ГЕНРИК СЕНКЕВИЧ

HANIA

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Henryk Sienkiewicz
Hania

PROLOGUE
THE OLD SERVANT

BESIDES old managers, overseers, and foresters there is another type of man which is disappearing more and more from the face of the earth, – the old servant.

During my childhood, as I remember, my parents were served by one of those mammoths. After those mammoths there will soon be only bones in old cemeteries, in strata thickly covered with oblivion; from time to time investigators will dig them out. This old servant was called Mikolai Suhovolski; he was a noble from the noble village of Suha Vola, which he mentioned often in his stories. He came to my father from my grandfather of sacred memory, with whom he was an orderly in the time of the Napoleonic wars. He did not himself remember accurately when he began service with my grandfather; when he was asked for the date, he took snuff, and answered, —

"Yes, I was then without mustaches, and the colonel, God light his soul, was still very young."

In the house of my parents he fulfilled the most varied duties:

he was butler; he was body-servant; in summer he went to the harvest fields in the rôle of overseer, in winter to the threshing; he kept the keys of the vodka room, the cellar, the granary; he wound up the clocks; but above all he kept the house in order.

I do not remember this man otherwise than scolding. He scolded my father, he scolded my mother; I feared him as fire, though I liked him. In the kitchen he worked off a whole breviary on the cook, he pulled the pantry boys by the ears through the house, and never was he content with anything. Whenever he got tipsy, which happened once a week, all avoided him, not because he permitted himself to have words with his master or mistress, but because whenever he fastened on any one, he followed that person all day, nagging and scolding without end.

During dinner, he stood behind my father's chair, and, though he did not serve, he watched the man who served, and poisoned life for him with a most particular passion.

"Take care, take care!" muttered he, "or I will take care of thee. Look at him! he cannot serve quickly, but drags his legs after him, like an old cow on the march. Take care again! He does not hear that his master is calling. Change her plate for the lady. Why art thou gaping? Why? Look at him! look at him!"

He interfered in conversation carried on at table, and opposed everything always. Frequently it happened that my father would turn during dinner and say to him, —

"Mikolai, tell Mateush after dinner to harness the horses; we will drive to such and such a place."

"Drive! why not drive? Oi yei! But are not horses for driving? Let the poor horses break their legs on such a road. If there is a visit to be made, it must be made. Of course their lordships are free; do I prevent them? I do not prevent. Why not visit? The accounts can wait, and the threshing can wait. The visit is more urgent."

"It is a torment with this Mikolai!" shouted my father sometimes, made impatient.

But Mikolai began again, —

"Do I say that I am not stupid? I know that I am stupid. The manager has gone to pay court to the priest's housekeeper in Nyevodov, and why shouldn't masters go on visits? Is a visit less important than paying court to a housekeeper? If 'tis permitted to the servant to go, it is permitted to the master."

And thus it went on in a circle without means of stopping the old grumbler.

We, that is, I and my younger brother, feared him, as I have said, almost more than our tutor Father Ludvik, and surely more than our parents. He was more polite toward my sisters. He said "Panienka" [1] to each of them, though they were younger than we; but to us he said "thou" without ceremony. For me he had a special charm: he always carried gun caps in his pocket. It happened often that after lessons I would slip into the pantry, smile as nicely as I could, be as friendly as possible, and say timidly, —

[1] Lord's daughter, or young lady.

"Mikolai! A good day to Mikolai. Will Mikolai clean pistols to-day?"

"What does Henryk want here? I'll get ready a dish-cloth, that is all."

Then he would mock me, saying, —

"'Mikolai! Mikolai!' When gun caps are wanted, Mikolai is good, and when not, let the wolves eat him. Thou wouldst do better to study; thou'lt never gain wit from shooting."

"I have finished my lessons," said I, half crying.

"Finished his lessons! Hum! finished. He is studying and studying, but his head is like an empty canister. I won't give caps, and that's the end of it." (While talking, he searched through his pockets.) "But if the cap goes into his eye, Mikolai will catch it. Who is to blame? Mikolai. Who let the boy shoot? Mikolai."

Scolding in this fashion, he went to my father's room, took down the pistols, blew the dust off them, declared a hundred times more that all this was not worth a deuce; then he lighted a candle, put a cap on the nipple of the pistol, and let me aim. Meanwhile I had often to bear heavy crosses.

"How the boy holds the pistol!" said he. "Hum! like a barber. How couldst thou quench a candle, unless as an old man quenches it in church? Thou shouldst be a priest to repeat Hail Marys, and not be a soldier."

In his own way he taught us his military art of other days. Often after dinner I and my brother learned to march under his eye, and with us marched Father Ludvik, who marched very

ridiculously.

Then Mikolai looked at him with a frown, and, though he feared the priest more than any one, he could not restrain himself.

"Hei!" said he, "but his grace marches just like an old cow."

I, as the elder, was oftener under his command, so I suffered most. But when I was sent to school old Mikolai cried as if the greatest misfortune had happened. My father and mother said that he became more peevish, and annoyed them two weeks.

"They took the child and carried him away," said he. "And if he dies! Uu! u! But what does he want of schools? Isn't he the heir? Will he study Latin? They want to turn him into a Solomon. What folly! The child has gone off, gone off, and crawl, thou old man, into corners and look for what thou hast not lost. The deuce knows why 'tis done."

I remember when I came home for the first holidays. All in the house were sleeping yet. It was just dawning; the morning was cold and snowy. The squeaking of the well-sweep in the farm-yard and the barking of dogs interrupted the silence. The blinds of the house were closed, but the windows in the kitchen were gleaming with a bright light which gave a rosy color to the snow near the wall. I had come home tired and gloomy with fear in my soul, since the first rank which I had received was nothing in particular. This happened because I was helpless till I had found my place, till I had grown accustomed to routine and school discipline. I feared my father; I feared the severe, silent face of the priest, who had brought me from Warsaw.

There was no consolation from any side. At last I saw the door of the kitchen open and old Mikolai, with his nose red from cold, wading through the snow with pots of steaming cream on a tray. When he saw me he cried, —

"Oh, golden Panich! my dearest!"

And then he put down the tray quickly, turned over both pots, caught me around the neck and began to press and kiss me. Thenceforward he always called me Panich.

For two entire weeks after that he could not forgive me that cream: "A man is carrying cream for himself quietly, and the boy comes along. He picked out his hour accurately," etc.

My father was going to flog me, or at least he promised to do so, because of the two moderate marks which I had brought, one for penmanship, the other for German; but my tears and promises of improvement on one hand, the intercession of my dear mother on the other, and finally, the troubles raised by Mikolai, prevented it. Mikolai did not know what kind of creature penmanship was, and to punish one for German – that he would not even listen to.

"Well," said he, "is the boy a Lutheran, or some Schwab? Did the lord colonel know how to speak German? or does the lord himself [here he turned to my father] know how to speak it? We met the Germans at – What is the name of the place? At Leipzig, and the devil knows wherever we attacked them we didn't talk German, but they showed us their backs right away."

Old Mikolai had one more peculiarity: he spoke rarely of his

former expeditions, but when in moments of special good humor he did so, he lied as if possessed. He did not do this through bad faith; in his old head perhaps facts were mixed up, and grew to fantastic proportions. Whatever military exploits he had heard of during youth he appropriated to himself and my grandfather, his colonel. And he believed sacredly all that he said.

Sometimes in the barn, while overseeing peasants working out their dues in threshing wheat, he would begin to narrate; the men would stop work, and, resting on their flails, listen with lips open in wonderment. Then he would notice them and shout, —

"Why do ye turn mouths on me as big as cannon?"

And again was heard, —

"Lupu! Tsupu! Lupu! Tsupu!"

The sound of flails was heard for some time on the straw, but after a while Mikolai would begin again, —

"My son writes me that he has just been made general by the Queen of Palmyra. He has a good place there, high pay, but there are terrible frosts in that country – " etc.

I may mention that the old man had no success with his children. He had a son, it is true, but a great good-for-nothing, who, when he grew up, made Lord knows what trouble; finally he went into the world and disappeared without trace; and Mikolai's daughter, in her time a wonder of a girl, was giddy with all the officials, as many as there were in the village, and finally died, after giving the world a daughter. That daughter was called Hania. She was about my age, beautiful, but delicate. I remember

that often we played soldier. Hania was the drummer, but a nettle to our enemies. She was good and mild as an angel. A grievous fate awaited her in the world, but those are memories which do not concern us at present.

I return to the old man's narratives. Once I heard him tell how on a time the horses of the Uhlans stampeded in Mariampol. Eighteen thousand of them rushed in through the gates of Warsaw. "How many people they trampled to death," said he, "what a day of judgment there was till they were caught, it is easy to imagine." Another time he told, not in the barn, however, but to us all in the mansion, the following, —

"Did we fight well? Why shouldn't we fight well? I remember once there was war with the Austrians; I was standing in the rank, in the rank, I say, and up to me rides the commander-in-chief, as if to give a message from the Austrians, that is, from the opposite side. 'Ei, thou Suhovolski,' said he, 'I know thee! If we could only catch thee we should finish the whole war.'"

"But didn't he say anything about the colonel?" asked my father.

"Of course! for he said expressly, 'thee and the colonel.'"

Father Ludvik got impatient and said, —

"But thou, Mikolai, tellest lies as if thou wert getting special pay for them."

The old man frowned and would have retorted; but he feared Father Ludvik and respected him, so he said nothing; but after a while, wishing somehow to straighten the affair, he continued, —

"Father Seklutski, our chaplain, told me the same. Once when I got a bayonet thrust from the Austrians under the twelfth, I meant to say the fifth rib, I was in a bad state. Ha! thought I, it is necessary to die, so I confessed all my sins to the Lord God Almighty before Father Seklutski. Father Seklutski listened and listened; at last he said, 'Fear God, Mikolai, thou hast told me all the lies thou knowest.' And I said: 'Maybe, for I don't remember any more.'"

"And they cured thee?"

"Cured! How could they cure me? I cured myself. I mixed right away two charges of powder in a quart of vodka and swallowed it for the night. Next morning I woke up as sound as a fish."

I should have heard more of these narratives and recorded them, but Father Ludvik, I know not why, forbade Mikolai "to turn my head," as he declared, "completely." Poor Father Ludvik, as a priest and a quiet village dweller, did not know first, that every youth whom a storm casts out of his quiet, native corner into the wide arena of the world must have his head turned more than once, and second, that it is not old servants and their narratives that turn them, but some one else.

For that matter the influence of Mikolai on us could not be harmful; on the contrary, the old man watched over us and our conduct very carefully and sternly. He was a conscientious man in the full sense of that word. From his military days one fine characteristic remained with him: conscientiousness and

accuracy in carrying out orders.

One winter, as I remember, the wolves inflicted enormous damage; they grew so bold that in the night a few of them came to the village, and then some tens of them. My father, a born hunter, wanted to arrange a great hunt; but since he was anxious that the command of it should be taken by our neighbor, Pan Ustrytski, a renowned destroyer of wolves, he wrote a letter to him, and calling Mikolai said, —

"My tenant is going to the town; let Mikolai go with him, get out on the road near Ustrytsi, and give this letter to Pan Ustrytski. But it is necessary to bring me an answer. Do not come back without an answer."

Mikolai took the letter, got in with the tenant, and they drove off. In the evening the tenant returned; Mikolai was not with him. My father thought that perhaps he would spend the night in Ustrytsi and return in the morning. A day passed, no Mikolai; a second day passed, nothing of him; a third, no sign of him. There was lamentation in the house. My father, fearing that wolves had attacked him on the way home, sent people to search for the man. They searched, but not a trace could they find. They sent to Ustrytsi. In Ustrytsi it was said that he had been there, had not found Pan Ustrytski; that he had inquired where he was, then borrowed four rubles from the lackey and gone, it was unknown whither. What can all this mean? thought we.

Next day messengers came from other villages with information that they had not found him anywhere. We had

begun to mourn for him when on the sixth evening my father, who was making dispositions in the chancery, heard all at once, outside the door, the wiping of feet, and hawking and grumbling in a low voice, by which he recognized Mikolai immediately.

In fact, it was Mikolai, chilled through, tired, thin, with icicles hanging from his mustaches, almost unlike himself.

"Mikolai! But fear God! what hast thou been doing all this time?"

"What have I been doing, what have I been doing?" muttered Mikolai. "What was I to do? I did not find Pan Ustrytski at home, I went to Bzin. In Bzin they told me, deuce take it, that Pan Ustrytski had gone to Karalovka. I went there too. He had gone from Karalovka, also. But isn't he free to warm strange corners? Isn't he a lord? Besides, he does not travel on foot. 'Very well,' said I, and from Karalovka I went to the capital, for they said that he was in the district capital. And what business had he in the capital, was he the mayor? He went to the government town. Was I to return? I went to the government town and gave him the letter."

"Well, did he give thee an answer?"

"He did, and he didn't. He gave it, but he laughed so that I could see his back teeth. 'Thy lord,' said he, asks me to a hunt on Thursday, and thou givest me this letter on the following Monday. The hunt is over now.' And he laughed again. Here is the letter. Why shouldn't he laugh?"

"But what hast thou eaten all this time?"

"Well, what of it if I haven't eaten anything since yesterday? Do I suffer hunger here? Or are the spoons stingy of food with me? If I haven't eaten, I shall eat."

After that no one gave unconditional commands to Mikolai, but as often as he was sent anywhere we told him what to do in case he did not find the person at home.

Some months later Mikolai went to a fair at a neighboring town to buy horses, for he knew horses perfectly. In the evening the manager came to say that Mikolai had brought the horses, but had come back beaten and was ashamed to appear. My father went immediately to Mikolai, —

"What is the matter with thee, Mikolai?"

"I had a fight!" he blurted out briefly.

"Be ashamed, old man. Thou wilt pick quarrels in a market? Thou hast no sense. Old, but a fool! Dost thou know that I would discharge another man for such a trick? Be ashamed. It must be that thou wert drunk. So thou art spoiling my people, instead of giving an example."

My father was really angry, and when he was angry he did not trifle. But this was the wonder, that Mikolai, who on such occasions did not forget the tongue in his mouth, was as silent as a log this time. Evidently the old man had grown stubborn. Others asked him in vain how it had happened and what was the question. He merely snorted at one, and said not a word to the other.

But they had annoyed him in earnest. Next morning he was so

sick that we had to send for the doctor. The doctor was the first man to explain the affair. A week before my father had quarrelled with his overseer; the man ran away on the following day. He betook himself to a certain Pan Zoll, a German, a great enemy of my father, and took service. At the fair were Pan Zoll, our former overseer, and Pan Zoll's servants, who had driven fat cattle to the fair to be sold.

Pan Zoll saw Mikolai first; he approached his wagon and fell to abusing my father. Mikolai called him a traitor, and when Pan Zoll uttered new outrages against my father, Mikolai retorted with the handle of his whip. Then the overseer and Zoll's servants rushed at Mikolai and beat him till he was bloody.

When my father heard this story tears came to his eyes. He could not forgive himself for having scolded Mikolai, who had been silent about the whole affair purposely.

When Mikolai recovered my father went to reproach him. The old man at first would not confess anything, and grumbled according to his habit; but afterward he grew tender, and he and my father cried like two beavers. Next my father challenged Zoll for the affair, and a duel was fought which that German remembered for many a day.

