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(London Daily Mail.)

Away on the western slopes of the Ural Mountains, near the Vialka river, buried among pine woods, lies the little village of Okharka. There Vania (Vani) was born, and there he passed the first twenty-one years of his life. He worked with his father in summer in the fields, in winter in the woods, and he thought of little of anything but the life of a peasant. He was the only daughter of Sidor the Rich. And he was a fine, handsome, upstanding young fellow. Natacha thought of him, and they used to meet of an evening in the woods, and he thought of her, and she thought of him, and they were always together. One day in autumn Vania's father, the village bailiff, brought a paper from the distant town, which ordered Vania and four other boys from the village to report themselves to the military chief of the district.

See him then outside the military depot sitting on the ground eating sunflower seeds. With him are some hundreds of young men from the village for many miles around. All are sad and restless looking. For the Czar that day rears his harvest of the young manhood of the district. The hours go by. Village after village is called. At last Okharka is called, and Vania finds himself in a large hall. He is ordered to draw a lot and an urn. He is pushed on further, and ordered to strip. A gentleman in spectacles rounds his chest and back and says, "Ah, he is not a man; he is an ox for strength."

Later on he is taken to the church, and the priest makes him swear to be a good soldier, to obey all orders, to fight the internal and external enemy, and to die, if necessary, for the Czar and Holy Russia. With the great milk eyes of some wild creature from his native woods Vania sees all, but understands nothing; one thing only is clear—he has a fortnight at home before joining. As he tramps in the starlight the twenty recruits in his village it especially breaks in on him that for four years he must go away; perhaps lose Natacha—his little dove Nata. The night winds gently sighing in the pine trees has a melancholy sound.

For almost the whole fortnight he drinks and sings with the two other boys of the village who have been taken. Troshka, the old soldier, tells them many stories; he tells how he, Troshka, was against the Turk, and how their father the Czar Alexander Nicolaievitch came to the hospital after Plezna, bent over his bed and pinned the St. George's Cross on his shirt, calling him "the brave fellow."

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Natacha was fearful that in his absence her father would order her to marry another; but she would wait, her great trees and her bright eyes were for Vania alone; but alas! her father was a severe man. So Vania drank and sang the more. Of an evening you would see him about the village, playing his accordion and shouting with the other boys:

Along the street the large one goes, The young blacksmith goes, And he goes, he goes, he goes, And he goes, he goes, he goes.

When the time came to leave Vania knelt down before his father and asked forgiveness for all his heavy sins, and was blessed by Holy St. Nicholas the Miraculous and his mother kissed him and signed him with the sign of the Cross, saying: "May the Holy Virgin of Kazan protect you! Do not forget your old parents; it is a heavy sin, mind it, Vanyushka." And she put a little holy image around his neck to keep away the evil. Meanwhile his sisters packed his box and put in it shirts and towels and loaves of bread for the journey. Then they all sat down for the last time under the holy images and Vania went.

At the district town he and some fifty other picked recruits were loaded in railway waggons and sent off

to Petersburg in charge of an escort. For a whole week they travelled; on and on, through forests and across immense plains, over great rivers and through towns and villages. Oh, my little Father, but the world was very big. At last, Petersburg. Vania is by no means clear as to what happened during the next few days; he saw great crowds and innumerable carriages and great gentlemen and ladies; houses immensely bigger than churches and there was a ceaseless roar of traffic. Vania's head ached and reeled; it was not a world, it was a hell, or some dreadful nightmare.

In the receiving barracks were men of all nations—Poles, Jews, Poles, Burians and Russians with hats) boots and red shirts. At night, in the dark, Vania lay awake and cried. He cried for his home, for the great pine woods, for Nata; and he thought of his father's sick cow, and wondered how they would do without him. He longed, too, for his mother. And this fair-haired young giant cried himself to sleep.

After supper on the fourth day Vania and some forty other recruits were ordered to take their boxes and go down to the barrack square. There were many soldiers there, in beautiful uniforms, with high red collars. There was a band. An officer came and shouted, "Good health, my children!" The soldiers shouted a reply. Then an order was given, the band played, the soldiers closed around Vania and the other recruits; they marched out into the street and after a long march they came to another barracks, where there seemed to be hundreds of soldiers in the same beautiful uniform. Again Vania is made to stand in line with the other recruits and an old officer comes and addresses them.

"My children, a great honor has come to you; you are to be soldiers of the Prokhorovskiy Regiment of Guards of His Imperial Majesty the Czar, our Father."

