

THE FOUR-DOLLAR SERVANT

A Russian Folk Tale

A RICH man, whose name was Mr. Seidman, employed many servants. He treated them all kindly, and they were fond of him and often told him their troubles and asked his advice. Among these servants were two men, named John and Joseph. John was paid four dollars a week as wages, and Joseph ten dollars a week,

The two men often saw each other at their tasks. John's work was nearly always hard. He had to move heavy furniture about, and carry large boxes and packages up and down stairs. Joseph's work was much easier. He ran errands for his master, worked for him among his books, and wrote letters for him.

John often wondered why Joseph received so large a wage for light work, while he himself worked much harder for less money. He determined to ask Mr. Seidman the reason. He knew that his master was his friend and would be willing to answer his question.

"There is something that puzzles me," he said to Mr. Seidman one day. "I wish you would explain it to me." And he told him his trouble.

Mr. Seidman listened, and then answered, "Yes, I will explain to you the reason for the difference between your wages and Joseph's. But first, do you see that loaded wagon that has stopped in the street? Ask the driver, please, what he has in his load."

John went out to the street and returned at once, saying that the wagon was loaded with wheat.

"Where is the wheat going?" asked Mr. Seidman.

Again John went out to the wagon.

"The wheat is to be delivered in Brod," he reported.

"And from where does it come?" Mr. Seidman asked.

Once more John was obliged to go out to the street and speak to the driver of the wagon.

Then Mr. Seidman wished to know how grain there was in the load.

As soon as John had learned this, his master asked what the price was per bushel. Again John ran out to the wagon.

Altogether he made five trips in order to answer his master's questions.

Then Mr. Seidman sent for Joseph, who was busy at his work in another room.

"Joseph," he said, "run out to that driver and ask him what he has in his wagon. I want to know."

Joseph quickly ran out to the street; and it was not very long - in fact only as long as it took John to ask his first question - before he came back,

"Well?" asked the master.

"The driver comes from the town of Sinyava," answered Joseph, "but his load of wheat comes from Svod, and he says he is taking it to Brod. Since early morning he has been on the road, but expects to get to Brod before night. He has more than one hundred and twenty bushels of wheat in the load, and it is worth seventy-five cents a bushel. He tells me that the wheat crop has been large this year, and that we may expect a fall in the price before long. Is that all, Mr. Seidman?"

"Yes, that is all, Joseph. Now, John," said Mr. Seidman, "do you understand why Joseph is worth a larger wage than you are?"

John nodded. "Yes," he replied, "he thinks while he works."

