THE VILLAGE; RUSSIAN IMPRESSIONS

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The village; Russian impressions by Ernest Poole

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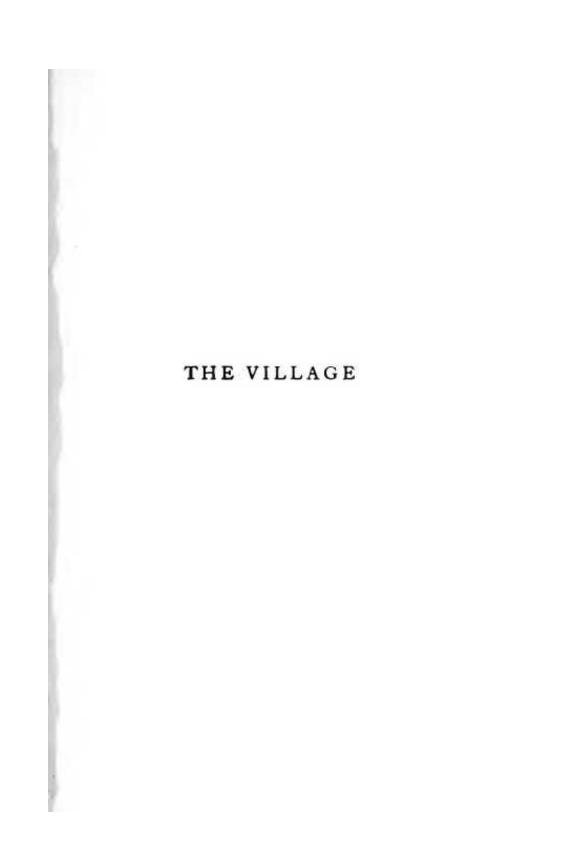
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Author of "The Harbor," "His Family," etc.

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ENTA TO CAME

TO M. A.

The author acknowledges the courtesy of the editors of The New Republic and The Red Cross Magazine in permitting the reprinting in this book of certain passages which first appeared in their magazines.

THE VILLAGE

CHAPTER I

1

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.