

night without a glimmer of joy or hope, in which he had been born and had died.

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To those then inaccessible Balkan wastes the echo of the war carried feebly. The war began and ended without a single shot resounding among the rocks of the unapproachable Isker ravine.

Bulgaria was liberated.

And old Yotso was liberated — they told him so.

But he was blind, he did not see liberty, nor could he sense it in any way.

For him liberty was expressed in the word: „There are no more Turks!“

And he could sense that there were no more.

But he longed to see something „Bulgarian“, to rejoice at it.

In his simple fellow-villagers, in their conversation, in their thoughts, in their cares for everyday life, he did not sense anything especially new. Still the same people with the same passions, worries and poverty as before. He would hear the same talking and noise in the inn; the same village quarrels, the same struggles with need and nature in this lost barren region, far removed from the world.

„What is ‘Bulgarian’ here?“ he would ask himself in wonder, sitting in the shade of the twisted oak in front of his plot of land, seemingly lifeless, gazingly dreamily into space.

If he only had sight he would fly like an eagle to see what was happening in the new world.

„It is just now that I need my eyes,“ he would think bitterly.

To see free Bulgaria — that was his constant thought. This thought overshadowed everything else; the bustle of the life around him left him indifferent, aloof — everything was so petty, unimportant, insignificant and commonplace. He was afraid he would die before understanding what sort of a thing was „Bulgarian“; or that he might lose his wits from old age without learning that wonderful thing. . .

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One day — in the fifth year after the Liberation — there spread through the village a rumour (such are the inscrutable ways of God) that the district superintendent was coming.

This news stirred the village.

It kindled also old Yotso's poor heart; his soul was roused by a sweet hot excitement which it had not felt before. Now at last he would see something „Bulgarian“! He would really see it. . .

He enquired what kind of a fellow this important man was, what kind of a „maimurin“. The more knowledgeable peasants told him that the superintendent was something like a Turkish kaimakamin, like a pasha.

„Is he a Bulgarian pasha?“ he asked breathless with excitement.

„Bulgarian, what else!“ they replied.