But had it not been for the doctor, Mikolai's devotion would have remained unknown. Mikolai had hated that doctor for a long time. The cause was as follows: —

I had a beautiful and youthful aunt, my father's sister, who lived with us. I loved her greatly, for she was as good as she was

beautiful, and it did not astonish me that all loved her, and among others the doctor, a man who was young, wise, and exceedingly respected in that whole region. At first Mikolai liked the doctor, said that he was a clever fellow and rode well; but when the doctor began to visit us with evident intentions regarding Aunt Marynia, Mikolai's feelings toward him changed beyond recognition. He began to be polite, but cold to him as to a man utterly strange. Formerly he would scold even him. When on some occasion he had sat too long with us, Mikolai when preparing him for the road grumbled: "What is the good of knocking around in the night? That serves nothing. Has any one ever seen the like!" Now he ceased to scold, and was as silent as if turned to stone. The honest doctor understood soon what it meant, and, though he smiled kindly as before at the old man, still, I think that in his soul it must have annoyed him.

Happily for the young Esculapius Aunt Marynia cherished for him feelings directly opposite those of Mikolai. On a certain evening, when the moon was lighting the hall very nicely, the odor of jasmine came in through the open window. Aunt Marynia was singing at the piano "Io questa notte sogno." Doctor Stanislav approached and asked in a quivering voice, if she thought that he could live without her. Evidently aunt expressed her doubts on this subject; then followed mutual vows, the calling of the moon to witness, and all things of that sort, which are done usually in such cases.

Unfortunately Mikolai came in just that moment to call them

to tea. When he saw what was happening, he ran at once to my father, and since my father was not at the house, for he was walking around the buildings of the estate, he went to my mother, who with her usual kindly smile prayed him not to interfere in the matter.

The confused Mikolai was silent, gnawing himself internally during the rest of the evening; but when my father before going to bed went once more to the chancery to write some letters, Mikolai followed him, and stopping at the door began to cough significantly and knock his feet together.

"What does Mikolai wish?" asked my father.

"But that – What do they call it? – I wanted to ask if it is true that our young lady is going to take – a wife – I wanted to say going to take a husband?"

"Yes. What of it?"

"But it cannot be true that the young lady is going to marry that – barber?"

"What barber? Has Mikolai gone mad? – And must he push in his three coppers everywhere?"

"But the young lady, is she not our young lady; is she not the daughter of the lord colonel? The lord colonel would never have permitted this. Is not the young lady worthy of an heir and a lord of lords? But the doctor, with permission, who is he? The young lady will expose herself to the ridicule of people."

"The doctor is a wise man."

"Wise or not wise, is it few doctors that I have seen? They

used to go through the camp and circle around in the army staff; but when it came to anything, a battle, for instance, they were not there. Didn't the lord colonel call them 'lancet fellows'? While a man is well the doctor won't touch him, but when he is lying half alive, then the doctor will go at him with his lancet. It is no trick to cut up a man when he cannot defend himself, for he has nothing in his hand. But try to cut him when he is well, and has a gun. Oi yei! A great thing to go over people's bones with a knife! There is no good in that! But the lord colonel would rise out of his grave if he knew of this. What kind of a soldier is a doctor? Or is such a man an heir? This cannot be! The young lady will not marry him. That's not according to command. Who is he to aspire to the young lady?"

Unfortunately for Mikolai the doctor not only aspired to the young lady, but even got her. Half a year later the wedding took place, and the colonel's daughter, covered with floods of her relatives' tears, and tears of the house-servants in general, but of Mikolai in particular, went away to share the fate of the doctor.

Mikolai did not cherish any feeling of offence against her, for he could not, since he loved her so much; but he would not forgive the doctor. He hardly ever mentioned his name, and in general tried not to speak of him. I may say in passing that Aunt Marynia was most happy with Doctor Stanislav.

After a year God gave them a beautiful boy, after another year a girl, and so on in turn, as if it had been written down. Mikolai loved those children as his own; he carried them in his arms,

fondled them, kissed them, but that there was a certain vexation in his heart because of the *mésalliance* of Aunt Marynia I noticed more than once.

We had assembled one Christmas eve, when suddenly the rumble of a carriage was heard on the road. We always looked for a number of relatives, therefore my father said, —

"Let Mikolai look out and see who is coming."

Mikolai went out, and returned soon with delight in his face.

"The young lady is coming!" cried he, from a distance.

"Who is that?" inquired my father, though he knew whom Mikolai meant.

"The young lady."

"What young lady?"

"Our young lady."

She was a sight, that young lady, when she came into the room with three children. A pretty young lady! But the old man in his fashion called her "the young lady" and nothing else.

At last his repugnance to Doctor Stanislav came to an end. Hania fell terribly ill of typhus. That for me too was a great affliction, since Hania was about my age and my only playmate, and I loved her almost as a sister. Doctor Stanislav hardly left her room for three days. The old man, who loved Hania with all the strength of his soul, went around during the time of her illness as if poisoned; he neither ate nor drank, he just sat at the door of her room. To her bed no one was permitted to go except my mother. The old man chewed the hard iron pain which was

tearing his breast. His was a soul of strong temper, as well for bodily toil as for blows of misfortune; still it almost bent under the weight of despair near the bed of that single grandchild. At last, after many days of mortal fear, Doctor Stanislav opened the door of the sick girl's room quietly, and with a face beaming with happiness, whispered to those waiting his sentence in the next room, one little phrase: "Saved." The old man could not endure; he bellowed like a bison and threw himself at the doctor's feet, merely repeating with sobs: "Benefactor, my benefactor!"

Hania recovered quickly. After that it was clear that Doctor Stanislav had become an eye in the old man's head.

"A clever man!" repeated he, stroking his mustaches, "a clever man. And sits well on horseback. Without him, Hania – Oh! I will not even mention it – A charm on a dog!"

In a year or so after this event the old man began to fail. His straight and powerful figure bent. He became very decrepit, he ceased to grumble and lie. At last, when he had reached almost ninety years he became perfectly childish. All he did was to make snares for birds; he kept a number of birds in his room, especially titmice.

Some days before death he did not recognize people; but on the very day of his decease the dying lamp of his mind gleamed up once more with bright light. I remember this because my parents were abroad then, for my mother's health. On a certain evening I was sitting before the fire with my younger brother, Kazio, and the priest, who had also grown old. The winter wind

with clouds of snow was striking at the window. Father Ludvik was praying; I, with Kazio's help, was preparing weapons for the morrow's hunt on fresh snow. All at once they told us that old Mikolai was dying. Father Ludvik went immediately to the domestic chapel for the sacrament. I hurried with all speed to the old man. He was lying on the bed, very pale, yellow, and almost stiffening, but calm and with presence of mind.

That bald head was beautiful, adorned with two scars: the head of an old soldier and an honest man. The candle cast a funereal gleam on the walls of the room. In the corners chirped tame titmice. With one hand the old man pressed the crucifix to his breast; his other was held by Hania, who was as pale as a lily, and she covered it with kisses.

Father Ludvik came in and the confession began; then the dying man asked for me.

"My master is not here, nor my beloved mistress," whispered he, "therefore it is grievous for me to die. But you, my golden Panich, the heir – be a guardian to this orphan – God will reward you. Be not angry – If I have offended – forgive me. I was bitter, but I was faithful."

Roused again suddenly he called in a strange voice, and in haste, as if breath failed him, —

"Pan! – Heir! – my orphan! – O God – into Thy – "

"Hands I commend the soul of this valiant soldier, this faithful servant and honest man!" said Father Ludvik, solemnly.

The old man was no longer alive.

We knelt down, and the priest began to repeat prayers for the dead, aloud.

Nearly twenty years have passed since that time. On the tomb of the honest servant the heather of the cemetery has grown vigorously.

Gloomy times came. A storm swept away the sacred and quiet fire of my village. To-day Father Ludvik is in the grave, Aunt Marynia is in the grave; I earn with the pen my bitter daily bread, and Hania —

Hei! tears are flowing!

HANIA

CHAPTER I

WHEN old Mikolai on his death-bed left Hania to my guardianship and conscience, I was sixteen years of age; she was younger by almost a year, and was also just emerging from childhood.

I had to lead her from the bed of her dead grandfather almost by force, and we both went to my father's domestic chapel. The doors of the chapel were open, and before the old Byzantine image of the Mother of God two candles were burning. The gleam of these lighted but faintly the darkness on the altar. We knelt down, one at the side of the other. She, broken by sorrow, wearied by sobbing, sleeplessness, and grief, rested her poor little head on my arm, and so we remained there in silence. The hour was late; in the hall adjoining the chapel, the cuckoo called hoarsely on the old Dantiz clock the second hour after midnight. Deep silence everywhere, broken only by the painful sighs of Hania, and by the distant sound of the snow-bearing wind, which at times shook the leaden window-sash in the chapel. I did not dare to speak one word of solace; I merely drew her toward me, as her guardian, or her elder brother. But I could not pray; a thousand impressions and feelings shook my heart and

head, various images swept before my eyes, but gradually out of that whirlpool one thought and one feeling emerged, – namely, that this pale face with closed eyes, this defenceless, poor little creature resting on my arm, had become to me now a dear sister for whose sake I would give my life, and for whose sake, should the need come, I would throw down the gauntlet to the whole world.

My brother, Kazio, appeared now and knelt down behind us, next Father Ludvik and a few of the servants. We said our evening prayers, according to daily custom: Father Ludvik read the prayers aloud, we repeated them, or answered the litany; the dark face of the Mother of God, with two sabre-cuts on her cheek, looked at us kindly. She seemed to take part in our family cares and afflictions, in our happiness or misfortune, and bless all who were assembled at her feet.

During prayers, when Father Ludvik began to commemorate the dead, for whom we repeated usually "Eternal rest," and connected with them the name of Mikolai, Hania sobbed aloud again; and I made a vow in my soul, that I would accomplish sacredly the duties which the deceased had imposed on me, even had I to accomplish them at the cost of the greatest sacrifice.

This was the vow of a young enthusiast who did not understand yet either the possible greatness of the sacrifices or the responsibility, but who was not without noble impulses and sensitive transports of soul.

After evening prayer we parted to go to rest. On the old

housekeeper, Vengrosia, I imposed the duty of conducting Hania to the chamber which she was to occupy in future, – not to the wardrobe chamber, as hitherto, – and to stay the whole night with her. Kissing the orphan affectionately, I went to the business house, where I, Kazio, and Father Ludvik had rooms, and which in the main house we called the station. I undressed and lay down in bed. In spite of my grief for Mikolai, whom I had loved sincerely, I felt proud and almost happy in my rôle of guardian. It raised me in my own eyes, that I, a boy of sixteen, was to be the support of a weak and helpless being. I felt full grown. "Thou wert not mistaken, thou honest old soldier," thought I, "in thy young lord and the heir; in good hands hast thou placed the future of thy grandchild, and thou mayst rest quietly in thy grave."

In truth, I was at peace touching Hania's future. The thought that she would grow up in time, and that I should have to give her in marriage, did not come to my head then. I thought that she would stay with me always, surrounded with attention as a sister, beloved as a sister, sad perhaps, but in peace. According to ancient custom the first son received more than five times as much property as younger members of the family. The younger sons and daughters on their part respected this custom, and never rebelled against it. Though in our family there was no legal primogeniture, I was the first son of the family, and therefore the greater part of the property would be mine; hence, though only a student yet, I looked on the property as my own. My father was among the richest proprietors of that region. Our family was

not distinguished, it is true, by the wealth of magnates, but by that large oldtime nobility-wealth which gave bread to be waded through; a calm life and plenty in the native nest until death. I was to be comparatively wealthy, hence I looked with calmness both on my future and Hania's, knowing that whatever fate was awaiting her she would always find refuge and support with me whenever she needed them.

I fell asleep with these thoughts. On the following morning I began to give effect to the guardianship. But in what a ridiculous and childish manner I did it! Still when I recall the whole matter to-day I cannot resist a certain feeling of tenderness.

When Kazio and I came to breakfast we found at table Father Ludvik, Madame d'Yves, our governess, and also my two little sisters, who were sitting on high cane chairs as usual, swinging their feet and prattling joyously.

I sat down with uncommon dignity in my father's arm-chair, and casting the eye of a dictator on the table I turned to the serving lad and said in a sharp, commanding tone, —

"Bring a plate for Panna Hania."

The word "Panna" I emphasized purposely. This had never happened before. Hania ate usually in the wardrobe chamber, for though my mother wished her to sit with us, old Mikolai would never permit it, saying: "What good in that? Let her have respect for lordship. What more does she need?" Now I introduced a new custom. The honest Father Ludvik smiled, covering his smile with a pinch of snuff and a silk handkerchief; Pani d'Yves made

a grimace, for in spite of her good heart, she was an inveterate aristocrat, being a descendant of an ancient noble family of France. The serving boy, Franek, opened his mouth widely and gazed at me with astonishment.

"A plate for Panna Hania! Hast thou heard?" repeated I.

"I obey, great mighty lord," answered Franek, who was impressed evidently by the tone in which I spoke.

To-day I confess that the great mighty lord was barely able to suppress the smile of satisfaction called to his lips by that title, given him for the first time in life. Dignity, however, did not permit the great mighty lord to smile.

Meanwhile the plate was ready. In a moment the door opened and Hania entered, dressed in a black robe, which the maid-servant and housekeeper had prepared for her during the night. She was pale, with traces of tears in her eyes; her long golden tresses flowed down over her dress and ended in ribbons of black crape entwined among the strands of hair.

I rose, and hastening to the orphan conducted her to the table. My efforts and all that splendor seemed to embarrass her, confusing and tormenting the child; but I did not understand then that in time of grief a quiet, lonely, uninhabited corner with rest are worth more than the noisy ovations of friends, even if they come from the kindest heart. So in best faith I was tormenting Hania with my guardianship, thinking that I was carrying out my task perfectly. Hania was silent, and only from time to time did she answer my questions as to what she would eat and drink.

"Nothing, I beg the favor of the lord's son."

I was pained by that "I beg the favor of the lord's son," all the more, that Hania had been more confidential with me and had called me simply Panich (lord's son). But just the rôle which I had played since yesterday, and the changed relations in which I had placed her, made Hania more timid and submissive.

Immediately after breakfast I took her aside.

"Hania, remember that hereafter thou art my sister. Never say to me, 'I beg the favor of the lord's son.'"

"I will not; I beg the fa – I will not, Panich."

I was in a strange position. I walked through the room with her, and did not know what to say. Gladly would I have consoled her, but to do that I should have to mention Mikolai and his death of the day before; that would have brought Hania to tears, and would have been merely a renewal of her suffering. So I finished with this, that we sat down on a low sofa at the end of the room, the child rested her head on my shoulder, and I began to stroke her golden hair.

She nestled up to me really as to a brother, and perhaps that sweet feeling of trust which rose in her heart called fresh tears to her eyes. She wept bitterly; I consoled her as best I could.

"Thou art weeping again, Hania," said I. "Thy grandfather is in heaven, and I shall try – "

I could not continue, for tears gathered in my eyes.

"Panich, may I go to grandfather?" whispered she.

I knew that the coffin had been brought, and that just in that

moment they were placing Mikolai's corpse in it. I did not wish Hania to approach the body till all had been arranged. I went alone.

On the way I met Pani d'Yves, whom I begged to wait for me, as I wished to speak with her a moment. After I had given final orders touching the burial, and had prayed before the remains of Mikolai, I returned to the French woman, and after a few introductory words asked her if in a certain time, when the first weeks of mourning had passed, she would give Hania lessons in French and music.

"Monsieur Henri," answered Pani d'Yves, who evidently was angry because I was ordering everything, like a gray goose in the sky, "I would most willingly, for I love that maiden much; but I do not know whether it lies within the designs of your parents, as also I do not know whether they will consent to the position which you are trying, of your own will, to give this little girl in your family. Not too much zeal, Monsieur Henri."

