

<i>С.Т.АКСАКОВ</i>	<i>SERGE AKSAKOFF</i>	<i>SERGEI AKSAKOV</i>
<p style="text-align: center;">СЕМЕЙНАЯ ХРОНИКА (отрывок)</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A RUSSIAN GENTLEMAN (excerpt) <i>Translated by J. Duff</i></p>	<p style="text-align: center;">A FAMILY CHRONICLE (excerpt) <i>Translated by C. E. Bechhofer</i></p>
<p>В пылу такой восторженности вдруг вздумалось ему наградить свою чайницу и кофейницу Аксютку, которую он Бог знает за что постоянно жаловал. Аксютка была круглая крестьянская сирота, взятая во двор, <i>на сени</i>, с семилетнего возраста единственно потому, что ее некому было кормить. Она была очень дурна лицом: рыжая, в веснушках, с глазами неизвестного цвета и, сверх того, отвратительно неопрятна и зла. За что бы ее любить? А Степан Михайлыч очень ее любил, и не проходило обеда, чтоб он не давал или не посылал со стола подачки своей Аксютке; когда же она стала девкой в возрасте, заставил по утрам наливать себе чай и разговаривал с нею целые часы. В настоящее время Аксютке было уже далеко за тридцать лет. И вот в одно утро, через несколько дней после радостной вести из Уфы, Степан Михайлыч говорит Аксютке: «Что ты, дура, ходишь неряхой? Поди и приоденься хорошенько, по-праздничному; я хочу тебя замуж выдать». Оскалила зубы Аксютка и, считая, что барин балагурит, отвечала: «Ну кто на мне, на сироте, женится? Разве пастух Кирсанка?» Это был известный дурак и урод. Степану Михайлычу стало как будто досадно, и он продолжал: «Уж если я посватаю – женится что ни лучший парень. Пошла оденься и мигом приходи ко мне». В радостном недоумении ушла Аксютка, а Степан Михайлыч</p>	<p>In his excitement and joy, it occurred to him suddenly to bestow a mark of his favour upon Aksyutka, the maid who poured out tea and coffee, to whom he always showed an unaccountable partiality. Aksyutka was a peasant's daughter who had lost both parents and was brought to the house at Bagrovo when she was seven years old, merely to save her from starvation. She was exceedingly ugly – red-haired and freckled, with eyes of no colour in particular; she was also bad-tempered and a horrible sloven. This does not sound attractive; but Stepan Mihailovitch took a great fancy to her, and never did dinner pass without his giving or sending to the child something taken from the dishes at table. When she grew up, he made her pour out his tea in the morning and talked to her for hours at a time. She was now a good deal over thirty. One morning, soon after the good news came from Ufa, Stepan Mihailovitch said to her:</p> <p>"What makes you go about looking like a scarecrow? Be off, you stupid creature, and put on your best clothes that you wear on holidays. I mean to find you a husband." Aksyutka grinned: she thought her master was not serious, and answered:</p> <p>"Why, who would marry an orphan like me, except perhaps Kirsanka, the shepherd?" (Kirsanka, as every one knew, was deformed and idiotic.) Stepan Mihailovitch seemed vexed; he went on,</p> <p>"If I arrange the marriage, you can have your pick</p>	<p>In the fullness of his delight my grandfather suddenly thought of doing a kindness to Aksyuta, the serf-girl who made his tea and coffee, and whom no one knew why he was continually rewarding. Aksyuta was a little orphan peasant, taken into service at seven years old, simply because there was no one to look after her. She was very ugly to look at red-haired, freckled, with eyes of unknown colour, and, besides, she was disgustingly squalid and evil-tempered. How could he like her? And yet my grandfather liked her very much, and not a dinner passed but he gave or sent out little scraps to his Aksyuta; when she grew into a girl, he made her pour him out tea in the mornings, and used to chat with her for hours at a time. At the present moment Aksyuta was well over thirty years old. And one morning my grandfather said to her,</p> <p>"Why are you in rags, you little fool? Go and dress yourself prettily in your holiday clothes; I want you to marry."</p> <p>Aksyuta showed her teeth and, thinking that her master was joking, replied, "Who'll marry me, an orphan? The shepherd Kirsanka, perhaps?"</p> <p>This was a well-known idiot and cripple. My grandfather felt rather angry, and he continued, "If I suggest it, the best of our young men will be glad to marry you. Go and dress, and come back to me at once!"</p> <p>In joyful perplexity Aksyuta went away, and my</p>

велел позвать к себе Ивана Малыша; мы отчасти уже знаем его. Это был двадцатичетырехлетний парень, кровь с молоком, молодец в полном смысле и ростом и дородством, сын старинного усердного слуги, Бориса Петрова Хорева, умершего в пугачевщину от забот, как все думали, и сухоты при сохранении в порядке вверенных его управлению крестьян Нового Багрова, когда помещик бежал с семьей в Астрахань. Ивана потому звали Малышом, что у него был старший брат также Иван, который прозывался Хорев, по прозвищу своего отца. Иван Малыш вырос перед своим баринком как лист перед травой. Степан Михайлыч посмотрел на него, полюбовался и сказал самым милостивым и ласковым голосом, от которого у Малыша жилки задрожали с радости: «Малыш, я хочу тебя женить». – «Ваша господская воля, батюшка Степан Михайлыч», – отвечал душой и телом преданный слуга. «Поди же принарядись и приходи ко мне; да чтоб одна нога там, а другая здесь». Малыш опрометью побежал исполнить барский приказ. Аксютка, однако, пришла первая; она пригладила и примазала свои рыжие волосы коровьим маслом, напялила праздничную кофту с юбкой, обулась в башмаки – и не похорошела! Она не могла удерживаться, и рот ее беспрестанно кривился от радостной улыбки; ей было стыдно оттого, и она закрывала лицо рукою. Степан Михайлыч смеялся. «Что, любо, небось хочется замуж», – говорил он... Соколом влетел Малыш, и мороз подрал его по коже при виде нарядной вороны Аксютки. «Вот тебе невеста, – весело сказал Степан Михайлыч, – она мне хорошо служит, и отец твой мне хорошо