That was all Vania understood; the speech was long, but the language was too difficult for him; even the priest at home could not speak so well, besides, he was frightened at seeing so many high officers and such a great number of soldiers. At last the officer finished, and the soldiers shouted a reply. A younger officer came with a paper and called the names of the recruits. When Vania was called a soldier stepped forward and told him to take his box and come with him. They went to a great barrack room in which there were four rows of little beds. The soldier pointed to a bed next his own, and told Vania that was to be his. For six months, so long, that is, as he was a recruit and had not taken his second oath, he was to stay in that room. Vania's duty to obey his soldier implicitly and learn from him his military duties. Such a soldier is called the recruit's "Little Uncle," and he is answerable to the officers for the progress of his pupil. Vania's Little Uncle was a tall, fair man, with a broad, good-humored face and smiling eyes. He had been through the great war and won many medals. One quality he had—the Little Uncle— which went near to ruin the little peasant home by the Vialka River—he had a perfectly insatiable thirst and a ravenous hunger for sausages and white bread.

"Of good heart, my little brother, for not at all. I who speak, I am Sashka Qiansprienko, born of the Kursk Government. I will be to you as an uncle; we will make of you a good soldier. O new one. Today we go to his honor the surgeon, and you will be measured and inscribed; afterwards your hair shall be cut, and afterward, if it is the will of Holy St. Vladimir, we go to the canteen to try the beer of Andrei Stepanitch, the great one, Andrei Stepanitch is a rare one, I tell you. The beer of Andrei Stepanitch is so black and so strong; oh, it is beer to lick the fingers after; and what concerns the sausage, it is simply a marvel—so fat it is."

The great jolly face of the Little Uncle was wreathed in smiles; Vania's box seemed to be taken that he came of a family who had some little means. To make sure, however, Sashka inquired:

"And what, my little brother, have you a good earth at home and many cows perhaps?"

"Our little earth at home is a good one, thank the Lord," said Vania; "it is of five desiatines (fourteen acres) we have cows."

"Oh, new one, we will make of you a good soldier, only be well with me and do all that I tell you."

Was the Sirio Wrecked by Her Crew?

Paris, Oct. 8.—The 'Echo de Paris' to-day published a dispatch from Cartagena, Spain, announcing that a sensation has been caused there by the discovery that the strong box of the Italian steamer 'Sirio' (wrecked in August last on Romagus Island, with the loss of about a hundred and fifty lives), although found to be hermetically sealed, was empty, raising the presumption of the complicity of the crew in the wreck.

MINARD'S LINIMENT CURES BURNS, ETC.

Mrsterious Story from Chinese Wilds

Some sensational details have come to light concerning the disappearance of a young American, named Reuben H. Morley, who left Peking in June, 1905, with a Frenchman named La Verger, and has never been heard of since his arrival at Tehol. His letters of credit, which were stolen from him, according to his last letter, were, however, cashed in Colombo and Shanghai some months later. In April the missing man's brother, G. W. Morley, went to China to hunt for him, and after a long journey he found the two servants who accompanied the missing man and La Verger to Tehol.

According to Reuben Morley's servant, the party went 200 miles out of their way into the direction of Mongolia, and on the last day of the journey La Verger sent his own servant ahead to prepare rooms at a village, and afterwards left Morley's servant on the main road with the baggage, saying that he and Morley were going to visit a lake some distance away. G. W. Morley has gained from the servant that he waited all day, and then, when they did not return, he pushed on to the village, where La Verger's servant had everything in readiness, but still there were no signs of the travellers.

Eventually La Verger arrived alone, bringing with him Morley's carbine and revolver. He declared that Morley had gone alone to Mongolia against his advice, and on the boy's protesting, said that he had arranged to meet Morley in Peking, and that everything was right. The next morning a start was made at two o'clock. La Verger and the two servants left the city, but not by the Peking gate, La Verger making an excuse of wishing to see some temple on the opposite road. A halt was made on the route, and La Verger announced that he had left something valuable behind him. Bidding the servants await his return, he set off, and was never seen again by them. They waited for two days, then returned to the village, only to discover that La Verger had not been seen there. An innkeeper recollects that on the night in question the Frenchman was very much excited, and destroyed a large number of documents in the luggage, and that he was also in possession of a large sum of money. G. W. Morley has returned to France to try and trace La Verger, and says he will ransack Europe to find him.

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Mr. W. C. Pott, a Star City, Ind., hardware merchant, is enthusiastic in his praise of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy. His children have all been subject to croup and he has used this remedy for the past ten years, and though they much feared the croup, his wife and he always felt safe upon getting when a bottle of Chamberlain's Cough Remedy was in the house. His oldest child was subject to severe attacks of croup, but this remedy never failed to effect a speedy cure. He has recommended it to friends and neighbors and all who have used it say that it is unequalled for croup and whooping cough. For sale by W. H. Warren, Pharm. D.

FUNERAL INVITATION.

Sir Royal Roach had a servant who was as great and original as his master. Two days after the death of the baronet this man waited upon a gentleman who had been a most intimate friend of Sir Royal's for the purpose of telling him the time at which the funeral was to have taken place had been changed.

"Sir," said he, "my master sends his compliments to you, and he won't be buried till to-morrow evening."

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Middleton, N. S., July 1906.

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