"She is under my guardianship," said I, haughtily, "and I am answerable for her."

"But I am not under your guardianship, therefore you will permit me to wait till your parents return."

The French woman's resistance angered me, but I succeeded incomparably better with Father Ludvik. The honest priest, who earlier had been teaching Hania, not only favored her further and broader education, but moreover praised me for my zeal.

"I see," said he, "that thou art putting thyself sincerely to thy

task, though thou art young and a child yet. This is to thy praise; only remember to be as persistent as thou art zealous."

And I saw that the priest was satisfied with me. The rôle of lord of the house, which I had taken, amused rather than angered him. The old man saw that there was much childishness in my conduct, but that the motives were honest; hence he was proud of me, and gratified that the seed which he had cast into my soul had not been lost. Moreover, the old priest loved me greatly. As to me, on approaching manhood I won him as much as I had feared him during childhood. He had a weakness for me, hence he let himself be led. Hania too he loved, and he was glad to improve her condition in so far as it lay in his power. From him, therefore, I met not the least opposition.

Pani d'Yves had really a good heart, and also met Hania with tenderness, though she was a little angry with me. Indeed, the orphan had no cause to complain of the lack of loving hearts. Our servants began to treat her differently, not as an associate, but as a young lady. The will of the first son in the family, even if a child, was greatly respected among us. This my father exacted. From the will of the first son there was a right of appeal to the old lord and lady, but no one dared to oppose this will without being authorized. It was also not in order to address the first son otherwise than as "Panich" (lord's son) from his earliest years. The servants, as well as the younger members of the family, were trained in respect for the Panich, and this respect remained with him during life. "The family is upheld by this," said my father;

and in fact because of this respect the voluntary constitution of the family, by virtue of which the eldest son had more property than the younger, was kept up from of old, though not resting on law. That was a family tradition, passing from generation to generation. People were accustomed to look on me as their future lord; and even old Mikolai, to whom everything was permitted, and who alone called me by name, could not resist this feeling to a certain extent.

My mother had a medicine room in the house, and visited the sick herself. In time of cholera she passed whole nights in cottages in company with the doctor, exposing herself to death; but my father, who trembled for her, did not prohibit her, repeating, "Duty, duty." Moreover, my father himself, though exacting, gave assistance. More than once he remitted arrears of labor; notwithstanding his innate impulsiveness, he forgave faults easily; frequently he paid debts for villagers, conducted weddings, was godfather to children; he commanded us to respect the peasants; to old tenants he answered with his hat, – nay, more, he called for their advice frequently. It is not possible to tell how attached the peasants were to our whole family; of this they gave convincing proofs afterward.

I mention these things, first, to show exactly how we live and lived; second, to show that in making Hania a lady I did not meet much difficulty. The greatest passive resistance I met in herself, for the child was too timid, and reared in excessive respect for the "lordships" by Mikolai himself, to be reconciled easily with

her fate.

CHAPTER II

MIKOLAI'S funeral took place three days after his death. Our neighbors appeared in rather large numbers, wishing to honor the memory of the old man, who, though a servant, was respected and loved universally. We buried him in our family vault, and his coffin was placed near the coffin of my grandfather, the colonel. During the ceremony I did not leave Hania for an instant. She had come with me in the sleigh, and I wished that she should return with me; but Father Ludvik sent me to invite the neighbors from the cemetery to our house to warm and strengthen themselves. Meanwhile my comrade and friend, Mirza Selim Davidovich, occupied himself with Hania. He was the son of Mirza Davidovich, a neighbor of my father; he was of Tartar origin and a Mohammedan, but his ancestors had lived in our neighborhood from remote times and enjoyed citizenship and nobility. I had to sit with the Ustrytskis; Hania went with Pani d'Yves and Selim to another sleigh. I saw the honest young fellow cover her with his own fur, then take the reins from the driver and shout at the horses; they flew on like a whirlwind.

On returning to the house Hania went to weep in her grandfather's chamber. I could not hurry after her, for I had to receive the guests in company with Father Ludvik.

Finally all went away except Selim; he was to pass with us the rest of the Christmas holidays, study with me a little, – for we

were both in the seventh class, and the examination of *maturitas* was waiting for us, – but still more to ride, to shoot at a mark with pistols, to fence and to hunt, occupations which we both much preferred to translating the Annals of Tacitus or the Cyropedaia of Xenophon.

This Selim was a joyous fellow, a rogue and very mischievous; passionate as a spark, but sympathetic in the highest degree. All in the house loved him greatly except my father, who was angry because the young Tartar shot and fenced better than I. But Pani d'Yves lost her head over him because he spoke French like a Parisian. His mouth was never shut; he retailed gossip and witticisms, and amused the French woman better than any of us.

Father Ludvik had some hope of converting him to the Catholic faith, all the more since the boy jested sometimes about Mohammed, and would beyond doubt have rejected the Koran had it not been that he feared his father, who, out of respect for family traditions, held with both hands to Mohammed, considering that as a noble of long standing he preferred to be an oldtime Mohammedan to a newly made Catholic. Old Davidovich, however, had no other Turkish or Tartar sympathies. His ancestors had settled in Lithuania during the time, perhaps, of Vitold. That was, moreover, a very wealthy nobility, living from of old in the same place. The property which they possessed had been given by Yan Sobieski to Mirza Davidovich, a colonel of light horse, who performed wonders at Vienna, and whose portrait was hanging then in Horeli.

I remember that portrait as making a wonderful impression on me. The colonel was a terrible person; his face was written over by God knows what sabres, as if with mystic letters of the Koran. He had a swarthy complexion, prominent cheek-bones, slanting eyes with a wonderfully gloomy glitter; they had this peculiarity, that they looked at you out of the portrait always, whether you stood straight in front or at either side.

But my comrade, Selim, resembled his ancestors in nothing. His mother, whom old Davidovich married in the Crimea, was not a Tartar, – she came from the Caucasus. I did not remember her, but people said that she was a beauty of beauties, and that young Selim resembled her as much as one drop of water resembles another.

Ah! he was a wonderful fellow, that Selim! His eyes had a scarcely discernible slant; they were not Tartar eyes, though, but the great, dark, pensive, moist eyes for which Georgian women have gained such renown. Eyes with such inexpressible sweetness when calm I had never seen in life, and shall never see again. He had regular features, as noble as if they had come from the chisel of a sculptor, a dark but delicate complexion, lips a trifle full, but red as raspberries, a sweet smile, and teeth like pearls.

When Selim was fighting with a comrade, for example, and this happened often enough, his sweetness vanished like a deceptive nightmare: he became almost terrible; his eyes seemed to swell out slantingly and gleam like the eyes of a wolf; the veins in his face distended; his complexion grew dark; and

for a moment the real Tartar was roused in him, just such a Tartar as those with whom our ancestors went dancing. This transformation was short-lived. After a while Selim wept, begged pardon, kissed, and was forgiven usually. He had the best of hearts and a great inclination to noble impulses. He was heedless, however, somewhat frivolous, and a frolicker of unrestrained temperament. He rode, shot, and fenced like a master; he had medium success in learning, for in spite of great gifts he was rather lazy. We loved each other like brothers, quarrelled frequently, made peace as often, and our friendship continued unbroken. In vacation and on all holidays either I spent half the time in Horeli, or he with us.

And now on his return from Mikolai's funeral, Selim was to stay with us to the end of the Christmas holidays.

When the guests took leave after dinner, it was perhaps four o'clock in the afternoon. The short winter day was near its end; the great evening twilight looked in through the windows; on trees standing near the house, and hidden with snow covered with a ruddy gleam, the crows began to caw and flutter. Through the windows we could see whole flocks of them flying across the pond from the forest and floating in the evening light. In the room to which we passed after dinner, silence prevailed. Pani d'Yves went to her chamber to tell fortunes by cards, as her habit was; Father Ludvik walked up and down the room and took snuff; my two little sisters, butting heads, tangled each other's golden curls; Hania, Selim, and I were sitting under the window, on a sofa,

looking at the pond on the garden side, on the forest beyond the pond, and on the vanishing daylight.

Soon it became entirely dark. Father Ludvik went out to evening prayers; one of my little sisters chased the other to an adjoining room; we were left alone. Selim had begun to say something when Hania pushed up to me all at once and whispered, —

"Panich, something terrifies me. I am afraid."

"Fear not, Haniulka," answered I, drawing her toward me. "Nestle up to me, this way. Whilst thou art near me, nothing evil can happen to thee. See, I am not afraid of anything, and I shall always be able to protect thee."

That was not true, for whether because of the gloom which filled the hall, or Hania's words, or the recent death of Mikolai, I, too, was under some strange impression.

"Perhaps thou wilt ask to have a light brought?" said I.

"Yes, Panich."

"Selim, ask Franek to bring a light."

Selim sprang from the sofa, and soon we heard an uncommon trampling and noise outside the door. The door opened with a slam; in rushed Franek like a whirlwind, and behind, grasping his arm, was Selim. Franek had a stupid and terrified face, for Selim, holding the boy by the shoulder, was spinning him like a top and turning round with him. Advancing with that motion to the sofa, Selim halted, and said, —

"Thy lord commands thee to bring a light, for the young lady is

afraid. Dost wish to bring the light, or shall I twist thy head off?"

Franek went for the lamp and returned with it in a moment; but it seemed that the light injured Hania's eyes, which were red from crying, so Selim quenched it. We were again in mysterious darkness, and again silence reigned among us. Soon the moon cast bright silver light through the window. Evidently Hania was afraid, for she nestled up to me still more closely, and I had to hold her hand besides. Selim sat opposite us in an armchair, and, as his custom was, passed from a noisy mood into thoughtfulness, and after a while fell to imagining. Great silence was among us; we were a little afraid; but it was pleasant there.

"Let Selim tell us some story," said I, "he tells stories so well. Shall he, Hania?"

"Let him."

Selim raised his eyes and thought awhile. The moon lighted clearly his handsome profile. After a time he began to speak in a quivering, sympathetic, and lowered voice: —

"Beyond forests, beyond mountains, lived in the Crimea a certain kind woman named Lala, who could soothsay. Once the Sultan was passing her cottage. This Sultan, who was called Harun, was very rich; he had a palace of coral with columns of diamonds; the roof of that palace was of pearls. The palace was so large that it took a year to go from one end of it to the other. The Sultan himself wore genuine stars in his turban. The turban was of sun-rays, and on top of it was a crescent, which a certain enchanter had cut from the moon and bestowed on the Sultan.

That Sultan was passing near Lala's cottage, and weeping; he was weeping so, and weeping, that his tears fell on the road, and wherever a tear fell a white lily sprang up right away.

"'Why art thou weeping, O Sultan Harun?' asked Lala.

"'Why should I not weep,' replied Sultan Harun, 'when I have only one daughter, beautiful as the morning dawn, and I must give her to a black Div with fiery eyes, who every ye – '"

Selim stopped suddenly and was silent.

"Is Hania asleep?" whispered he to me.

"No; she is not asleep," answered the girl, with drowsy voice.

"'How should I not weep,' said Harun the Sultan to her [continued Selim], when I have only one daughter, and I must give her to the Div?'

"'Do not weep, O Sultan,' says Lala; 'sit on the winged horse and ride to the grotto of Borah. Evil clouds will chase thee on the road, but throw thou these poppy seeds at them and directly the clouds will fall asleep.'"

And so Selim went on, and then he stopped a second time and looked at Hania. The child was now asleep really. She was very tired and pained, and was sleeping soundly. Selim and I scarcely dared to breathe lest we might waken her. Her breathing was even, peaceful, interrupted only at times by deep sighs. Selim rested his forehead on his hand and fell into serious thought. I raised my eyes toward the sky, and it seemed to me that I was flying away on the wings of angels into heavenly space. I cannot tell the sweetness which penetrated me, for I felt that that dear

little being was sleeping calmly and with all confidence on my breast. Some kind of quiver passed through my whole body, – something not of earth; new and unknown voices of happiness were born in my soul, and began to sing and to play like an orchestra. Oh, how I loved Hania! How I loved her, as a brother and a guardian yet, but beyond bound and measure.

I approached my lips to Hania's hair and kissed it. There was nothing earthly in that, for I and the kiss were yet equally innocent.

Selim shivered all at once and woke up from his pensiveness.

"How happy thou art, Henryk!" whispered he.

"Yes, Selim."

But we could not stay there in that way.

"Let us not wake her, but carry her to her room," said Selim.

"I will carry her alone, and do thou just open the door," answered I.

I drew my arm carefully from under the head of the sleeping girl, and laid her on the sofa. Then I took her carefully in my arms. I was still a youth, but I came of uncommonly strong stock; the child was small, frail, and I carried her like a feather. Selim opened the door to the adjoining chamber, which was lighted, and in that way we reached the green chamber, which I had destined to be Hania's room. The bed was already prepared. In the chimney a good fire was crackling; and near the chimney, poking the coals, sat old Vengrosia, who, when she saw me burdened as I was, exclaimed, —

"Ah, for God's sake! and so the Panich is carrying the little maid. Wasn't it possible to wake her, and let her come herself?"

"Let Vengrosia be silent!" said I, angrily. "A young lady, not 'a maid,' only a young lady; does Vengrosia hear? The young lady is tired. I beg not to wake her. Undress her and put her to bed quietly. Let Vengrosia remember that this is an orphan, and that we must comfort her with kindness for the loss of her grandfather."

"An orphan, the poor little thing; an orphan, indeed," repeated the honest Vengrosia, with emotion.

Selim kissed the old woman for this, then he returned for tea.

Selim forgot everything and became frolicsome at tea; I did not follow his example, however, first, because I was sad, and second, I judged that it did not become a serious man, already a guardian, to appear like a child. That evening Selim raised another storm; this time with Father Ludvik, because when we were at evening prayers in the chapel, he flew out to the yard, climbed onto the low roof of the ice-house, and began to howl. The dogs of the yard rushed together from all sides and made such an uproar while accompanying Selim that we could not say our prayers.

"Have you gone mad, Selim?" asked Father Ludvik.

"Pardon me, Father, I was praying in Mohammedan fashion."

"Do not make sport of any religion, thou rascal!"

"But if I, begging your attention, want to become a Catholic, only I am afraid of my father, what can I do with Mohammed?"

The priest, attacked on his weak side, was silent, and we went to bed. Selim and I had a room together, for the priest knew that we liked to talk, and did not wish to hinder us. When I had undressed and saw that Selim was doing the same without praying, I inquired, —

"But really, Selim, dost thou never pray?"

"Of course I do. If thou wish, I will begin right away."

And standing in the window he raised his eyes to the moon, stretched his hands toward it, and began to cry in a singing voice, —

"Oh, Allah! Akbar Allah! Allah Kerim!"

Dressed only in white, with his face raised toward the sky, he was so beautiful that I could not take my eyes from him.

Then he began to explain, —

"What shall I do? I do not believe in this prophet of ours, who would let others have only one wife, but had as many himself as he pleased. Besides, I tell thee that I like wine. I am not free to be anything except a Mohammedan, but I believe in God, and often I pray as I know how. But do I know anything? I know that there is a Lord God, and that is the end of the question."

After a while he continued, —

"Knowest what, Henryk?"

"What?"

"I have splendid cigars. We are children no longer; let us smoke."

Selim sprang out of bed and got a package of cigars. We each

lighted one, then lay down and smoked in silence, spitting out of the bed in secret from each other.

"Knowest thou what, Henryk?" said Selim after a while. "How I envy thee! Thou art really grown up now."

