

CHAPTER VIII

The day after Rostóv had been to see Borís, a review was held of the Austrian and Russian troops, both those freshly arrived from Russia and those who had been campaigning under Kutúzov. The two Emperors, the Russian with his heir the Tsarévich, and the Austrian with the Archduke, inspected the allied army of eighty thousand men.

From early morning the smart clean troops were on the move, forming up on the field before the fortress. Now thousands of feet and bayonets moved and halted at the officers' command, turned with banners flying, formed up at intervals, and wheeled round other similar masses of infantry in different uniforms; now was heard the rhythmic beat of hoofs and the jingling of showy cavalry in blue, red, and green braided uniforms, with smartly dressed bandsmen in front mounted on black, roan, or gray horses; then again, spreading out with the brazen clatter of the polished shining cannon that quivered on the gun carriages and with the smell of linstocks, came the artillery which crawled between the infantry and cavalry and took up its appointed position. Not only the generals in full parade uniforms, with their thin or thick waists drawn in to the utmost, their red necks squeezed into their stiff collars, and wearing scarves and all their decorations, not only the elegant, pomaded officers, but every soldier with his freshly washed and shaven face and his weapons clean and polished to the utmost, and every horse groomed till its coat shone like satin and every hair of its wetted mane lay smooth—felt that no small matter was happening, but an important and solemn affair. Every general and every soldier was conscious of his own insignificance, aware of being but a drop in that ocean of men, and yet at the same time was conscious of his strength as a part of that enormous whole.

From early morning strenuous activities and efforts had begun and by ten o'clock all had been brought into due order. The ranks were drawn up on the vast field. The whole army was extended in three lines: the cavalry in front, behind it the artillery, and behind that again the infantry.

A space like a street was left between each two lines of troops. The three parts of that army were sharply distinguished: Kutúzov's fighting army (with the Pávlograds on the right flank of the front); those recently arrived from Russia, both Guards and regiments of the line; and the Austrian troops. But they all stood in the same lines, under one command, and in a like order.

Like wind over leaves ran an excited whisper: "They're coming! They're coming!" Alarmed voices were heard, and a stir of final preparation swept over all the troops.

From the direction of Olmütz in front of them, a group was seen approaching. And at that moment, though the day was still, a light gust of wind blowing over the army slightly stirred the streamers on the lances and the unfolded standards fluttered against their staffs. It looked as if by that slight motion the army itself was expressing its

joy at the approach of the Emperors. One voice was heard shouting: "Eyes front!" Then, like the crowing of cocks at sunrise, this was repeated by others from various sides and all became silent.

In the deathlike stillness only the tramp of horses was heard. This was the Emperors' suites. The Emperors rode up to the flank, and the trumpets of the first cavalry regiment played the general march. It seemed as though not the trumpeters were playing, but as if the army itself, rejoicing at the Emperors' approach, had naturally burst into music. Amid these sounds, only the youthful kindly voice of the Emperor Alexander was clearly heard. He gave the words of greeting, and the first regiment roared "Hurrah!" so deafeningly, continuously, and joyfully that the men themselves were awed by their multitude and the immensity of the power they constituted.

Rostóv, standing in the front lines of Kutúzov's army which the Tsar approached first, experienced the same feeling as every other man in that army: a feeling of self-forgetfulness, a proud consciousness of might, and a passionate attraction to him who was the cause of this triumph.

He felt that at a single word from that man all this vast mass (and he himself an insignificant atom in it) would go through fire and water, commit crime, die, or perform deeds of highest heroism, and so he could not but tremble and his heart stand still at the imminence of that word.

"Hurrah! Hurrah! Hurrah!" thundered from all sides, one regiment after another greeting the Tsar with the strains of the march, and then "Hurrah!"... Then the general march, and again "Hurrah! Hurrah!" growing ever stronger and fuller and merging into a deafening roar.

Till the Tsar reached it, each regiment in its silence and immobility seemed like a lifeless body, but as soon as he came up it became alive, its thunder joining the roar of the whole line along which he had already passed. Through the terrible and deafening roar of those voices, amid the square masses of troops standing motionless as if turned to stone, hundreds of riders composing the suites moved carelessly but symmetrically and above all freely, and in front of them two men—the Emperors. Upon them the undivided, tensely passionate attention of that whole mass of men was concentrated.

