

Giovanni," he said slowly. "I am older than you, but we have stood by each other very often, — in places more slippery than these marble steps. Do not let us quarrel now, old friend. When I tell you that my omniscience exists only in the vivid imaginations of people whose tea I like, believe me; and if you wish to do me a kindness, for the sake of old times, do not help to spread the idea that I know everything."

The melancholy Spicca had never been given to talking about friendship or its mutual obligations. Indeed, Gio-

vanni could not remember having ever heard him speak as he had just spoken. It was perfectly clear that he knew something very definite about Maria Consuelo, and he probably had no intention of deceiving Giovanni in that respect. But Spicca also knew his man, and he knew that his appeal for Giovanni's silence would not be vain.

"Very well," said Sant' Ilario.

They exchanged a few indifferent words before parting, and then Giovanni walked slowly homeward, pondering on the things he had heard that day.

F. Marion Crawford.

THROUGH THE RUSHES.

THROUGH the rushes by the river
Runs a drowsy tremor sweet,
And the waters stir and shiver
In the darkness at their feet;
From the sombre east up-stealing,
Gradual, with slow revealing,
Comes the dawn, and with a sigh
Night goes by.

Here and there, to mildest wooing,
Folded buds are open blown;
And the drops their leaves bedewing,
Like to seed-pearls thickly sown,
Sinking, with the blessing olden,
Deep into each calyx golden,
A supreme behest obey,
Then melt away.

And while robes of splendor trailing
Fitly deck the glowing morn,
And a fragrance, fresh exhaling,
Greets her loveliness new-born,
Midst divine melodic voicings,
Midst delicious mute rejoicings,
Strong as when the worlds began,
Awakens Pan!

Florence Earle Coates.

HARVEST-TIDE ON THE VOLGA.

OUR life at Prince X.'s estate on the Volga flowed on in a semi-monotonous, wholly delightful state of lotus-eating idleness, though it assuredly was not a case which came under the witty description once launched by Turgeneff broadside at his countrymen: "The Russian country proprietor comes to revel and simmer in his *ennui* like a mushroom frying in sour cream." *Ennui* shunned that happy valley. We passed the hot mornings at work on the veranda or in the well-filled library, varying them by drives to neighboring estates and villages, or by trips to the fields to watch the progress of the harvest, now in full swing. Such a visit we paid when all the able-bodied men and women in the village were ranged across the landscape in interminable lines, armed with their reaping-hooks, and forming a brilliant picture in contrast with the yellow grain, in their blue and scarlet raiment. They were fulfilling the contract which bound them to three days' labor for their landlord, in return for the pasturage furnished by him for their cattle. A gay kerchief and a single clinging garment, generally made of red and blue in equal portions, constituted the costume of the women. The scanty garments were faded and worn, for harvesting is terribly hard work, and they cannot use their good clothes, as at the haying, which is mere sport in comparison. Most of the men had their heads protected only by their long hair, whose sunburnt outer layer fell over their faces, as they stooped and reaped the grain artistically close to the ground. Their shirts were of faded red cotton; their full trousers, of blue-and-red-striped home-made linen, were confined by a strip of coarse crash swathed around the feet and legs to the knee, and cross-gartered with ropes. The feet of men and women alike were shod with low

shoes of plaited linden bark over these cloths.

They smiled indulgently at our attempts to reap and make girdles for the sheaves, — the sickles seemed to grow dull and back-handed at our touch, — chattering with the dignified ease which characterizes the Russian peasant. The small children had been left behind in the village, in charge of the grandams and the women unfit for field labor. Baby had been brought to the scene of action, and installed in luxury. The cradle, a cloth distended by poles, like that of Peter the Great, which is preserved in the museum of the Kremlin at Moscow, was suspended from the up-turned shafts of a *telyéga* by a stiff spiral spring of iron, similar to the springs used on bird-cages. The curtain was made of the mother's spare gown, her *sarafán*. Baby's milk-bottle consisted of a cow's horn, over the tip of which a cow's teat was fastened. I had already seen these dried teats for sale in pairs, in the popular markets, but had declined to place implicit faith in the venders' solemn statements as to their use.

It was the season which the peasants call by the expressive title *stradó* (suffering). Nearly all the summer work must be done together, and, with their primitive appliances, suffering is the inevitable result. They set out for the fields before sunrise, and return at indefinite hours, but never early. Sometimes they pass the night in the fields, under the shelter of a cart or of the grain sheaves. Men and women work equally and unweariedly; and the women receive less pay than the men for the same work, in the bad old fashion which is, unhappily, not yet unknown in other lands and ranks of life. Eating and sleeping join the number of the lost arts.