"I hope so."

"For thou art a guardian already. Oh, if some one would leave me such a ward to care for!"

"That is not so easy, and, besides, where could another Hania be found in the world? But knowest what?" continued I, in the tone of a mature wise man. "I hope that soon I shall not go to school. A man who has such obligations at home cannot go to school."

"And – thou art raving! What! thou wilt not learn any more? But school is the main thing."

"Thou knowest that I like to study, but duty before all. Unless my father and mother send Hania to Warsaw with me."

"They won't even dream of it."

"While I am in the classes, surely not; but when I am in the University they will. Well, dost thou not know what a student means?"

"Yes, yes! That may happen. Thou wilt be her guardian, and thou wilt marry her."

I sat up in bed.

"Selim, art thou mad?"

"Why shouldst thou not marry her? In school one is not free to marry; but a student may not only have a wife, he may have

even children," said Selim.

At that moment all the University prerogatives and privileges did not concern me in the least. Selim's question illuminated, as with a lightning flash, those sides of my heart which to me were still dark. A thousand thoughts, like a thousand birds, flew through my head all at once. To marry my dear, beloved orphan! Yes; that was the lightning flash, the new flash of thought and feelings. It seemed to me that suddenly into the darkness of my heart some one had brought light. Love, deep, but brotherly hitherto, had grown rosy on a sudden from that light and was heated through it by an unknown warmth. To marry Hania, that bright-haired angel, my dearest, most beloved Hania. With a weak voice now and lower, I repeated like an echo, —

"Selim, art mad?"

"I would lay a wager that thou art in love with her already," said Selim.

I made no answer; I quenched the light, then seized a corner of the pillow and began to kiss it.

Yes; I loved her already.

CHAPTER III

ON the second or third day after the funeral, my father came, summoned by a telegram. I trembled lest he should recall my dispositions touching Hania, and my forebodings were real to a certain degree. My father praised me and embraced me for my zeal and conscientiousness in fulfilling duties; that pleased him evidently. He repeated even a number of times, "Our blood!" which he did only when he was much pleased with me. He did not divine to what extent that zeal was interested, but my dispositions had not pleased him overmuch. It may be that the exaggerated statements of Pani d'Yves moved him toward this a little, though really in the days following that night in which my feelings rose to consciousness I made Hania the first person in the house.

He was not pleased by my project to educate her in the same way as my sisters.

"I recall and withdraw nothing," said he. "That is the affair of thy mother. She will determine what she likes; that is her department. But it is worth while to think over this: What is best for the girl herself."

"Education, father, will never harm. I have heard that from thy own mouth more than once."

"True, in the case of a man," answered he, "for the education of a man gives position, but with a woman it is different. A woman's education should be in accord with the position which

she is to occupy in life. Such a girl does not need more than a medium education; she has no need of French, music, and the like. With a medium education Hania will find more easily an honest official for a husband – "

"Father!"

He looked at me with astonishment.

"What is the matter?"

I was as red as a beet. The blood almost spurted through my face. In my eyes it grew dark. To compare Hania with an official seemed such blasphemy before my world of imagining that I could not withhold a cry of indignation. And that blasphemy pained me the more since it came from the lips of my father. That was the first cold water thrown by reality on the burning faith of youth, the first blow aimed by life into the fairy castle of illusions, the first deceit and disenchantment from the bitterness of which we defend ourselves with pessimism and unbelief. But as red-hot iron, when a drop of cold water falls on it, merely hisses and turns the water into steam, so the burning soul of a man under the influence of its first contact with the cold palm of reality, hisses, it is true, from pain, but soon warms reality itself with its own heat.

My father's words wounded me at once, therefore, and wounded me in a wonderful manner, for under their influence I had a feeling of offence not against my father, but, as it were, against Hania. In virtue, however, of that internal resistance which exists only in youth, I soon threw it as far from my soul

as possible, and forever. My father understood nothing of my enthusiasm, and ascribed it to excessive devotion to the duties confided to me, which, moreover, was natural at my time of life, and which, instead of angering, simply flattered him and weakened his dislike to the higher education of Hania. I promised him to write a letter to my mother, who was to remain abroad a good while yet, and beg her to make final arrangements in this regard. I do not remember that I have ever written so long and so heartfelt a letter. I described the death of old Mikolai, his last words, my desires, fears, and hopes; I moved vigorously the chord of compassion which was always quivering in my mother's heart; I depicted the disquiet of conscience which would await me beyond doubt, if we should not do for Hania all that lay in our power, – in a word, according to my opinion at that time, my letter was of its kind a real masterpiece, which must produce its effect. Pacified somewhat by this, I waited patiently for an answer, which came in two letters, – one to me, the other to Pani d'Yves. I had won the battle at all points. My mother not only agreed to the higher education of Hania, but enjoined it most emphatically.

"I should wish," wrote my kind mother, "in case it agrees with the will of thy father, that Hania be considered in every way as belonging to our family. We owe this to the memory of old Mikolai, to his devotion and faithfulness."

My triumph then was as great as it was complete, and Selim shared it with me heartily, – Selim, whom everything which

touched Hania concerned as much as if he himself had been her guardian.

It is true that the sympathy which he felt, and the tenderness which he exhibited for the orphan, began to anger me a little, all the more since my own relations with Hania had changed greatly since that memorable night when I had become conscious of my feelings. When with her I felt as if convicted; the former heartiness and childlike intimacy had vanished on my side completely. Barely a few days before the girl had fallen asleep quietly on my breast; now at the mere thought of this the hair rose on my head. A few days before at good-morning and good-night I kissed her pale lips as a brother would; now the touch of her hand burned me, or pierced me with a delicious quiver. I began to honor her as the object of first love is honored usually; and when the innocent girl, neither divining nor knowing anything, nestled up to me as formerly, I was angry in my soul, though not at her; I looked on myself as sacrilegious.

Love had brought me unknown happiness, but also unknown suffering. If I had had some one to whom I could confide my suffering; if I had been able at times to weep on some one's breast, an act for which I had often a wonderful desire, – I should have removed half the weight, beyond doubt, from my soul. I might have confessed all to Selim, but I feared his disposition. I knew that he would feel my words heartily at the first moment; but who could assure me that next day he would not ridicule me with the cynicism peculiar to him, and with frivolous words defile

my ideal, which I dared not touch with any giddy thought? My character had at all times been well locked up in me; besides, there was one great difference between me and Selim. I had always been somewhat sentimental; Selim had not sentiment to the value of a copper. I could fall in love only when sad, Selim only when joyous. I concealed my love from every one, almost from myself, and really no one discovered it. In a few days, without ever having seen any models, I had learned instinctively to hide all indications of that love, such as the confusion which often came on me, and the blushes with which I was covered when Hania was mentioned in my presence, – in a word, I developed immense cunning, that cunning by the aid of which a boy sixteen years old will often deceive the most careful eye watching him. I had not the least design of confessing my feelings to Hania. I loved her, and that was sufficient. Only at times, when we were alone, something urged me to kneel before her and kiss the hem of her dress.

Selim meanwhile played his mad pranks, laughed, was witty and joyous for both of us. He was the first to bring a smile to Hania's face, when once at breakfast he proposed to Father Ludvik to turn Mohammedan and marry Pani d'Yves. Neither the French woman, who was rather easily offended, nor the priest, could get angry with him; with her he had made himself such a favorite that when he made eyes at her and laughed, all ended in a slight scolding and in general merriment. In his treatment of Hania a certain tenderness and care were

evident, but in this relation too his innate joyousness conquered everything. He was more confidential with her than I. It was evident that Hania liked him much, for whenever he entered the room she was more cheerful. He made continual sport of me, or rather of my sadness, taking it for the artificial dignity of one who wishes to be grown up in a hurry.

"Look, all of you, he will end by becoming a priest," said he.

Then I dropped the first thing I could, so as to bend down for it and hide the blush which covered my face; but Father Ludvik took snuff and answered, —

"To the honor of God! to the honor of God!"

Meanwhile the Christmas holidays were over. My faint hope of remaining at home was not justified in the least. On a certain evening it was announced to the great guardian that next morning early he must be ready for the road. There was need of starting early, for we had to turn in at Horeli, where Selim was to take farewell of his father. So we rose at six o'clock in the dark. Ah! my soul was as gloomy as that cold wintry, windy morning. Selim was in the worst humor also. As soon as he had crept out of bed, he declared that the world was stupid, and most wretchedly ordered; I agreed with this perfectly. When we had dressed we went from the station to the house for breakfast. It was dark in the yard; small flakes of sharp snow, whirled by the wind, struck our faces. The windows of the dining-room were lighted. Before the entrance stood the sleigh, in which our things were packed already; the horses were shaking the bells; dogs were barking

around the sleigh. All this, taken together, formed, at least for us, a picture so gloomy that the heart was straitened at sight of it.

On entering the dining-room we found my father and the priest pacing up and down with serious faces. Hania was not there. I looked with a throbbing heart toward the door of the green chamber. Would she come, or was I to go away without farewell?

Meanwhile my father and the priest fell to giving us advice and detailing morality. Both began with this, that at our age there was no need to repeat to us what labor and learning meant; still both spoke of nothing else. I listened to everything without the least attention, chewing toasted bread and swallowing with straitened throat the heated wine.

All at once my heart beat so powerfully that I could hardly sit in my chair, for in Hania's room I heard rustling. The door opened, and out came Pani d'Yves, in a wrapper, her hair in papers; she pressed my hand warmly. For the disappointment which she had caused me I wanted to throw the glass of wine at her head. She expressed the hope that such good youths would surely learn perfectly; to this Selim answered that the memory of the papers in her hair would give him strength and endurance in study. Hania did not show herself.

It was not destined me, however, to drain the bitter cup. When we rose from the table Hania came out, looking drowsy, yet all rosy and with ruffled hair. When I pressed her hand while wishing good-morning, it was hot. Immediately it occurred to

me that she had a fever because of my departure, and I played a tender scene in spirit, but her fever was simply the warmth of sleep. After a while my father and the priest went for letters to be delivered in Warsaw. Selim rode out through the door on an immense dog which had entered the room a moment earlier. I was left alone with Hania. Tears were coming to my eyes; from my lips tender and warm words were rushing forth. I had no intention to confess that I loved her; but I was urged to say something like this, My dear, my beloved Hania! and to kiss her hands at the same time. That was the only convenient moment for such an outburst, though I might give way to it before people without drawing the attention of any one; still I did not dare. I wasted that moment most shamefully. I drew near to her and stretched out my hand, but I did so awkwardly, somehow, and unnaturally. "Hania," said I, with a voice so foreign to me that I drew back at once and was silent. I had the wish to kiss her cheek; meanwhile she herself began, —

"My God! how sad it will be without the Panich!"

"I will come at Easter," said I, in a low, strange bass.

"But it is a long time till Easter."

"Not at all long," muttered I.

At that moment Selim rushed in, and after him came my father, the priest, Pani d'Yves, and some servants. The words, "To the sleigh! to the sleigh!" sounded in my ears. We all went to the porch; there my father and the priest embraced me. When the time came to take leave of Hania, I had an almost irrestrainable

wish to seize her in my arms and kiss her as of old; but I could not bring myself to it.

"Farewell, Hania," said I, giving her my hand, but in my soul a hundred voices were weeping, a hundred most tender and fondling expressions were on my lips.

I saw on a sudden that the girl was shedding tears, and with equal suddenness was heard that stubborn Satan within, that irresistible wish to tear open my own wounds, which later in life I felt more than once; so, though my heart was bursting into bits, I said in a cold and rough voice, —

"Do not cry without reason, my Hania." Then I sat down in the sleigh.

Meanwhile Selim took farewell of all. Running up to Hania he seized her two hands, and, though the girl tried to pull them away, he kissed them wildly, first one and then the other. Oh, what a wish I had to beat him off at that moment! When he had kissed Hania, he sprang into the sleigh. "Move on!" cried my father. The priest blessed us with the cross for the road. The driver called "Hetta! ho!" to the horses, the bells sounded, the snow squeaked under the runners, and we moved over the road.

"Scoundrel! robber!" said I in my soul. "That is how thou didst take farewell of thy Hania! Thou wert disagreeable to her, scolded her for tears of which thou wert unworthy, tears of an orphan."

I raised the collar of my fur and cried like a little child in silence, for I was afraid lest Selim should detect me in tears. It

appeared, however, that Selim saw everything perfectly; but he himself was moved, hence he said nothing at first. But we had not gone so far as Horeli when he called, —

"Henryk!"

"What?"

"Thou art blubbering?"

"Let me alone."

Again there was silence between us. But after a while Selim again said, —

"Henryk!"

"What?"

"Thou art blubbering?"

I made no answer; suddenly Selim bent down, took a handful of snow, raised my cap, spread the snow on my head, and covered it again, saying, —

"That will cool thee!"

CHAPTER IV

I DID not go home at Easter, for the approaching examination for *maturitas* stood in the way. Besides, my father wished me to pass the preliminary examination before the beginning of the University year. He knew that I would not like to work in vacation, and that beyond doubt I should forget at least one half of what I had learned in school, so I worked very vigorously. Besides the ordinary lessons in the gymnasium and the work for the examination, Selim and I took private lessons from a student who, as he had entered the University not long before, knew best what we needed.

This for me was a memorable time, for in it fell the whole structure of my thoughts and imagining, reared so laboriously by Father Ludvik, my father, and the whole atmosphere of our quiet house.

The young student was a radical in every regard. While explaining the history of Rome, he knew so well how to explain his disgust and contempt for the great oligarchy during the reforms of the Gracchi that my arch-noble convictions were swept away like smoke. With what profound faith my young teacher declared, for example, that a man who was soon to occupy the powerful and in every sense influential position of student at the University should be free from all "prejudices," and not look on anything save with the compassion of a genuine

philosopher.

In general he was of opinion that for the regulation of the world, and for the exercise of a mighty influence on all people, a man is best between the eighteenth and twenty-third year of his life, for later he becomes gradually an idiot or a conservative.

Of those who were neither students nor professors of the University, he spoke with compassion; but he had ideals, which never left his lips. From him I learned for the first time of the existence of Moleschotte and Büchner, – two men of science whom he cited oftenest. One should hear with what ardor our preceptor spoke of the conquests of science in recent times, of great truths which the blind superstitious past had avoided, and which the most recent scholars had raised "from the dust of oblivion" and announced to the world with unparalleled courage.

While uttering these opinions he shook his thick, curly foretop, and smoked an incredible number of cigarettes, assuring us that he was so trained that it was all one to him whether he let the smoke out through his mouth or his nostrils, and that there was not in Warsaw another man who could smoke in that fashion. Then he rose usually, put on his cloak, which lacked more than half its buttons, and declared that he must hurry, for he had another "little meeting." Saying this, he winked mysteriously and added that Selim's age and mine did not permit him to communicate to us nearer information about this "little meeting," but that later and without his explanation we should understand its meaning.

Notwithstanding all this which would not have pleased our parents much, the young student had his really good sides. He understood well what he was teaching us, and besides he was a real fanatic of science. He wore boots with holes in them, a threadbare coat, a cap which was like an old nest; he never had a copper on his person; but his mind never dwelt on his personal cares, poverty, want almost. He lived through a passion for science; of a joyous life for himself he had no thought. Selim and I looked on him as some higher supernatural personage, as an ocean of wisdom, as an immovable weight. We believed sacredly that if any one could save humanity in case of danger, it was surely he, that imposing genius, who, beyond doubt, was of this opinion himself. But we clung to his convictions as to bird-lime.

