Akoulina takes the opposite direction. Incessantly she called "Miehka!" in sonorus tones, but no one answered.

"I am tired," said Groushka, lagging behind.

But Olga ran, without stopping, now to the right, now to the left, looking everywhere.

The voice of Akoulina became fainter and fainter as she went farther and farther away. Olga had already given up the hunt and was returning to her starting point, when, in a clump of bushes near the trunk of a young linden, she heard the persistent and despairing cry of a bird and of her troubled brood. Evidently the bird was afraid of something. Olga peered into the thicket, which was surrounded by high, thick, white-flowered grass, and discovered there something resembling a forest knoll. She approached and examined it closely. It was Miehka. It was of Miehka that the bird was afraid and against Miehka that it was crying out. Miehka was lying upon his fat belly, with his hands under his head and his bandy legs stretched out; he was asleep.

Olga woke him, gave him some strawberries and called his mother.

And for a long time thereafter Olga recounted to her parents and relatives and to all the people she met how she had searched for and found the child of Akoulina.

The sun beat down straight upon the forest and heated with its rays the earth and everything upon it.

"Olga! let's go and take a bath," said some little girls who came running up.

All together they went singing to the river. They were so busy pushing and pulling one another, so busy shouting and beating the water with their legs that they did not see the black cloud which mounted the heavens from the west; they did not remark that the sun hid itself from instant to instant, that the perfume of the flowers and of the birch leaves became more penetrating; they did not hear the light claps of thunder. But before they had the time to dress the rain fell. The little girls, with their chemises clinging to their dripping bodies, ran to their house, ate, and carried into the fields the dinner of the plowmen.

When they returned from the field their chemises were already dry. They sorted carefully the berries, but them into bowls and plates and carried them to the house of Nicholas Semionovitch, where they knew that they would be well paid.

But this time the berries were not wanted there.

As soon as Mary, who, stifling with heat, was reclining in an easy chair in the shade, caught sight of the little girls with their berries, she signaled to them with a movement of her fan to go away.

"No, no; we don't want any!"

But Vala, the oldest son, a boy of 12 years, who was resting from the overwork of the lycie and who at that moment was playing croquet with some neighbors, ran to Olga, when he caught sight of the berries, and asked her how much they were:

"Thirty kopeks."

"They are dear," said he. He said that because he was always hearing it said by his elders.

"Hold on! Go around this corner and wait for me there." And he started to go to his old nurse. During his absence, Olga and Groushka admired a glass globe on which they saw a little house, some woods and some gardens; and this globe and the many other things they saw did not astonish them, for they expected to find the most marvelous things in this world of nobles—mysterious and incomprehensible to them.

Vala went to his old nurse on the run and demanded of her 30 kopeks. The nurse thought 20 kopeks enough, and she took them from a box and gave them to him. Trying to escape the notice of his father, who, feeling the need of refreshment after his painful night, had only just risen and was smoking and reading his papers, he brought the 20 kopeks to the little girls and [illegible] voured the plate of berries.

On her return to the house, [illegible] untied with her teeth the corner of her handkerchief into which the 20 kopeks were knotted and gave them to her mother. The mother put the money away in a safe place, and gathered up the soiled clothes to go to the river.

Taraska, who, since lunch, had been helping his father work the soil, was sleeping at this moment in the thick shade of an oak. His father, seated beside him, was watching the horse, which was browsing near the edge of a neighbor's land, and which, in spite of the fact that his forefeet were tied, was in danger at any moment of doing damage to the neighbor's bat field or meadow.

The family of Nicholas Semionovitch had resumed its ordinary aspect; everything was going well; the three-course lunch was ready and the flies had long been regaling themselves upon it, but nobody went to the table, because nobody was hungry. Nicholas Semionovitch was proud of his opinions, whose value was evident to him, because he had refound them that very morning in his newspaper. Mary was tranquil because Goga's stomach was no longer out of order. The doctor was content because the remedy which he had prescribed had produced the desired effect. And Vala was blissful because he had eaten a heaping plate of strawberries.

OBEDIENT TO CONDITIONS---Hard Work and Necessary Drudgery Useful Discipline, Needed in Development

By John Anderson Jayne.

WHEN you were a boy or a girl in school how you did dread "examination day!" It mattered little how hard you had worked during the term, or the standing in the class to which you had come, "examination day" was a dread, a possible danger and a great big bugbear. But when it was all over and you had passed its conditions successfully, it was a proud moment in your life when you heard the teacher call out your name as being among those who, through obedience to the hard conditions, had been promoted to the higher grade. The successful meeting of the test gave you and those who knew you, confidence that better things were wrapt up within you. It was the test of the hard condition and your obedience thereunto, that revealed your strength and prowess.

