

"Tomorrow our little father, the Czar, is coming. I shall wait until then, kneel to him, and our Czar Ferdinand will let me go. I know it, I feel it."

"My own Xenia," murmured the man. And again the mist closed on them and on the army.

In the distance Sofia rested peacefully, while in the royal palace a man was bending over maps and papers, thinking, scheming, for the greatness of his country. The stars woke one by one. The children of the Czar rested, for they knew that upon them Ferdinand was watching, working for them, and they slept to be able on the morrow to fight and die for him and for their Bulgaria.

When the morning sunshine flooded the sky, Sofia appeared ablaze, glorious in the glory of the sun. Through streets decorated as for a festival, he came. He—their Czar—escorted by devoted and brave officers, to address and give his blessing to the recruits. As he was about to speak, some one pierced the crowd and crouched at his feet.

"Little Father," pleaded the one who knelt there—Xenia—"Little Father, I want to fight for you near the boy I am to marry. I come to you, for you will let me do it. You are not like those others who said 'no' to me."

Officers were about to push her out of the way, but with a gesture the Czar stopped them. Xenia lifted her head in hope, she had known always that their beloved Czar would listen, he would understand, he would say yes. Something urged her to speak. She told of the walk through the night, the train, the days at Sofia, and then she pointed an accusing finger at officers who had refused to help her.

The Czar was smiling, "Little girl," he said gently, "You will prevent the others from fighting, besides, what can a girl like you do?"

"Little Father," answered she, rising and facing them all, "Little Father, I can always die for you and for Bulgaria."

The Czar turned to his officers, facing the men, these soldiers of just one day. "Soldier Xenia" he said at last,

take your place in the ranks. Men like you make our country great. May the blessing of the Almighty be on us all, and on you."

Xenia dropped back. A gun was handed to her. She was near Danilo and together they listened to the parting words of their Czar. When he ceased speaking there was but one cry. The wind took it on its wings and the Turks listening heard the clamor and shuddered.

The next day Danilo and Xenia boarded the express—soldiers—lovers no more. Somehow their love had broadened, the love of the man and woman stood still while the love of country had become so big, so overpowering, that in the train as they went forward Soldier Danilo was teaching Soldier Xenia to load his gun.

On the edge of the firing line they camped at last. Every day on went the fight, every day they went forward, every day men dropped dead behind them, before them, and at their side. What did it matter? Black with powder, red with blood, their uniforms in rags, they went ahead in victory, laughing while the cannons were singing a death song that echoed with the beating of a thousand drums.

Sometimes the soldiers stopped. A dead horse would provide meat or they would make a sherbet with snow and his blood. Who cared if the snow was cold, if the windy sunset was of the same crimson as the snow! Who cared that men fell, if only others went on smiling as they fought, conquering new lands, making the flag of Bulgaria and the cross rest where but the morning before had rested the crescent. And in the male chorus of soldiers' voices there mixed the voice of one who had a woman's voice, but who could race, fight, or hold her own with the others. And all the army knew that it was Soldier Xenia with her shadow Soldier Danilo.

It seemed as if the two of them had been afraid that some one might do better than they, so eagerly they raced to the dangerous spots. One day tak-

ing cannons, another day coming back with a flag belonging to the enemy. Death smiled at them, she seemed to enjoy stepping back to let the lovers pass, letting sometimes the blood of others splash in their faces.

Adrianople was looming in the distance. A night bright with stars and frost had stopped the fighting of the two armies. A great peace seemed to fall from Heaven. The cry of the wounded, the moan of the dying had ceased. One could no longer see the battlefield. The stars gave every man the appearance of an indistinct shadow, lying on mother earth close, so close, as if they listened to the secrets she had to tell.

One by one the fires went out, there was no sound, heaven and earth were still, here and there the soldiers slept. Danilo had been listening for a long time to this and to something more—to the calm respiration of the woman he loved, sleeping with her head resting on a broken box of ammunition. On the cheeks he noted the shadow made by dark lashes, and as he was bending over her, her eyes opened.

"Danilo" she whispered, moving noiselessly nearer, "Danilo, sweetheart, look—the night is still—just like the night in the village. Do you remember it? It seems now that our soldier-souls are gone and that we are back to the good old days. It was all love and peace then!"

"Yes, Xenia," whispered the man, "I feel it too. It seems, dear, the same night and the same stars shining."

Slowly the hands of Xenia reached those of Danilo and the silence closed around them while something in the air whispered old words long forgotten, just sweet words of love!

"Xenia," said Danilo at last, Xenia, sweetheart, won't you be my wife now?—tomorrow or the next day we shall come to Adrianople, let us be married there!"

Soldier Xenia shivered a little. "Yes, Danilo" she answered at last, "We will be married at Adrianople—and my wed-

ding ring shall be made from a Turkish gun."

Then her head dropped on his shoulder. The world was forgotten. It was the old story over again but with death watching in the background.

Far away a dog barked. A gun cracked near by and a cannon answered, and again the calmness of the night and the brightness of the stars.

In the Jubilee year of Queen Victoria two women were heard in a street car in Scotland discussing the meaning of the word "Jubilee." One did not know the meaning of it. The other thought that she did, and gave the following explanation: "Twenty-five years mairits a silver waddin', an' fifty years mairits a golden waddin', an' the jubilee's when the maun dees!"

### Compensations

By Martha Martin

If it were not for the darkness  
That enshrouds the world at night,  
We should never know the beauty  
Of the stars' soft radiant light;  
But these eyes of Heaven open  
When the shadows first appear,  
And their lustre only deepens  
As the blackness grows more drear.

If it were not for the sorrows  
That we daily have to bear  
In the trials and afflictions  
That each human life must share,  
We should never know the blessing  
Of that holy inward calm,  
Born of every earthly suffering,  
Bringing with it healing balm.

Darkest clouds have silver linings,  
Rainbows span the storm-girt sky,  
Giving promise through the rainfall  
Of full sunshine bye and bye;  
Pain and anguish borne in patience,  
Sweetest compensations hide,  
And with every crucifixion  
Comes a joyful Eastertide.

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