

## CHAPTER XXI

After the definite refusal he had received, Pétya went to his room and there locked himself in and wept bitterly. When he came in to tea, silent, morose, and with tear-stained face, everybody pretended not to notice anything.

Next day the Emperor arrived in Moscow, and several of the Rostóvs' domestic serfs begged permission to go to have a look at him. That morning Pétya was a long time dressing and arranging his hair and collar to look like a grown-up man. He frowned before his looking glass, gesticulated, shrugged his shoulders, and finally, without saying a word to anyone, took his cap and left the house by the back door, trying to avoid notice. Pétya decided to go straight to where the Emperor was and to explain frankly to some gentleman-in-waiting (he imagined the Emperor to be always surrounded by gentlemen-in-waiting) that he, Count Rostóv, in spite of his youth wished to serve his country; that youth could be no hindrance to loyalty, and that he was ready to... While dressing, Pétya had prepared many fine things he meant to say to the gentleman-in-waiting.

It was on the very fact of being so young that Pétya counted for success in reaching the Emperor—he even thought how surprised everyone would be at his youthfulness—and yet in the arrangement of his collar and hair and by his sedate deliberate walk he wished to appear a grown-up man. But the farther he went and the more his attention was diverted by the ever-increasing crowds moving toward the Krémelin, the less he remembered to walk with the sedateness and deliberation of a man. As he approached the Krémelin he even began to avoid being crushed and resolutely stuck out his elbows in a menacing way. But within the Trinity Gateway he was so pressed to the wall by people who probably were unaware of the patriotic intentions with which he had come that in spite of all his determination he had to give in, and stop while carriages passed in, rumbling beneath the archway. Beside Pétya stood a peasant woman, a footman, two tradesmen, and a discharged soldier. After standing some time in the gateway, Pétya tried to move forward in front of the others without waiting for all the carriages to pass, and he began resolutely working his way with his elbows, but the woman just in front of him, who was the first against whom he directed his efforts, angrily shouted at him:

“What are you shoving for, young lordling? Don't you see we're all standing still? Then why push?”

“Anybody can shove,” said the footman, and also began working his elbows to such effect that he pushed Pétya into a very filthy corner of the gateway.

Pétya wiped his perspiring face with his hands and pulled up the damp collar which he had arranged so well at home to seem like a man's.

He felt that he no longer looked presentable, and feared that if he were now to approach the gentlemen-in-waiting in that plight he would not be

admitted to the Emperor. But it was impossible to smarten oneself up or move to another place, because of the crowd. One of the generals who drove past was an acquaintance of the Rostóvs', and Pétya thought of asking his help, but came to the conclusion that that would not be a manly thing to do. When the carriages had all passed in, the crowd, carrying Pétya with it, streamed forward into the Krémlin Square which was already full of people. There were people not only in the square, but everywhere—on the slopes and on the roofs. As soon as Pétya found himself in the square he clearly heard the sound of bells and the joyous voices of the crowd that filled the whole Krémlin.

For a while the crowd was less dense, but suddenly all heads were bared, and everyone rushed forward in one direction. Pétya was being pressed so that he could scarcely breathe, and everybody shouted, "Hurrah! hurrah! hurrah!" Pétya stood on tiptoe and pushed and pinched, but could see nothing except the people about him.

All the faces bore the same expression of excitement and enthusiasm. A tradesman's wife standing beside Pétya sobbed, and the tears ran down her cheeks.

"Father! Angel! Dear one!" she kept repeating, wiping away her tears with her fingers.

"Hurrah!" was heard on all sides.

For a moment the crowd stood still, but then it made another rush forward.

Quite beside himself, Pétya, clinching his teeth and rolling his eyes ferociously, pushed forward, elbowing his way and shouting "hurrah!" as if he were prepared that instant to kill himself and everyone else, but on both sides of him other people with similarly ferocious faces pushed forward and everybody shouted "hurrah!"

"So this is what the Emperor is!" thought Pétya. "No, I can't petition him myself—that would be too bold." But in spite of this he continued to struggle desperately forward, and from between the backs of those in front he caught glimpses of an open space with a strip of red cloth spread out on it; but just then the crowd swayed back—the police in front were pushing back those who had pressed too close to the procession: the Emperor was passing from the palace to the Cathedral of the Assumption—and Pétya unexpectedly received such a blow on his side and ribs and was squeezed so hard that suddenly everything grew dim before his eyes and he lost consciousness. When he came to himself, a man of clerical appearance with a tuft of gray hair at the back of his head and wearing a shabby blue cassock—probably a church clerk and chanter—was holding him under the arm with one hand while warding off the pressure of the crowd with the other.

"You've crushed the young gentleman!" said the clerk. "What are you up to? Gently!... They've crushed him, crushed him!"