Life has many hard conditions that it places upon men who are desirous of leaving the low level of mediocrity and coming out at last on the high plateaus of an achieved success. The obedience to the conditions tests ability to receive and rightly use the coveted promotion.

In Columbia university there are many interesting buildings set apart by the directors for specific purposes. Among them none is more interesting than the one erected for the purpose of "trying out" the claims of inventors and manufacturers of fireproof flooring material. The manner in which this alleged fireproof flooring material is tested is unique. The material is built into this building as a roof to the building. Under it is built a fierce fire, averaging 1,700 degrees Fahrenheit, sometimes reaching 2,000. This is kept up for four hours, while delicate instruments measure the heat of the floor and its sagging under a load of pig iron, 150 pounds to the square foot. Then water is turned on the whole and after the floor has cooled a weight of 600 pounds to the square foot is placed upon it. If it stands this tremendous strain the floor system is approved.

It is the condition obeyed that reveals the strength or the weakness of the flooring. One may imagine a manufacturer unwilling to submit his flooring to such a test, even while he was making the most extravagant claims for it. His unwillingness to obey the conditions is the proof of his lack of confidence in his flooring.

Men are tested in this world by means of many tests. Rarely is there, if ever, a man who rises high in the estimation of his employers, or comes to exalted position in the confidence of the public, but what passes through crucial tests. It is the test that reveals the inherent character of the man.

"Can you fulfill the conditions—in other words, can you meet the test?" is the query that is asked of all aspirants for better positions. If the affirmative answer is given, then the testing begins; the "try-out" reveals the worth or the worthlessness of the affirmative answer.

You are wondering today, young man, why your life conditions are so hard—why your employer surrounds you with such exacting rules and conditions. Rest assured your employer sees in you possibilities of greater things, or he wouldn't waste time in "trying you out." Employers, as a rule in this world, employ young men, not old men, as superintendents. The hardest thing in the world to find is a thoroughly prepared man for a specific place and work. Hence the employer, in looking over the host of young men who apply for positions, sees in this, that or the other one the faint promise of possibility. The young man may be the young man who will become It in the days that are to come. As fire reveals the presence of silver and separates the dross from the precious metal, so the testing, the obedience to the conditions, tries out the young man. It's a good thing to remember when you are working surrounded by exacting conditions that you are in the process of the "tryout."

If you meet all the conditions you are sure to rise to the place that is awaiting you. At the age of 23 Mr. Gladstone adopted as one of the mottoes of his life the old Greek quotation from Thrucydides: "We should remember that man differs little from man, except that he turns out best who is trained in the sharpest school."

Your sharp school of today, with its handicapping conditions, may in the days that are to come reveal you to the world as "the best trained."

Consider it.

SENSE OF SIGHT IN ANTS

Experiments Indicating That They Don't Depend on Smell.

The old theory that ants could not see and were guided entirely by sense of smell has been demolished by a series of experiments reported in the Revue Scientifique. A little platform of cardboard was set up near one of their nests with inclined plane leading conveniently down to the entrance. Then a number of the insects and a quantity of their eggs were placed upon the platform.

For a few minutes the ants seemed greatly perturbed, but they very soon found the inclined plane and at once started carrying the eggs down it to the nest.

A second inclined plane was located on the opposite side of the platform, but they took no notice of it. The experimenters then twisted the platform around so that the second plane pointed to the nest entrance.

Without hesitation the ant's ceased using the old plane and took the new one, showing conclusively, it is argued, that they were not following a trail by scent, but were getting their bearings by some other sense.

The next step was to mark some of the ants with a view to seeing whether each individual always used the same path and the same entrance to his nest. It was found that no such thing was the case.

They all seemed to know all the entrances and to have a sense of their direction. They struck out new paths for themselves without fail. This was regarded as establishing some form of vision.

Finally, an electric light bulb was set up near one entrance to the nest. It seemed to have an immediate attraction for the ants, as they unanimously used the entrance on that side coming to and going from the nest. Then it was changed over to the other side, causing great excitement apparently among the insects, which ended in their changing over to the newly illuminated way.

Changes in the brilliancy of the light seemed to have no perceptible effect on the ants, but they never failed to detect the change of direction. All possible precautions were taken to prevent the heat from the lamp from reaching them, so that it is regarded as certain that they perceived the light.

For the purpose of improving the working condition of federal, state and municipal employes in the United States, a national committee on welfare work for government employes has been appointed by the welfare department of the National Civic Federation. Secretary of War Tart is chairman of the committee.