As to me, I went farther, perhaps, than even my master. That was the natural reaction against my previous education; and, besides, the student had really opened before me gates to new worlds of knowledge, in comparison with which the circle of my ideas was very narrow. Dazzled by these new truths, I had not many thoughts and fancies to devote to Hania. At first, and immediately after coming, I did not part with my ideal. The letters which I received from her fed that fire on the altar of my heart; but, compared with the ocean of ideas of the young student, all our village world, so calm and quiet, began at once to grow little and diminish in my eyes. Hania's form did not vanish, it is true, but was enwrapped, as it were, in a light mist.

As to Selim, he advanced also by the earthly road of violent

reforms; but of Hania he thought less, since opposite our quarters was a window in which sat a schoolgirl named Yozia. Indeed, Selim began to sigh at her, and for whole days they looked at each other from the two windows, like two birds in two cages. Selim repeated with unshaken certainty, "this one or none." Frequently it happened that he would lie face and hands on the bed and study, then throw his book on the floor, spring up, seize me, and cry, laughing like a madman, —

"Oh, my Yozia! how I love thee!"

"Go to the plague, Selim!" I would say to him.

"Oh, it is thou, not Yozia," he would answer roguishly, and return to his book.

At last came the days of examination. Selim and I passed both the final examination of the gymnasium and the one for entrance to the University very favorably; after that we were as free as birds, but we stayed three days longer in Warsaw. We used that time for getting students' uniforms, and for a solemnity which our master considered indispensable; that is, a feast for three in the first wine-cellar that we came to.

After the second bottle, when Selim's head and mine were turning, and when to the cheeks of our master, now a comrade, a flush came, we were seized by a sudden and uncommon tenderness, combined with an inclination to confessions of the heart.

"Well, ye have come out among people, my boys," said the master, "and the world stands open before you. Ye can amuse

yourselves now, throw away money, play the lord, fall in love; but I tell you that these are follies. A life on the surface, without an idea for which a man lives, toils, and struggles, is folly. But to live wisely or to live reasonably, and to struggle wisely, one should look on things soberly. As to me, I think that I look on them soberly. I believe in nothing which I cannot touch myself, and I advise the same to you. God knows there are so many ways of living and thinking in the world, and all in such confusion, that one needs the devil knows what kind of head to avoid error. But I hold fast to science, and that's the end of it. They will not entrap me with trifles. That life is foolish, over this theme I shall not break a bottle on any man's head; but we have science. Had we not, I would shoot myself. Every one has the right to do that, as I think; and I will shoot myself surely if I grow bankrupt to that degree. But on my foundation one will not be bankrupt. Thou wilt be deceived in everything: fall in love, the woman will deceive thee; have religion, the moment of doubt will come; but thou mayst sit quietly till death investigating the canal of the nutritive infusoria, and wilt not even notice how on a certain day the world will stupidly grow somehow and somehow dark to thee, and then the end, – the water clock, the portrait in the illustrated paper, the more or less dull biography, and the comedy will be over! After that there will be nothing. I can give you my word on that, my little fellows. Ye may be bold in believing in no nonsense. Science is my fiddle-bow; Science is the foundation. Meanwhile all this has the good side, – that if thou occupy thyself with such

things, thou mayst go about in broken boots boldly and sleep on a hay-loft. It will make no difference to thee. Do ye understand?"

"To the health and honor of science!" cried Selim, whose eyes were gleaming like coals.

Our master pushed back his immense woolly forelock, emptied his goblet, then inhaling smoke he let two enormous currents of it out through his nostrils, and continued, —

"Besides exact sciences – Selim, thou art drunk! – besides exact sciences there is philosophy, and there are ideas. With these life is filled to the brim. But I prefer exact sciences. Philosophy, and especially ideal-real philosophy, I tell you that I revile it. It is guess-work. A man is pursuing truth, as it were, but pursuing it as a dog pursues his own tail. In general I cannot endure guess-work. I love facts. Thou canst not squeeze whey out of water. As to ideas, that is another thing. For them it is worth while to lay down one's head; but ye and your fathers travel by stupid ways. I tell you that. Long life to ideas!"

We emptied our goblets again. Our forelocks were steaming. The dark room of the cellar seemed still darker; the candles on the table burned with a faint light; smoke hid the pictures on the walls. Outside the window in the yard an old beggar was singing the pious hymn, "Holy, heavenly, angelic Lady!" and in the pauses he played a plaintive minstrel melody on a fiddle. Wonderful feelings filled my breast. I believed the words of the master, but I felt that he had not told everything yet which could fill out one's life. Something was lacking. A species

of melancholy possessed me in spite of myself; so under the influence of imagination, wine, and momentary enthusiasm I said in a low voice, —

"But women, gentlemen! a loving woman, devoted, who stops at nothing in life?"

Selim began to sing, —

> "Woman is changeable:
> Stupid the man who believes in her!"

Our master looked at me with a peculiar expression. He was thinking of something else, but soon he shook himself and said, —

"Oh, ho! thou hast shown the tip of the sentimental ear. Knowest thou, that Selim will go much farther in the world than thou. The deuce will take thee. Guard thyself, guard thyself, I say, lest some petticoat crawl into thy path and spoil thy life. Woman! woman!" (here the master blinked according to his custom), "I know that ware somewhat. I cannot complain; God knows I cannot. But I know this too, that thou must not give thy finger to the devil, for right away he will take thy whole hand. Woman! love! all our misfortune is in this, that we make great things out of nonsense. If thou wish to amuse thyself as I do, amuse thyself, but don't put thy life in it. Have reason at once, and do not pay good coin for false goods. Do ye think that I complain of women? I do not even dream of doing so. On the

contrary, I love them; but I do not let myself be taken by chaff of my own imagining. I remember when I fell in love the first time with a certain Lola, I thought, for example, that her dress was sacred, but it was calico. That's the point. Was it her fault that she walked in mud instead of flying through the heavens? No! it was I who was stupid, through putting wings on her by force. Man is rather a limited beast. One or another of us carries God knows what ideal in his heart, and therewith feels a need of loving; hence on seeing the first little goose that he meets, he says to himself, 'That is she.' Afterward he finds out that he has made a mistake, and because of that small mistake the devil takes him, or he lives an idiot all his life."

"But you will acknowledge," said I, "that a man feels the need of loving, and surely you feel that need as well as others."

A scarcely discernible smile shot across his lips.

"Every necessity may be satisfied," answered he, "in various ways. I help myself in my own way. I have said that I do not look on stupid things as great. I am sober, God knows, more sober than at this moment. But I have seen many men who have broken their lives, or snarled them up, like a thread, for one woman; so I say that it is not worth while to put all one's life in that. I say that there are better things, loftier objects, and that love is a trifling matter. To the health of sobriety!"

"To the health of women!" shouted Selim.

"Very good; let us have that," answered our master. "They are agreeable creatures, only take them not too seriously. To the

health of women!"

"To the health of Yozia!" cried I, touching Selim's glass.

"Wait! Now is my turn," answered he. "To the health of thy Hania! one deserves the other."

The blood began to play in me, and sparks flashed from my eyes.

"Be silent, Selim," cried I. "Do not mention that name before me in this shop!"

Then I threw my glass to the floor, and it broke into a thousand bits.

"Hast gone mad?" cried our master.

I had not gone mad at all, but anger had sprung up in me and was blazing like a flame. I could listen to everything which the master said about women; I could even take pleasure in it; I could ridicule them with others. I could do that because I did not connect the words and the ridicule with any one of my own, and because it did not even come to my mind that the general theory was to be applied to persons dear to me. But when I heard the name of my purest orphan bandied about frivolously in that room, amid smoke, dirt, empty bottles, corks, and cynical conversation, I thought that I had heard some abominable sacrilege, some defilement, some wrong wrought against Hania, and from anger I almost lost self-control.

Selim looked at me for a moment with astonishment, and then his face began to grow dark quickly, his eyes shot sparks, on his forehead came out knots of veins, his features extended and

became sharp as those of a real Tartar.

"Thou dost forbid me to say what I please?" cried he, in a deep voice, broken by panting breath.

Luckily the master rushed between us at this moment.

"Ye are not worthy of the uniforms which ye wear! What is this? Ye will fight, or pull each other by the ears, like school-boys? Yes, philosophers who break glasses on each other's heads. Be ashamed of yourselves! Ye are persons with whom to talk touching universal questions! Be ashamed of yourselves! From the war of ideas to a war of fists. Stop! But I will say that I proposed a toast in honor of universities; and that ye are drones if ye will not make peace, and if ye leave even a drop in the glasses."

We recovered. But Selim, though more drunk, recovered first.

"I implore thy pardon," said he, in a tender voice. "I am a fool."

We embraced heartily, and emptied the glasses to the bottom to the honor of universities. Then our master intoned *Gaudeamus*. Through the glass doors leading to the cellar, merchants began to look in. It was growing dark outside. We were all what is called tipsy. Our joyfulness rose to the zenith and then descended gradually. Our master was the first who fell into meditation, and after a while he said, —

"All this is well, but, taking everything together, life is stupid. These are all artificial means; but as to what happens in the soul, that is another thing. To-morrow will be like to-day: the same misery, four naked walls, the hay-loft, broken boots, and – so on without end. Labor and labor, but happiness? A man deceives

himself as best he can and deadens – Farewell!"

So saying, he put his cap with broken crown on his head, executed a few mechanical motions which had for object the buttoning of his coat with buttons which did not exist, lighted his cigarette, and waving his hand said, —

"But do ye pay here, for I am naked, and be in good health. Ye may remember me or not, – all one to me. I am not sentimental. Be in good health, my honest boys – "

He uttered the last words in a low and emotional voice, as if to contradict the statement that he was not sentimental. The poor heart needed love, and was as capable of it as any other heart; but misfortune from years of childhood, poverty, and the indifference of people had taught that heart to withdraw into itself. His soul was a proud one, though ardent, hence always full of fear of being rejected should it incline first to some person too cordially.

We remained alone for a while, and under the influence of a certain sadness. Those were perhaps gloomy forebodings, for we were not to see our poor master again in life. Neither he nor we divined that in his breast had been inherent for a long time elements of mortal disease, from which there was no rescue. Misery, too much exertion, feverish labor over books, sleepless nights, and hunger had hastened the crisis.

In the autumn, at the beginning of October, our master died of consumption. Not many comrades followed his coffin, for it was the time of vacation; but his poor mother, a dealer in wax candles

and holy images under the Dominican church, wept aloud for the son whom often she had not understood during life, though, like a mother, she loved him.

CHAPTER V

THE next day after that feast, horses came from the old Mirza in Horeli, and we set out for home on the following morning. We had two long days' ride before us, so we started at dawn. In our stone house everything was asleep yet; but in the place opposite Yozia's face gleamed in the window, amid geraniums, yellow violets, and fuchsias. Selim, when he had put on his travelling bag and student's cap, stood in the window, ready for the road, to announce that he was going; to this an answer was given from among the geraniums by a melancholy glance. But when he placed one hand on his heart and sent a kiss with the other, the face between the flowers grew red and pushed back quickly into the dark interior of the room.

Below, on the pavement of the yard, a brichka, drawn by four sturdy horses, rolled in. It was time to take farewell and sit in the wagon; but Selim waited, and stood in the window persistently, hoping to see something more. Hope deceived him, however; the window remained empty. Only when we had descended and were passing the dark entrance of the building opposite, did we see on the steps two white stockings, a nut-colored dress, a bosom bent forward, and two bright eyes shaded by a hand; the eyes were looking out of darkness into daylight.

Selim rushed at once to the entrance. I took my seat in the brichka right there close by; I heard whispers and certain

sounds very similar to the sound of kisses. Then Selim came out blushing, half laughing, half moved, and sat by my side. The driver struck the horses. Selim and I looked involuntarily toward the window. Yozia's face was among the flowers again; a moment more and a hand holding a white handkerchief was thrust forth; one more sign of farewell, and the brichka rolled out onto the street, taking with it me and the beautiful ideal of poor Yozia.

It was very early in the morning. The city was in slumber; the rosy light of dawn passed along the windows of the sleeping houses. Only here and there an early bird, a passer-by, roused with his steps a drowsy echo; here and there a guard was sweeping the street; sometimes a cart was heard coming from some village to the city market. Beyond this it was noiseless, but clear and breezy, as is usual on a summer morning.

Our light brichka, drawn by four horses, bounded along the pavement, like a nutshell pulled by a string. Soon the cool breath of the river surrounded our faces; the bridge resounded under the hoofs of our horses; and half an hour later we were beyond the barriers among broad fields, and wheat, and forests.

Our breasts breathed deeply of the splendid morning air, and our eyes feasted on the region about. The earth had wakened from sleep; pearly dew was hanging on the wet leaves of the trees and glittering on every ear of wheat. In the hedges the birds moved about joyously with noisy chirping and twittering, greeting the beautiful day. The forests and meadows were coming out of the mist of morning, as if out of swathing bands. Here and

there on the meadows, water was gleaming; through this storks waded among the golden flowers of the water-lily. Rosy smoke went straight up from the chimneys of village cottages; a light breeze bent in waves the yellow fields of ripening wheat, and shook the dampness of night from them. Joy was poured out everywhere; it seemed that all was waking, living; that the whole region around was singing, —

"When the morning dawn arises,
To thee the land, to thee the sea – "

What was taking place then in our hearts every one will understand easily who remembers how in youth he returned home on such a wonderful summer morning. The years of childhood and the subjection of school were behind us; the age of youth was spread out broadly, as a rich, flowery steppe, with an endless horizon, – a curious and unknown land into which we had started on a journey with good omens, youthful, strong, almost with wings on our shoulders, like young eagles. Of earthly treasures the greatest is youth, and of that treasure with all its wealth we had not spent yet a single copper.

We passed the road quickly, for at the chief stopping-places relays of horses were waiting for us. Toward evening of the second day, after riding all night, we drove out of a forest and saw Horeli, or rather the pointed summit of the domestic minaret, shining in the rays of the setting sun. Soon we came out onto a

dam, bordered with willows and privet, on both sides of which were two immense ponds with grist-mills and saw-mills. We were accompanied by the drowsy croaking of frogs, swimming in water warmed by the heat of the sun and along banks overgrown with grass. It was clear that the day was inclining to its rest. Herds of cattle and flocks of sheep, hidden in clouds of dust, were returning by the dam to the buildings of the farmyard. Here and there crowds of people with sickles, scythes, and rakes on their shoulders were hurrying homeward, singing, "Dana, oi dana!" Those honest toilers stopped the brichka, kissed Selim's hands, and greeted him warmly.

Soon the sun inclined still more toward setting and hid half its bright shield behind the reeds. Only one broad golden line of light was reflected yet on the middle of the ponds, on the banks of which the trees looked into the smooth surface. We turned to the right a little; and soon, amid lindens, poplars, firs, and ash-trees, shone the white walls of the mansion of Horeli. In the yard was heard the bell calling workmen to supper; and from the minaret came the pensive voice of the domestic muezzin, announcing that starry night was falling from the sky to the earth, and that Allah is great. As if to accompany the muezzin, a stork, standing, like an Etruscan vase, in a nest on the top of a tree above the roof of the mansion, issued for a while from his statuesque repose, raised to the sky a bill which was like a bronze arrow, then dropped it on his breast and rattled, shaking his head as if in greeting.

I looked at Selim. There were tears in his eyes, and his face

shone with a sweetness beyond compare, peculiar to him alone. We drove into the yard.