The Emperor entered the Cathedral of the Assumption. The crowd spread

out again more evenly, and the clerk led Pétya—pale and breathless—to the Tsar-cannon. Several people were sorry for Pétya, and suddenly a crowd turned toward him and pressed round him. Those who stood nearest him attended to him, unbuttoned his coat, seated him on the raised platform of the cannon, and reproached those others (whoever they might be) who had crushed him.

“One might easily get killed that way! What do they mean by it? Killing people! Poor dear, he’s as white as a sheet!”—various voices were heard saying.

Pétya soon came to himself, the color returned to his face, the pain had passed, and at the cost of that temporary unpleasantness he had obtained a place by the cannon from where he hoped to see the Emperor who would be returning that way. Pétya no longer thought of presenting his petition. If he could only see the Emperor he would be happy!

While the service was proceeding in the Cathedral of the Assumption—it was a combined service of prayer on the occasion of the Emperor’s arrival and of thanksgiving for the conclusion of peace with the Turks—the crowd outside spread out and hawkers appeared, selling kvass, gingerbread, and poppyseed sweets (of which Pétya was particularly fond), and ordinary conversation could again be heard. A tradesman’s wife was showing a rent in her shawl and telling how much the shawl had cost; another was saying that all silk goods had now got dear. The clerk who had rescued Pétya was talking to a functionary about the priests who were officiating that day with the bishop. The clerk several times used the word “plenary” (of the service), a word Pétya did not understand. Two young citizens were joking with some serf girls who were cracking nuts. All these conversations, especially the joking with the girls, were such as might have had a particular charm for Pétya at his age, but they did not interest him now. He sat on his elevation—the pedestal of the cannon—still agitated as before by the thought of the Emperor and by his love for him. The feeling of pain and fear he had experienced when he was being crushed, together with that of rapture, still further intensified his sense of the importance of the occasion.

Suddenly the sound of a firing of cannon was heard from the embankment, to celebrate the signing of peace with the Turks, and the crowd rushed impetuously toward the embankment to watch the firing. Pétya too would have run there, but the clerk who had taken the young gentleman under his protection stopped him. The firing was still proceeding when officers, generals, and gentlemen-in-waiting came running out of the cathedral, and after them others in a more leisurely manner: caps were again raised, and those who had run to look at the cannon ran back again. At last four men in uniforms and sashes emerged from the cathedral doors. “Hurrah! hurrah!” shouted the crowd again.

“Which is he? Which?” asked Pétya in a tearful voice, of those around him, but no one answered him, everybody was too excited; and Pétya, fixing on one of those four men, whom he could not clearly see for the tears of joy that filled his eyes, concentrated all his enthusiasm on him—though it happened not to be the Emperor—frantically shouted “Hurrah!” and resolved that tomorrow, come what might, he would join the

army.

The crowd ran after the Emperor, followed him to the palace, and began to disperse. It was already late, and Pétya had not eaten anything and was drenched with perspiration, yet he did not go home but stood with that diminishing, but still considerable, crowd before the palace while the Emperor dined—looking in at the palace windows, expecting he knew not what, and envying alike the notables he saw arriving at the entrance to dine with the Emperor and the court footmen who served at table, glimpses of whom could be seen through the windows.

While the Emperor was dining, Valúev, looking out of the window, said:

“The people are still hoping to see Your Majesty again.”

The dinner was nearly over, and the Emperor, munching a biscuit, rose and went out onto the balcony. The people, with Pétya among them, rushed toward the balcony.

“Angel! Dear one! Hurrah! Father!...” cried the crowd, and Pétya with it, and again the women and men of weaker mold, Pétya among them, wept with joy.

A largish piece of the biscuit the Emperor was holding in his hand broke off, fell on the balcony parapet, and then to the ground. A coachman in a jerkin, who stood nearest, sprang forward and snatched it up. Several people in the crowd rushed at the coachman. Seeing this the Emperor had a plateful of biscuits brought him and began throwing them down from the balcony. Pétya’s eyes grew bloodshot, and still more excited by the danger of being crushed, he rushed at the biscuits. He did not know why, but he had to have a biscuit from the Tsar’s hand and he felt that he must not give way. He sprang forward and upset an old woman who was catching at a biscuit; the old woman did not consider herself defeated though she was lying on the ground—she grabbed at some biscuits but her hand did not reach them. Pétya pushed her hand away with his knee, seized a biscuit, and as if fearing to be too late, again shouted “Hurrah!” with a voice already hoarse.

The Emperor went in, and after that the greater part of the crowd began to disperse.

“There! I said if only we waited—and so it was!” was being joyfully said by various people.

Happy as Pétya was, he felt sad at having to go home knowing that all the enjoyment of that day was over. He did not go straight home from the Krémelin, but called on his friend Obolénski, who was fifteen and was also entering the regiment. On returning home Pétya announced resolutely and firmly that if he was not allowed to enter the service he would run away. And next day, Count Ilyá Rostóv—though he had not yet quite yielded—went to inquire how he could arrange for Pétya to serve where there would be least danger.