

**THE VILLAGE;
RUSSIAN
IMPRESSIONS**

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The village; Russian impressions by Ernest Poole

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ERNEST POOLE

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THE VILLAGE

RUSSIAN IMPRESSIONS

BY

ERNEST POOLE

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SANTA BARBARA

TO M. A.

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THE VILLAGE

CHAPTER I

I

“O H, Tarasov, hurry up!”

In my hotel room in Petrograd, Tarasov was doing his packing. I had already finished mine. It was a stifling afternoon in August, 1917, and we were trying to get off for a trip to a little village deep in the heart of the country. But I had small hope of catching the train. My companion was a man about forty, huge of limb and nearly bald. His face was flushed and perspiring. A vast disorderly heap of belongings lay all around him on the floor, and he was mauling things about with a kind of desperate patience. To my imprecations he said not a word. I heard him panting softly.

In Petrograd and Moscow and in smaller cities, Juvenale Ivanovitch Tarasov had for many weeks been my interpreter and friend. I had tried three other interpreters, two of them Bolsheviki and the third one a Cadet. Each had looked at Russia through his political party eyes. The value of Tarasov to me was that he belonged to no party at all.