Before the windowed porch sat the old Mirza, drawing blue smoke from his pipe; he was looking with a joyful eye at the calm and industrious life moving on that charming landscape. When he saw his son he sprang up quickly, caught him in his arms, and pressed him long to his breast, for though he was stern to the boy he loved him beyond everything. He asked at once about his examination; then followed new embraces. All the numerous servants ran in then to meet the Panich, and the dogs sprang joyously around him. A tame she-wolf, a favorite of the old Mirza, jumped from the porch. "Zula! Zula!" called Selim, and she put her great paws on his shoulders, licked his face, and then ran around him as if mad, whining and showing her terrible teeth from delight.

Now we went to the dining-room. I looked at Horeli and everything in it, like a man thirsting for novelty. Nothing in it had been modified; the portraits of Selim's ancestors, captains, bannerets, hung on the walls. The terrible Mirza, Sobieski's colonel of light horse, looked on me as before with his ominous, slanting eyes; but his countenance, slashed with sabres, looked still uglier and very terrible. Selim's father had changed most. From being black, his forelock had grown iron gray, his thick mustache had become almost white, and the Tartar type appeared with increasing distinctness in his features. Ah, what a difference between the father and the son, between that bony

face, stern, even harsh, and that face simply angelic, resembling a flower, fresh and sweet! But it is difficult for me to describe that love with which the old man looked upon Selim, and with which his eyes followed every movement of his son.

Not wishing to interrupt them, I remained at one side; but the old man, as hospitable as a genuine Polish noble, seized me at once, embraced me, and tried to detain me for the night. I would not pass the night there, for I was in a hurry to reach home, but I had to stay for supper.

I left Horeli late in the evening, and when I was near home the triangle had risen in the sky; that meant that it was midnight. Windows in the village were not lighted; fire in a tar-pit near the forest was visible from a distance. Dogs were barking at the cottages. In the alley of linden-trees, which extended to our house, it was dark; even strain out thine eyes thou couldst see nothing. A man passed at one side humming a song in low tones, but I did not see his face. I reached the porch; the windows were dark. Clearly all were asleep; but dogs, dashing out from all sides, began to bark round the brichka in gladness. I sprang down and knocked at the door; I could not make any one hear for a long time. At last this became disagreeable; I had thought that they would be waiting for me. Only after a time did a light begin to flit here and there past the window-panes, and then a drowsy voice, which I recognized as Franek's, inquired, —

"Who is there?"

I answered. Franek opened the door and fell to kissing my

hands at once.

"Are all well?" I asked.

"Well," answered Franek; "but the old lord has gone to the city, and will return only to-morrow."

Thus speaking, he conducted me to the dining-room, lighted a hanging lamp over the table, and went to make tea. I was alone for a while with my thoughts, and with my heart beating quickly. But that while was of short duration, for Father Ludvik ran in, in a dressing-gown; the honest Pani d'Yves, dressed also in white, with her usual papers and in a cap; and Kazio, who had come from school for vacation a month earlier. The honest hearts greeted me with feeling, admired my growth; the priest insisted that I had grown manly, Pani d'Yves that I had grown comely.

Father Ludvik, poor man, inquired only after some time, and then timidly, about examination and my school diploma. When he heard of my successes he just wept, taking me in his arms and calling me his dear boy. And now from the chamber came the patter of small naked feet, and my two little sisters ran in, in their night-dresses and little caps, repeating, "Henlis has come! Henlis has come!" and they sprang on my knees. In vain did Pani d'Yves put them to shame, saying that it was an unheard of thing for two young ladies (one was eight, the other nine) to show themselves to people in such "dishabille." The two, without saying a word, put their little arms around my neck and pressed their mouths to my cheeks. After a while I asked timidly about Hania.

"Oh, she has grown!" answered Pani d'Yves. "She will come

right away; she is dressing, I think."

In fact, I did not wait long, for five minutes later, perhaps, Hania entered the room. I looked at her; and, oh, what had become in half a year of that slender, thin orphan of sixteen? Before me stood an almost mature, or at least maturing young lady. Her form had grown full, rounded marvellously. She had a delicate but healthy complexion; on her cheeks was ruddiness, as it were, the reflection of the morning dawn. Health, youth, freshness, charm, were radiating from her, as from a rose at its opening. I noticed that she looked at me curiously with her large blue eyes; but I saw also that she must have understood my admiration and the impression which she made on me, for a kind of indescribable smile wandered in the corners of her mouth. In the curiosity with which we looked at each other was hidden the undefined bashfulness of a youth and a maiden. Oh, those simple heartfelt relations of a brother and sister, relations of childhood, had gone somewhere into a forest, to return nevermore.

Ah, how beautiful she was with that smile and that quiet joy in her eyes! Light from the lamp hanging over the table fell on her bright hair. She was dressed in a black robe with something thrown over her which was equally dark. This she held on her breast beneath her white neck with her hand; but in this apparel was evident a certain charming disorder, which arose from the haste with which she had dressed. The warmth of sleep issued from her. When at greeting I touched her hand, it was warm, soft, satin-like, and her touch pierced me with a delightful quiver.

Hania had changed as well mentally as physically. When I went away she was a simple maiden, half servant; now she was a young lady, with a noble expression of face and elegant movements, betraying good breeding and the habit of select society. She was roused morally and mentally; a soul was looking out through her eyes. She had ceased to be a child in every respect; her undefined smile, and a kind of innocent coquetry with which she considered me declared this, and from which it was evident that she understood in how greatly changed relations we stood toward each other. I saw soon that she had a certain superiority over me; for I, though more trained in learning, in reference to life, in reference to understanding every position, every word, was still rather a simple boy. Hania was freer with me than I with her. My dignity of a guardian and lord's son had also gone somewhere into a forest. On the road home I had been arranging with myself how to greet Hania, what to say to her, how to be kind and indulgent, but all these plans tumbled down utterly. The position somehow began to be defined that not I was good and kind to her, but rather that she seemed to be good and kind to me. I could not understand this clearly at first, but I felt the position more than I understood it. I had arranged with myself to ask her what she was studying, what she had learned, how she had passed the time, whether Pani d'Yves and Father Ludvik were satisfied with her; but it was she who always, with that smile in the corners of her mouth, asked me what I had been doing, what I had learned, and what I intended to do in the future. All had come

out wonderfully different from what I had intended. Speaking briefly, our relations had changed in a sense directly inverse.

After an hour's conversation we all betook ourselves to rest. I went to my room a little drowsy, a little astonished, a little deceived and downcast, but through various impressions. Love roused again began to push out, like a flame through the cracks of a burning building, and soon covered those impressions completely. Then simply Hania's form, that maiden figure, rich, full of charms, such as I had seen her, alluring, surrounded with the warmth of sleep, with her white hand holding the disordered dress on her bosom, with her hanging tresses, roused my young imagination, and veiled with itself everything before me.

I fell asleep with her image under my eyelids.

CHAPTER VI

I ROSE very early next day and ran out to the garden. The morning was beautiful, full of dew and the odor of flowers. I went quickly to the hornbeam picket, for my heart told me that I should find Hania there. But evidently my heart, too receptive of forebodings, had deceived itself. Hania was not there, no trace of her. Only after breakfast did I find myself alone with her. I asked if she would walk in the garden. She consented willingly and ran to her chamber; she returned soon with a large straw hat on her head, which shaded her forehead and eyes, and with a parasol in her hand. She smiled at me roguishly from under the hat, as if to say, "See how this becomes me."

We went to the garden together. I turned toward the hornbeam picket, and on the road thought, how shall I begin conversation, and thought also that Hania, who certainly could begin better than I, had no wish to assist me, but rather amused herself with my perplexity. I walked along at her side in silence, cutting off with my whip flowers growing on the side of the path, till Hania laughed all on a sudden.

"Pan Henryk," said she, catching at the whip, "what have the flowers done to you?"

"Hania, what are the flowers to me? But thou seest that I do not know how to begin talk with thee; thou hast changed much, Hania. Ah, how thou hast changed!"

"Let us suppose that to be true. Does it make you angry?"

"I do not say that it does," answered I, half in sorrow; "but I cannot make myself used to it, for it seems to me that that other little Hania whom I knew before, and thou, are two different beings. That one had grown into my memory, into – my heart, like a sister, Hania, and therefore – "

"And therefore" (here she pointed to herself) "this one is a stranger, is she not?" asked she, in a low voice.

"Hania! Hania! how canst thou even imagine such a thing?"

"Still it is very natural, though perhaps sad," answered she. "You are looking in your heart for the old brotherly feelings, and do not find them, that is all."

"No, I do not look in my heart for the old Hania, for she is there always; but I look for her in thee, and as to my heart – "

"As to your heart," interrupted she, joyously, "I can guess what has become of it. It has stayed somewhere in Warsaw with some other little heart. That is guessed easily!"

I looked deeply into her eyes. I did not know whether she was quizzing me a little or counting on the impression made on me yesterday, and which I was unable to hide, but she was playing with me somewhat cruelly. All at once a wish to resist was roused in me. I thought that I must have a supremely comical face, looking at her with the expression of a mortally wounded deer; so I mastered my feelings and said, —

"If that is true?"

A visible expression of astonishment, and, as it were, of

dissatisfaction, came to her face.

"If that is true," answered she, "it is you who have changed, not I."

She frowned a little, and, looking at me from under her forehead, went on some time in silence. I endeavored to hide the glad emotion with which her words penetrated me. "She says," thought I, "that if I love another, it is I who have changed; therefore it is not she who has changed, she – " And from delight I dared not finish this wise inference.

Notwithstanding all this, it was not I, not I, but she who had changed. That little maiden who six months before knew nothing of God's world, to whose mind it had never occurred to mention feelings, and for whom such a conversation would have been as Chinese, carried it on to-day as freely and accurately as if she had been reciting a lesson. How had that child mind developed and become so flexible? But wonderful things take place in girls. More than one falls asleep in the evening a child and wakes up in the morning a woman, with another world of feelings and thoughts. For Hania, with a nature quick, capable, sensitive, the passage of her sixteenth year, another sphere of society, learning, books, read, perhaps, in secret, – all this was more than sufficient.

Meanwhile we walked on side by side in silence which Hania was the first to break.

"Then you are in love, Pan Henryk?"

"Perhaps," answered I, with a smile.

"Then you will be sighing for Warsaw?"

"No, Hania; I should be glad were I never to leave here."

Hania glanced at me quickly. Evidently she wished to say something, but was silent. After a while, however, she struck her skirts lightly with the parasol, and said, as if answering her own thoughts, —

"Ah, what a child I am!"

"Why dost thou say that, Hania?"

"Oh, so – Let us sit on this bench and talk of something else. Is not the view from here beautiful?" asked she, with that well-known smile on her lips.

She seated herself on the bench not far from the paling under an immense linden-tree. From that point the view was very beautiful indeed in the direction of the pond, the dam, and the forest beyond the pond. Hania pointed it out to me with her parasol; but I, though a lover of beautiful views, had not the least desire to look at it, – first, because I knew it perfectly; second, I had before me Hania, a hundred times more beautiful than anything which surrounded her; finally, I was thinking of something else.

"How clearly those trees are reflected in the water!" said she.

"I see that thou art an artist," I answered, not looking at the trees or the water.

"Father Ludvik is teaching me to sketch. Oh, I have learned much while you were gone. I wanted – but what is the matter? Are you angry with me?"

"No, Hania, I am not angry, for I could not be angry with thee; but I see that thou avoidest my questions, and this is the trouble, we are both playing at hide and seek, instead of speaking sincerely and with confidence, as in old times. Maybe thou dost not feel this, but for me it is disagreeable."

These simple words had this effect only, that they brought us into great perplexity. Hania gave me both hands, it is true; I pressed those hands perhaps too vigorously, and, oh, terror! I bent over them quickly and kissed them not at all as befitted a guardian. Then we were confused to the utmost. She blushed to the neck, I also; and finally we were silent, not knowing in any way how to begin that conversation which should be sincere and full of confidence.

Then she looked at me, I at her, and again we hung out red flags on our faces. We sat side by side like two dolls; it seemed to me that I was listening to the hurried beating of my own heart. Our position was unendurable. At times I felt that some hand was seizing me by the collar to throw me at her feet, and another was holding me by the hair and would not let me do so. All at once Hania sprang up and said in a hurried, confused voice, —

"I must go. I have a lesson at this hour with Pani d'Yves. It is nearly eleven."

We returned by the same road to the house, and went on as before in silence. I, as before, kept cutting the heads off the flowers with my whip, but this time she had no compassion for the flowers.

"Our former relations have returned beautifully; there is nothing to be said on that point. Jesus, Mary! what is taking place within me?" thought I, when Hania left me to myself. I was in love so that the hair was rising on my head.

Just then the priest came and took me to look at the management. On the way he told me many things touching our estate; these did not occupy me in the least, though I pretended to listen attentively.

My brother Kazio, who, enjoying his vacation, spent the whole day out of doors, in the stables, in the forest, at shooting, on horseback, or in a boat, was at that particular moment in the farm-yard riding a young horse from the stud. When he saw me and the priest, he galloped up to us on the chestnut, which reared as if mad, and asked us to admire the horse's form, fire, and pace; then he dismounted and went with us. Together we visited the stables, the cow-houses, the barns, and were just going to the fields, when it was announced that my father had come, so we had to go home.

My father greeted me more warmly than ever. When he learned of the examinations, he took me in his arms and declared that thenceforward he would consider me full grown. Indeed, a great change had taken place in him with reference to me. He treated me with more confidence and affection. He began to talk with me at once about property interests; he confided to me his intention of buying one of the neighboring estates, and asked my opinion. I divined that he spoke of that purposely to show me

how seriously he looked on my significance as a mature person and the first son in the family. At the same time I noticed how genuinely he was pleased with me and my advance in study. His pride of a parent was flattered immensely by the testimonial which I had brought from the professors. I noticed, meanwhile, that he was testing my character, my style of thought, my ideas touching honor, and that he put various questions purposely to test me with them. It was evident that the parental inspection proved favorable, for though my philosophic and social principles were utterly different from his, I did not bring them forward; in other ideas we could not differ. So my father's severe, lion-like face became more radiant than ever I had seen it. He covered me with gifts that day; he gave me a brace of pistols, with which he had fought a duel not long before with Pan Zoll, and on which were marked a number of other duels which he had fought during youth, while serving in the army. Then I received a splendid horse of Eastern blood, and an ancient sabre handed down from my ancestors; the hilt was set with stones; on the broad Damascus blade was an image of the Mother of God, inlaid with gold in the steel, and the inscription, "Jesus, Mary!" That sabre had become one of our most precious family relics, and for years had been the object of sighs from me and Kazio, for it cut iron as if shavings. My father, when presenting the sabre, unsheathed and whirled it a couple of times so that the air whistled and there was a flash in the room; then he made a cross with it over my head, kissed the image of the Mother of God on the blade, and said, while

delivering the weapon into my hands, —

"Into worthy hands! I brought no shame to it; bring thou none!" Then we threw ourselves into each other's arms. Meanwhile Kazio seized the sabre with delight; and though only a lad of fifteen, but uncommonly strong, he began to give blows with an accuracy and with a quickness that would not have shamed any trained master of fencing. My father looked at him with satisfaction, and said, —

"He will be perfect; but thou wilt do what is needed, wilt thou not?"

"I will, father. I should be able to manage Kazio even. Of all the comrades whom I have tried in fencing, only one has surpassed me."

"Who is he?"

"Selim."

My father made a wry face.

"Selim! But thou must be stronger?"

"That is indifferent. What would make me try him? Selim and I will never fight."

"Ai! various things happen," answered my father.