The handsome young Emperor Alexander, in the uniform of the Horse Guards, wearing a cocked hat with its peaks front and back, with his pleasant face and resonant though not loud voice, attracted everyone's attention.

Rostóv was not far from the trumpeters, and with his keen sight had recognized the Tsar and watched his approach. When he was within twenty paces, and Nicholas could clearly distinguish every detail of his handsome, happy young face, he experienced a feeling of tenderness and ecstasy such as he had never before known. Every trait and every movement of the Tsar's seemed to him enchanting.

Stopping in front of the Pávlograds, the Tsar said something in French

to the Austrian Emperor and smiled.

Seeing that smile, Rostóv involuntarily smiled himself and felt a still stronger flow of love for his sovereign. He longed to show that love in some way and knowing that this was impossible was ready to cry. The Tsar called the colonel of the regiment and said a few words to him.

“Oh God, what would happen to me if the Emperor spoke to me?” thought Rostóv. “I should die of happiness!”

The Tsar addressed the officers also: “I thank you all, gentlemen, I thank you with my whole heart.” To Rostóv every word sounded like a voice from heaven. How gladly would he have died at once for his Tsar!

“You have earned the St. George’s standards and will be worthy of them.”

“Oh, to die, to die for him,” thought Rostóv.

The Tsar said something more which Rostóv did not hear, and the soldiers, straining their lungs, shouted “Hurrah!”

Rostóv too, bending over his saddle, shouted “Hurrah!” with all his might, feeling that he would like to injure himself by that shout, if only to express his rapture fully.

The Tsar stopped a few minutes in front of the hussars as if undecided.

“How can the Emperor be undecided?” thought Rostóv, but then even this indecision appeared to him majestic and enchanting, like everything else the Tsar did.

That hesitation lasted only an instant. The Tsar’s foot, in the narrow pointed boot then fashionable, touched the groin of the bobtailed bay mare he rode, his hand in a white glove gathered up the reins, and he moved off accompanied by an irregularly swaying sea of aides-de-camp. Farther and farther he rode away, stopping at other regiments, till at last only his white plumes were visible to Rostóv from amid the suites that surrounded the Emperors.

Among the gentlemen of the suite, Rostóv noticed Bolkónski, sitting his horse indolently and carelessly. Rostóv recalled their quarrel of yesterday and the question presented itself whether he ought or ought not to challenge Bolkónski. “Of course not!” he now thought. “Is it worth thinking or speaking of it at such a moment? At a time of such love, such rapture, and such self-sacrifice, what do any of our quarrels and affronts matter? I love and forgive everybody now.”

When the Emperor had passed nearly all the regiments, the troops began a ceremonial march past him, and Rostóv on Bedouin, recently purchased from Denísov, rode past too, at the rear of his squadron—that is, alone and in full view of the Emperor.

Before he reached him, Rostóv, who was a splendid horseman, spurred

Bedouin twice and successfully put him to the showy trot in which the animal went when excited. Bending his foaming muzzle to his chest, his tail extended, Bedouin, as if also conscious of the Emperor's eye upon him, passed splendidly, lifting his feet with a high and graceful action, as if flying through the air without touching the ground.

Rostóv himself, his legs well back and his stomach drawn in and feeling himself one with his horse, rode past the Emperor with a frowning but blissful face "like a vevy devil," as Denísov expressed it.

"Fine fellows, the Pávlograds!" remarked the Emperor.

"My God, how happy I should be if he ordered me to leap into the fire this instant!" thought Rostóv.

When the review was over, the newly arrived officers, and also Kutúzov's, collected in groups and began to talk about the awards, about the Austrians and their uniforms, about their lines, about Bonaparte, and how badly the latter would fare now, especially if the Essen corps arrived and Prussia took our side.

But the talk in every group was chiefly about the Emperor Alexander. His every word and movement was described with ecstasy.

They all had but one wish: to advance as soon as possible against the enemy under the Emperor's command. Commanded by the Emperor himself they could not fail to vanquish anyone, be it whom it might: so thought Rostóv and most of the officers after the review.

All were then more confident of victory than the winning of two battles would have made them.