of the young men. Go and dress yourself, and come back at once." Aksyutka went out surprised and delighted; and Stepan Mihailovitch summoned Little Ivan to his presence. We have heard something of this man already; he was now twenty-four years old, with a complexion of lilies and roses, a very fine young fellow, both tall and stout. At the time of Pugatchoff's revolt, when the master himself took refuge with his family at Astrakhan, Ivan's father had been left in charge of the serfs at Bagrovo; and it was generally supposed that his death was due to overwork and anxiety at that time. He left two sons, both called Ivan, and this one was known as Little Ivan, to distinguish him from his elder brother, who inherited his father's nickname of Weasel. Little Ivan appeared before his master, "like a leaf before the grass."*

Stepan Mihailovitch looked at him with admiration, and then said in a voice so kind that the lad's heart leaped for joy,

"Ivan, I mean to give you a wife."

"Your will is law, batyushka Stepan Mihailovitch," answered the man, devoted body and soul to his master.

"Well, go and dress yourself in your best, and come back to me in less than no time." Ivan flew off to do his master's bidding.

Aksyutka was the first to reappear; she had smoothed her red hair and greased it with oil, and put on her smartest jacket and skirt, and her bare feet were hidden in shoes; but alas! she was no more beautiful than before. She was much excited, and her mouth was constantly expanding into a broad grin, which she tried to hide with her hand, because she felt ashamed of it. Stepan Mihailovitch laughed :

grandfather ordered Young Ivan to be sent for. He was a youth, twenty-four years of age, full-blooded, a fine fellow in every sense of the term, both in build and figure, the son of a zealous old servant who had died from worry and emaciation, as every one thought, in keeping order among the peasants he had been put in charge of. Ivan was called the "Young" because he had an elder brother, also named Ivan, who was nicknamed Parrot, like his father. Young Ivan flew up like the wind.

My grandfather looked at him with admiration and, in the kindest and gentlest of voices, whereat Ivan's blood began to freeze, he said, "Ivan, I want you to marry."

"It is your will, master," answered the serf, who was devoted to him in body and soul.

"Go and put on your best clothes, and come back to me as fast as you can."

Ivan ran off precipitately to carry out his master's order. Aksyuta returned first; she had smoothed and oiled her red hair with butter, had thrown on a holiday blouse and skirt, and put on her boots and looked none the prettier! She could not control herself, and her mouth twisted unceasingly with a joyful smile; she felt ashamed of this and covered her face with her hand. My grandfather laughed.

"What, little one! You want a husband, eh?" said he.

Ivan flew up like a falcon, but he felt chilled to the bone at the sight of that dressed-up crow, Aksyuta.

"Here's a bride for you," said my grandfather merrily; "she serves me well, and your father served me well: I'll not abandon you." Then he spoke to his wife who had just come up.

служил: я вас не покину. – Ариша, – сказал он, обратясь к только что вошедшей жене, – невесте сшить все приданое из господского добра, и корову ей дать и свадьбу сыграть господским пивом, вином и харчами». Противоречий не было. Свадьбу сыграли. Аксютка без памяти влюбилась в красавца мужа, а Малыш возненавидел свою противную жену, которая была вдобавок старше его десятью годами. Аксютка ревновала с утра до вечера, и не без причины, а Малыш колотил ее с утра до вечера, и также не без причины, потому что одно только полено, и то ненадолго, могло зажимать ей рот, унимать ее злой язык. Жаль, очень жаль! Погрешил Степан Михайлыч и сделал он чужое горе из своей радости.

"Oh, she's willing enough to take a husband," he said. Back flew Ivan; but the sight of Aksyutka's ugly face and fine dress sent a cold shiver down his back.

"There is your bride," said Stepan Mihailovitch; "she is a good servant to me as your father was once. You may both count on my protection." His wife now came in, and he turned to her and said :

"Arisha, the bride's clothes are all to be made out of our stuff; I shall give her a cow and provide everything to eat and drink at the wedding." No one raised any objections, and the marriage took place. Aksyutka was charmed with her handsome husband, but he detested his repulsive wife, who was ten years older than him to boot. She was jealous of him all day long, and not without reason; and he beat her all day long, with some excuse on his side also; for nothing but the stick – and not even that for long – could shut her mouth and keep her wicked tongue from wagging. It was a pity, a great pity: Stepan Mihailovitch did a wrong thing when he made others sad because he was happy.

** I.e. "instantly," though why the phrase means this I cannot discover. In Russian fairy-tales, a witch regularly summons any one she wants with the words, "Stand thou before me, like a leaf before the grass!"*

"Let a dowry be sewn for the bride from our own stores, and a cow given to her, and let the wedding be celebrated with our own beer, wine, and victuals."

There was no gainsaying him. The wedding was celebrated. Aksyuta fell over head and ears in love with her handsome husband, but Ivan began to hate his ugly wife, who was besides ten years older than he. Aksyuta was jealous from morning till night, and not without cause; and Ivan beat her from morning till night, also not without cause, for only the stick and that not for long could close her mouth and stop her angry tongue. It was a pity, a great pity, that my grandfather's joy became a source of others' sorrow.