

heads were old and spattered with mud; the sheepskin coats were torn and foul. We saw hunger—always hunger—in the weak, shuffling steps of men, in the weary faces of women, in hollow, anemic cheeks of little children. They stood about by hundreds and by thousands in the mud. Scowls and gloomy silence. Only here and there groups would suddenly collect. In an instant hands would wave and voices rise in wild anger. Then the soldiers with their bayonets, or the Cossacks with their whips, would rush in shouting abuse, and the peasants would scatter, scowling, shivering—thinking. Such thinking is the Russian Revolution.

The town covered a big bare hill. Looking down and off into the prairie we saw, under the low-hanging gray clouds, indistinct through the mist, miles and miles of snow and slush and mud; the mud so deep you could see the peasant carts sink to the hubs of the wheels, while the furious drivers lashed the bony little horses. Far out over this stretch were tiny groups of huts made of sod and logs and straw. These were villages. And between them under the snow lay the earth—the famous Black Belt, once so rich, but “sweated” now by ignorance.

We went for advice to a leader of the district zemstvo; we had a letter to him from a liberal prince in Moscow. The leader received us kindly. He was a short, rugged old man with enormous, broad shoulders, bushy, gray whiskers, massive face lined and wrinkled by work. His little blue eyes twinkled and his face wrinkled in a noiseless laugh when we told him what the Chancellor had said.

“He means just what he says. You would be jailed in two hours, lose all your note-books, and be expelled from Russia; while your friend here might land for months in prison. You would also run a good chance of

being killed by the peasants. You have seen even here in town how furious they get in a moment. They suspect you foreigners, for the head of the Russian Church has ordered all his twenty thousand village popes to assure the peasants every Sunday that the Petersburg massacre was caused by English and Japanese spies, who incited the workmen to riot simply in order to have them killed. According to the village popes, the English are all murderers.

“But why not let me give you the stories? I have lived all my life down there among the peasants. You know already, from Prince B——, in Moscow, from the zemstvo men, and from the Socialists that I’m a half-way old chap between them all. You can rely on the literal truth of what I tell you. First, about the riots:

“One morning, ten days ago, in a village some forty miles back in the country, the church bell began to ring furiously. An hour later some fifty men and women with clubs and pitchforks started off for the next village half a mile away. There the mob doubled, on they marched, and in six hours there were over a thousand surging along through the snow, sucking in every man, woman, and child from each village through which they passed.

“In one little hamlet a hundred peasants stood blocking the road. These peasants had heard the roar of the mob in the distance, and because their *barin* had always been kind and liberal they resolved to defend his estate. They stood startled, bewildered, irresolute, massed across the road between the high snow-banks.

“Down the road surged the mob, two thousand now—men, women, and children in shaggy sheepskin coats and rags; bare heads, disheveled hair and bloodshot eyes; wild shouts, curses, screams, and hysterical laugh-