After dinner that day we were all sitting on the broad, vine-covered porch; from this porch the view was on the immense front yard and in the distance on the shady road bordered by linden-trees. Pani d'Yves was working an altar-cloth for the chapel; my father and the priest were smoking pipes and drinking black coffee. Kazio was circling about in front of the porch,

following the turns of swift swallows, at which he wanted to shoot balls; but my father would not let him do that. Hania and I were looking at drawings which I had brought home, and were thinking least of all of the drawings; for me they served only to conceal from others the glances which I cast at Hania.

"Well, and how hast thou found Hania? Does she seem ugly to thee, lord guardian?" asked my father, looking facetiously at the girl.

I began to examine a drawing very carefully, and answered from behind the paper, —

"I will not say, father, that she has grown ugly, but she has grown tall, and has changed."

"Pan Henryk has reproached me already with these changes," put in Hania, with freedom.

I wondered at her daring in presence of my father. I could not have mentioned those reproaches so freely.

"Oh, what matters it whether she has grown old or grown pretty!" said Father Ludvik; "but she learns quickly and well. Let Madame tell how quickly she has learned French."

It should be known that the priest, though highly educated, did not know French and could not learn it, though he had spent a number of years under our roof with Pani d'Yves. The poor man, however, had a weakness for French, and considered a knowledge of it as an indispensable mark of superior education.

"I cannot deny that she learns easily and willingly," answered Pani d'Yves, turning to me; "but still I must complain of her."

"Oh, Pani! what new fault have I committed?" cried Hania, crossing her hands.

"What fault? You will explain here right away," answered Pani d'Yves. "Just imagine, this young lady, when she finds a moment of time, takes up a novel immediately; and I have strong reasons for thinking that when she goes to bed, instead of quenching the candle and sleeping, she reads for whole hours."

"She does a very bad thing; but I know from some source that she follows the example of her teacher," said my father, who was fond of teasing Pani d'Yves when he was in good humor.

"I beg your pardon greatly; I am forty-five years of age," answered the French woman.

"Why, just think, I never should have said that," answered my father.

"You are malicious."

"I do not know that; but I know this, that if Hania gets novels from any place, it is not from the library, for Father Ludvik has the key to it. The blame therefore falls on the teacher."

In truth, Pani d'Yves had read novels all her life, and, having a passion to relate them to every one, she must surely have related some to Hania; hence, in the words of my father, which were half in jest, a certain truth lay concealed, which he wished to emphasize purposely.

"Oh, see! Some one is coming!" cried Kazio, suddenly.

We all looked into the shady alley between the linden-trees, and at the other end of it, perhaps a verst away, we saw a cloud

of dust, which approached us with uncommon rapidity.

"Who can that be? What speed!" said my father, rising up. "Such a dust one can distinguish nothing."

In fact, the heat was great; no rain had fallen for more than two weeks, so that along the roads clouds of white dust rose at every step. We looked for a while, yet in vain, at the approaching cloud, which was not farther than a few tens of steps from the front yard, when out of the cloud emerged a horse's head with distended, red nostrils, fiery eyes, and flowing mane. The white horse was going at the swiftest gallop; his feet barely touched the earth; and on his back, bent to the horse's neck, in Tartar fashion, was no other than my friend Selim.

"Selim is coming, Selim!" cried Kazio.

"What is that lunatic doing? The gate is closed!" cried I, springing from my place.

There was no time to open the gate, for no one could reach it in season; meanwhile, Selim urged on like a madman, at random, and it was almost certain that he would fall on the gate, more than two ells high, with sharp peaks at the top.

"O God, have mercy on him!" cried the priest.

"The gate! Selim, the gate!" screamed I, as if possessed, waving my handkerchief and running with all my might across the yard.

Something like five yards from the gate, Selim straightened himself in the saddle, and measured the gate with a glance quick as lightning. Next, the scream of women sitting on the

porch came to me, the swift trampling of hoofs; the horse rose, suspended his forelegs in the air, and went over the gate at the highest speed without stopping one instant.

When before the porch, Selim reined in his steed so that the beast's hoofs dug into the earth, then snatching the hat from his own head, he waved it like a standard and cried, —

"How are ye, dear beloved lords? How are ye? My respects to the lord benefactor!" cried he, bowing to my father; "my respects to the beloved priest, Pani d'Yves, Panna Hania! We are all together again. Vivat! Vivat!"

Then he sprang from the horse, and throwing the reins to Franek, who had run out of the hall the moment before, he embraced my father, then the priest, and fell to kissing the hands of the ladies.

Pani d'Yves and Hania were pale from terror, and just because of that they greeted Selim as if he had been rescued from death.

"Oh, thou art playing the madman, the madman! What terror thou didst bring on us!" said Father Ludvik. "We thought that it was all over with thee."

"But why so?"

"That gate. How is it possible to race so at random?"

"At random? I saw very well that the gate was closed. Oho! I have my perfect Tartar eyes."

"And thou dost not fear to race so?"

Selim laughed. "Not in the least, Father Ludvik. But for that matter, the merit is my horse's, not mine."

"There is a bold boy for you!" said Pani d'Yves.

"Oh, that is true! Not every man would dare that," added Hania.

"It is thy wish to say," added I, "that not every horse could clear the gate, for more such men could be found."

Hania gazed long at me.

"I would not advise you to try," said she; then she turned toward Selim and her look expressed admiration, for really this daring deed of the Tartar was one of those risks which always please women. One should have seen him at that moment, his fine, dark hair falling on his forehead, his cheeks flushed from the swift movement, his gleaming eyes, from which shone delight and gladness. As he stood there near Hania, looking her in the eyes with curiosity, no artist could have imagined a more beautiful couple.

But I was touched in the highest degree by her words. It seemed to me that that, "I would not advise thee to try," had been spoken in a voice in which a tone of irony was trembling. I looked with an inquiring glance at my father, who had examined Selim's horse a moment before. I knew his parental ambition; I knew that he was jealous the moment that any one surpassed me in anything, and this had angered him toward Selim for a long time. I concluded, therefore, that he would not oppose in case I wished to show that I was not a worse horseman than Selim.

"That horse gallops well, father," said I.

"Yes, and that Satan sits well," muttered he. "Couldst thou do

the same?"

"Hania doubts," answered I, with a certain bitterness. "May I try?"

My father hesitated, looked at the gate, at the horse, at me, and said, —

"Give peace."

"Naturally!" exclaimed I, in sorrow; "it is better for me to be counted an old woman in comparison with Selim."

"Henryk! what art thou saying?" cried Selim, encircling my neck with his arms.

"Gallop! gallop, boy! and do your best," said my father, whose pride was touched.

"Bring the horse here!" called I to Franek, who was leading the tired steed slowly around the yard.

"Pan Henryk!" cried Hania, springing up from her seat, "then I am the cause of this trial. I do not wish it; I do not wish it. Do not do it; do not, for my sake!"

And while speaking, she looked me in the eyes, as if she wished to finish with her eyes that which she could not express in words.

Ah! for that look I would have given the last drop of my blood at that moment; but I could not and would not draw back. My offended pride was stronger just then than aught else; so I mastered myself and answered dryly, —

"Thou art mistaken, Hania, in thinking that thou art the cause. I shall clear the gate to amuse myself."

Thus speaking, in spite of the protests of all save my father, I mounted and moved forward at a walk into the alley of lindens. Franek opened the gate and closed it after me. I had bitterness in my soul, and would have gone over the gate had it been twice as high. When I had ridden about three hundred yards, I turned the horse and began at a trot, which I changed to a gallop immediately.

All at once I noticed that the saddle was moving. One of two things had happened, – either the girth had stretched during the former leap, or Franek had loosened it to let the horse breathe, and through stupidity, or perhaps forgetfulness, had not informed me.

Now it was too late. The horse was approaching the gate at the highest speed, and I did not wish to stop him. "If I kill myself, I shall kill myself," thought I. I pressed the sides of the horse convulsively. The air whistled in my ears. Suddenly the points of the gate gleamed before my eyes. I waved my whip, felt myself borne through air, a scream from the porch struck my ears, it grew dark in my eyes – and after a while I recovered from a faint.

I sprang to my feet.

"What has happened?" cried I. "Was I thrown? I fainted."

Near me were my father, the priest, Pani d'Yves, Selim, Kazio, and Hania white as linen, with tears in her eyes.

"What is the matter? What is the matter?" was the cry on all sides.

"Nothing at all. I was thrown, but that was not my fault. The

girth was stretched."

In fact, after the momentary faint I felt perfectly well, only breath lacked me a little. My father fell to touching my hands, feet, shoulders.

"It does not hurt?" inquired he.

"No; I am perfectly well."

My breath too returned to me. But I was angry, for I thought that I seemed ridiculous, – that I must seem ridiculous. In falling from the horse, I was thrown with violence across the whole width of the road, which passed near a grass-plot, and fell on the grass; because of this the elbows and knees of my clean clothing were stained green, my dress and hair disordered. But still the unfortunate outcome had rendered me a service. A moment before, Selim was the object of general attention in our circle, as a guest, and as a guest just arrived; now I had taken from him that palm of victory at the cost of my knees and elbows. Hania, thinking herself all the time, and justly, the cause of this hazardous trial which for me might have ended badly, tried to make up for her hastiness with kindness and sweetness. Under such influence I soon recovered my joyousness, which was communicated to all the society which a moment before had been terrified. We amused ourselves perfectly. Lunch was served, at which Hania was the mistress, and then we went to the garden. In the garden Selim became as full of pranks as a little boy; he laughed, frolicked, and Hania helped him with all her soul. Finally he said, —

"Oh, how we shall amuse ourselves this time, all three of us!"

"I am curious to know," said Hania, "who is the most joyous!"

"Oh, surely I," answered Selim.

"But perhaps it is I. I am gladsome by nature."

"But the least gladsome is Henryk," added Selim. "He is naturally dignified, and a little sad. If he had lived in the Middle Ages, he would have been a knight-errant and a troubadour, only he cannot sing. But we," continued he, turning to Hania, "have looked for the poppy and found it."

"I cannot agree to that," answered I. "For any given disposition I prefer the opposite, since in this case one has the qualities which are lacking the other."

"Thanks," replied Selim; "I admit that thou art by nature fond of weeping, and Panna Hania of laughing. Well, let it be that: get married, you two – "

"Selim!"

Selim looked at me and began to laugh.

"Well, young man? Ha! ha! Dost remember the oration of Cicero, 'commoveri videtur juvenis,' which in Polish means: the young man seems confused. But that signifies nothing, for without cause even thou canst blush gloriously: Panna Hania, he cooks crawfish [2] gloriously, and now he has blushed for himself and you."

"Selim!"

"Nothing, nothing! I return to my subject. Thou, sir, art a

[2] To cook crawfish, to blush.

man of weeping, and thou, young lady, art a lady of laughing; get married. What will happen? He will begin to blubber, and you to laugh; you will never understand each other, never agree, different always; and what do I care for chosen natures? Oh, with me it would be different: we should simply laugh all our lives, and that would be the whole story."

"What are you saying?" answered Hania, and then both laughed heartily.

As to me, I had not the least desire to laugh. Selim did not know what injustice he did me in persuading Hania of the difference between her disposition and mine. I was angry in the highest degree, and answered Selim with sarcasm, —

"Thou hast a strange view, and it astonishes me all the more, since I have noticed that thou hast a weakness for melancholy persons."

"I?" said he, with unfeigned astonishment.

"Yes. I will merely remind thee of a certain maiden, some fuchsias, and a little face between them. I give thee my word that I do not know such a melancholy face."

Hania clapped her hands.

"Oho! I am learning something new!" cried she, laughing. "Is she pretty, Pan Selim; is she pretty?"

I thought that Selim would grow confused and lose his boldness; but he merely said, —

"Henryk?"

"What?"

"Dost thou know what I do with those whose tongues are too long?" And he laughed.

Hania insisted on his telling her even the name of this chosen one; without thinking long, he said, —

"Yozia."

But if he had been what he pretended he would have paid dearly for his sincerity, for Hania gave him no peace from that hour till evening.

"Is she pretty?"

"Oh, so."

"What kind of hair has she, and eyes?"

"Nice ones, but not such as please me more than all others."

"And what kind please you?"

"Bright hair, and eyes, if they are kind, blue, like those into which I am looking at this moment."

"Oo, Pan Selim!"

And Hania frowned; but Selim, putting his palms together, made himself pleasant with that incomparable sweetness in his eyes, and began, —

"Panna Hania, be not angry. What has the poor little Tartar done? Be not angry! Let the lady laugh."

Hania looked at him, and as she looked the cloud vanished from her forehead. He simply enchanted her. A smile wandered in the corners of her mouth; her eyes grew bright, her face radiant; and at last she answered in a soft, mild voice, —

"Very well, I will not be angry; but I beg you to be nice."

"I will, as I love Mohammed, I will."

"And do you love your Mohammed much?"

"As dogs a beggar."

And then both laughed again.

"But now tell me whom does Pan Henryk love? I asked him, but he would not tell me."

"Henryk? Do you know" (here he looked at me askance) "he is not in love with any one yet, perhaps, but he will love. Oh, I know perfectly whom! and as to me – "

"As to you, what?" inquired Hania, trying to conceal her confusion.

"I would do the very same – but wait a bit; he may be in love already."

"I beg thee to stop, Selim."

"Thou, my honest boy," said Selim, putting his arm around my neck – "Ah, if you knew how honest he is."

"Oh, I know that," said Hania; "I remember what he was to me after my grandfather's death."

A cloud of sadness flew between us then.

"I will tell you," said Selim, wishing to change the subject, "that after examination we had a little feast with our master – "

"And drank?"

"Yes. Oh, that is the custom which one cannot avoid. So while we were drinking, I, being, as you know, a giddy fellow, raised a toast to you. I acted unwisely, but Henryk sprang up: 'How dare you mention Hania in such a place as this?' said he to me; for

that was a wine-cellar. We came near fighting. But he will not let any one offend you, no, no – "

Hania gave me her hand. "How good you are, Pan Henryk!"

"Well," answered I, carried away by Selim's words, "say thyself, Hania, is not Selim just as honest, since he tells this?"

"Oh, what great honesty!" said Selim, laughing.

"But it is," answered Hania; "you are worthy of each other, and we shall have such a pleasant time in company."

"You will be our queen!" cried Selim, with enthusiasm.

"Gentlemen! Hania! we invite you to tea," called Pani d'Yves from the garden veranda.

We went to tea, all three of us in the very best feeling. The table was set under the veranda; the lights, shielded by glass tubes, burned brightly, and moths in a swarm circled around them; they butted against the glass walls of the tubes; the leaves of wild grapevines rustled, moved by the warm night air; and beyond the poplars rose a great golden moon. The last conversation between Hania, Selim, and myself had brought us to a wonderfully mild, friendly tone. That calm and quiet evening acted also on the older persons. My father's face and the priest's were as serene as the sky.

After tea Pani d'Yves began to play solitaire; my father fell into perfect humor, for he commenced to tell of old times, which with him was always a sign of good feeling.

"I remember," said he, "we halted once not far from a village in Krasnostav. The night was dark; even strain your eyes out, you

could not see anything" (here he drew smoke from his pipe and let it go above the light). "People were as tired as a Jew's nag. We were standing silently, and then – "

Here began a narrative of wonderful and most wonderful happenings. The priest, who had listened to this more than once, still stopped smoking and listened more attentively; he raised his spectacles to his forehead, and, nodding, repeated "Uhum! Uhum!" or called out, "Jesus, Mary! well, and what?"

Selim and I, leaning against each other, with eyes fixed on my father, caught his words eagerly. On no face was the expression depicted so definitely as on Selim's. His eyes were gleaming like coals; a flush covered his face; his hot Eastern nature came to the surface like oil. Hardly could he sit in one place. Pani d'Yves smiled as she looked at him, and showed him to Hania with her eyes; then both began to observe him, for they were entertained by that face, which was like a mirror or the surface of water, in which everything is reflected that comes near its transparency.

To-day, when I recall evenings like that, I cannot resist my emotion. Many waves on the water, many clouds in the sky, have passed since that time; but still winged memory pushes before my eyes continually similar pictures of the village mansion, the summer night, and that family, harmonious, loving, happy, – a gray veteran telling former adventures of his life; youths with fire in their eyes; farther on a face like a field flower – Ei! Many waves on the water and clouds in the sky have passed since that time.

Meanwhile the clock struck ten. Selim sprang up, for he had received the command to return that same night. The whole company decided to go with him as far as the cross at the end of the lindens near the second gate, I on horseback farther, as far as the meadows. We started then, all of us except Kazio, who had fallen asleep in the best fashion.

Hania, Selim, and I pushed on ahead, we two leading our horses by the bridles, Hania between us. The three old people walked behind. It was dark in the alley; the moon, merely breaking through the dense foliage, marked the dark road with silver spots.

"Let us sing something," said Selim, "some song, old and good; for example, the song about Filon."

"No one sings that," answered Hania. "I know another: 'Oh, autumn, autumn, the leaf is withering on the tree!'"

We agreed at last to begin with "Filon," which the priest and my father liked much, for it reminded them of old times, and then sing "Oh, autumn, autumn!" Hania placed her white hand on the mane of Selim's horse and began to sing, —

> "The moon has gone down, the dogs are all sleeping;
> But some one is clapping beyond the pine wood.
> Surely, Filon, my darling, is watching,
> Awaiting me under the favorite maple."

When we finished, the voices of the old people were heard behind us in the darkness: "Bravo! bravo! sing something more."

I accompanied as best I could, but I did not sing well; while Hania and Selim had beautiful voices, especially Selim. Sometimes, when I went too far beyond the notes, they both laughed at me. Then they hummed some other songs, during which I thought, "Why does Hania hold the mane of Selim's horse, and not the mane of mine?" That horse pleased her peculiarly. Sometimes she nestled up to its neck, or, patting it, repeated, "My steed, mine!" and the gentle beast snorted and stretched out its open nostrils toward her hand, as if looking for sugar. All this caused me to grow sad again, and I looked at nothing save that hand, which continued to rest on the horse's mane.

Meanwhile we reached the cross at the end of the linden-trees. Selim bade good-night to all: he kissed the hands of Pani d'Yves and wished to kiss Hania's; but she would not consent, and looked at me as if afraid. But as a recompense, when he was on horseback she approached him and spoke. In the light of the moon, unobstructed in that place, I saw her eyes raised to Selim's, and the sweet expression of her face.

"Do not forget Pan Henryk. We shall always amuse ourselves and sing together, and now good-night!" said she, giving him her hand.

Hania and the older people went toward the house, Selim and I toward the meadows. We rode on some time in silence by an open road without trees. Round about it was so bright that one might count the needle-like leaves on the low juniper bushes growing by the road. From time to time the horses snorted, or a stirrup

struck against a stirrup. I looked at Selim; he was thoughtful and turned his eyes to the depths of night. I had an overpowering desire to speak of Hania. I felt the need of confessing to some one the impressions of the day, of telling every word of hers, but not a movement could I make; I knew not how to begin that conversation. Selim began it first, for suddenly, neither from one reason nor another, he bent toward me, and embracing my neck kissed me on the cheek, and cried, —

"Ah, my Henryk! how beautiful and charming thy Hania is! Let the devil take Yozia!"

This exclamation chilled me like a sudden breath of wintry wind. I made no answer, but removed Selim's arm from my neck, and, pushing him away, rode on in silence. I saw that he was greatly confused, and had grown silent also; after a while, turning to me, he said, —

"Art thou angry about something?"

"Thou art a child!"

"Perhaps thou art jealous?"

I reined in my horse.

"Good-night to thee, Selim."

It was evident that he had no desire to take further farewell, but he stretched out his hand mechanically for pressure. Then he opened his lips as if to say something; but I turned my horse quickly, and trotted toward home.

"Good-night!" cried Selim.

He stood a while yet on the same spot, then rode slowly toward

Horeli.

Lessening my speed, I rode at a walk. The night was beautiful, calm, warm; the meadows, covered with dew, seemed like broad lakes. From those meadows came the voices of land rails; bitterns were calling in the distant reeds. I raised my eyes to the starry immensity; I wanted to pray and to cry.

Suddenly I heard the tramp of a horse behind me. I looked around; it was Selim. He had caught up, and, coming before me in the road, said with a voice full of emotion, —

"Henryk! I have come back because something is the matter with thee. At first I thought: 'if he is angry, let him be angry!' But afterward I grew sorry for thee. I could not restrain myself. Tell me what the matter is. Perhaps I have spoken too much with Hania? Perhaps thou art in love with her, Henryk?"

Tears stopped my throat, and I could answer nothing at once. If I had followed my first inspiration, thrown myself on Selim's honest breast, cried there, and confessed all! Ah! I remember that whenever I met an outpouring of the heart in another, and opened my own heart affectionately in response, a kind of irresistible, rebellious pride, which should have been broken as a stone with a pickaxe, froze my heart and bound the words on my lips. How many times has my happiness been ruined by that pride, and always have I regretted it later! Still at the first moment I could never resist it.

"I was sorry for thee," continued Selim.

So he had compassion on me; that was sufficient to shut my

mouth. I was silent. He gazed at me with his angelic eyes; he spoke with an accent of entreaty and repentance in his voice, —

"Henryk! Perhaps thou lovest her? She, as thou seest, has pleased me, but let this be the end. If thou wish, I will not say another word to her. Tell me: perhaps thou art in love with her already? What hast thou against me?"

"I do not love her, and I have nothing against thee. I am a little weak. I was thrown from the horse; I got shaken. I am not at all in love; I only fell from the horse. Good-night to thee!"

"Henryk! Henryk!"

"I repeat to thee, I was thrown from the horse."

We parted again. Selim kissed me in farewell, and rode away more calmly; for, in truth, it might be supposed that the fall had had that effect on me. I remained alone, with a straitened heart, in a kind of deep sorrow, in tears which stopped my throat, moved by Selim's kindness, angry with myself, and cursing my conduct in having repulsed him. I let the horse go at a gallop, and soon I was before the mansion.

The windows of the drawing-room were lighted; the sound of the piano came through them. I gave the horse to Franek, and entered. Hania was playing some song which I did not know; she was playing for herself, falsifying the melody with all a dilettante's confidence, for it was not long since she had begun to learn, but it was more than sufficient to enchant my spirit, which was much more in love than it was musical. When I entered, she smiled at me without ceasing to play. I threw myself

into an armchair standing opposite, and looked at her. Over the music-rack her clear, serene forehead was visible, and her brows, outlined symmetrically. Her eyelashes were downcast, for she was looking at the keys. She played some time yet, then stopped, and, raising her eyes on me, said in a fondling, soft voice, —

"Pan Henryk?"

"What, Hania?"

"I wanted to ask something – Ah! Have you invited Selim for to-morrow?"

"No. Father wishes us to go to Ustrytsi to-morrow, for a package has come from mother for Pani Ustrytski."

Hania was silent, and struck a few soft notes; but it was evident that she did so only mechanically, while thinking of something else, for after a while she raised her eyes and said, —

"Pan Henryk?"

"What, Hania?"

"I wanted to ask you about something – Ah! here it is! Is that Yozia in Warsaw very pretty?"

That was too much; anger, mixed with vexation, pressed my heart. I approached the piano quickly; my lips were trembling when I answered, —

"Not prettier than thou. Be at rest. Thou mayst try thy charms boldly on Selim."

Hania rose from the piano stool; a burning blush of offence covered her face.

"Pan Henryk! what do you say?"

"That which thou wert aiming at."
I seized my hat, bowed to her, and left the room.

CHAPTER VII

IT is easy to divine how I passed the night after those vexations of a whole day. When I had lain down, I asked myself first of all what had happened, and why I had had such adventures. The answer was easy: Nothing had happened; that is, I could not reproach either Selim or Hania with anything which might not be explained by the friendliness which bound us all equally, or by curiosity, or by mutual sympathy. That Selim pleased Hania, and she him, was more than certain; but what right had I to be angered because of that, and destroy every one's peace? Not they were at fault, but I. This thought should have calmed me, but the opposite happened. No matter how I explained their mutual relations, though I saw that I had caused many vexations unjustly to both, still, I felt that a certain unspeakable danger was impending in the future; this consideration, that the danger was not tangible, that it could not be put in the form of a reproach against Selim or Hania, made it felt all the more keenly by me. Besides this, I thought of one other thing; namely, that not having the right to reproach them, I had still sufficient reason for alarm. These were all subtleties of the case, almost impossible to be seized, in which my mind, still unsophisticated, was entangled and tortured as if amid snares and darkness. I felt simply wearied and broken, like a man who has made a long journey; and still one other thought, bitter and painful, came back to my head without

ceasing; namely, this, that it was I, expressly I, who by jealousy and awkwardness, was impelling those two persons toward each other. Oh, how much knowledge had I been acquiring, though I had no knowledge whatever! Such things are divined. What is more, I knew that, amid all these wrong paths, I should go, not where I wished to go, but where I should be urged by feelings and circumstances, not infrequently temporary and insufficient, but which are somehow important and on which happiness often depends. I was very unhappy; and though those vexations of mine might seem foolish to some persons, I will say this, that the greatness of any misfortune depends not on what it is in itself, but on how one feels it.

And still nothing had happened. Lying in bed, I repeated these words to myself, till gradually my thoughts began to grow dim, to scatter, and to fall into the usual disorder of sleep. Various strange elements pushed themselves into this disorder. My father's narratives, persons and events in those narratives, were joined then with Selim, Hania, and my love. Perhaps I had some fever, all the more since I had fallen. The wick of the burnt candle dropped all at once into the candlestick; it grew dark, then blue flame flickered up, then less of it, and still less, till at last the expiring light shone brightly and died. It must have been late; the cocks were crowing outside the window. I fell into an oppressive, unhealthy sleep, out of which I rose not very quickly.

Next morning it appeared that I had slept past the breakfast hour, and past the chance of seeing Hania before dinner, for she

had lessons till two with Pani d'Yves. But after a long sleep I took courage, and did not look on the world as so black. "I will be kind and cordial to Hania, and thus make amends for yesterday's peevishness," thought I.

Meanwhile, I had not foreseen one circumstance; namely, that my last words had not only annoyed, but offended her. When she came in with Pani d'Yves to dinner, I hurried toward her quickly; and all at once, as if some one had poured water on me, I withdrew again into myself with my cordiality, not because I wished to do so, but because I was repulsed. Hania answered very politely, "Good-day," but so coldly that all wish for heartfelt effusions deserted me. I sat down near Pani d'Yves, and during the whole dinner Hania seemed not to take note of my existence. I confess that that existence appeared then so empty and pitiful in my eyes that if any man had offered three coppers for it I would have told him to deliver the money. What was I to do? The desire for resistance was roused in me, and I determined to pay Hania in the same coin. That was a wonderful rôle regarding a person whom one loves above everything. I could say truly, "Lips abuse thee, though the heart weeps!" During the whole dinner we did not speak once directly, only through the medium of others. When Hania said, for example, that there would be rain toward the evening, I turned to Pani d'Yves, and told her, and not Hania, that there would be no rain. This pouting and bickering had a certain exciting charm for me. "I am curious to know, my young lady, how we shall get on in Ustrytsi, for we must go there,"

thought I. "In Ustrytsi, I will ask her something purposely in the presence of others; she must answer then, and so the ice will be broken." I promised myself much from that visit. True, I had to go with Pani d'Yves; but how would that harm me? At present I cared much more for this, that no one at the table should take note of our anger. Should any one notice it, thought I, that one would ask if we were angry; then all would be discovered, all would come out. At the very thought of this, a blush came to my face, and fear pressed my heart. But, oh, wonder! I saw that Hania feared this much less than I; besides, she saw my fear, and in her soul was amused at it. In turn, I felt overcome; but for the moment there was nothing to be done. Ustrytsi was waiting for me, so I caught at that thought as a plank of salvation.

Hania was thinking too of it, for after dinner, when she brought black coffee to my father, she kissed his hand and said, —

"I beg not to go to Ustrytsi."

"Ah, what a rogue, what a rogue, that dear Hania!" thought I, in my soul.

My father, who was a little deaf, did not hear at once. Kissing her on the forehead, he asked, —

"What dost thou wish, little woman?"

"I have one prayer."

"What is it?"

"That I may not go to Ustrytsi."

"But why, art thou ill?"

"If she says that she is ill," thought I, "all is lost, the more since my father is in good humor."

But Hania never lied, even innocently; therefore, instead of masking the lack of wish as a headache, she answered, —

"I am well, but I do not like to go."

"Ah! then thou wilt go to Ustrytsi, for there is need of thy going."

Hania courtesied and went away without saying a word. Had it been proper, I should have gladly shown her zyg, zyg, zyg, on my fingers.

After a while I asked my father why he ordered Hania to go.

"I wish the neighbors to see in her our relative, and grow familiar with that position. Hania in going to Ustrytsi goes there, so to speak, in the name of thy mother; dost understand?"

Not only did I understand, but I wanted to kiss my honest father for that thought.

We were to start at five o'clock. Hania and Pani d'Yves were then dressing upstairs. I gave orders to bring out a light carriage for two persons, since I intended to go myself on horseback. It was three miles to Ustrytsi, so with good weather we had a very pleasant drive before us. Hania came down dressed in black, it is true, but with care and even elegance, for such was my father's desire. I could not take my eyes from her. She looked so beautiful that I felt my heart soften immediately; the desire for resistance and the artificial coldness flew away somewhere beyond the ninth boundary. But my queen passed me in real queenly fashion;

she did not even look at me, though I had arrayed myself as best I knew how. I may add in passing that she was somewhat displeased, for really she had no desire to go, though that was not from a wish to annoy me, but from more reasonable causes which I discovered later.

At five o'clock punctually the ladies took their seats in the carriage, and I mounted my horse; we started together. On the road I held aside from Hania, wishing by all means to arrest her attention. In fact, she looked at me once when my horse reared, measured me with calm eye from foot to head, even smiled, I thought, though slightly, which gave me comfort at once; but she turned quickly to Pani d'Yves and began to talk with her in such a way that I could not take part in the conversation.

We came at last to Ustrytsi. Selim had preceded us. Pani Ustrytski was not there. We found at home only Pan Ustrytski, the two governesses, one French, the other German, and Pan Ustrytski's daughters, – the elder Lola, a rather coquettish, pretty, chestnut-haired person of the same age as Hania, and the younger, Marynia, a child yet.

After the first greeting the ladies went at once to the garden for strawberries; but Pan Ustrytski took Selim and me to show us his new weapons, and his new dogs for hunting wild boars; these dogs he had brought at great cost from Vrotslavie. I have mentioned already that Pan Ustrytski was the most passionate hunter in that whole region, and moreover a very honorable and kind man, as active as he was rich. He had only one fault,

which made him annoying to me: he laughed all the time; every few words he slapped his stomach, repeating, "A farce, gracious benefactor! What is it called?" For this reason people spoke of him as "Neighbor Farce," or "Neighbor What-is-it-called."

Well, Neighbor Farce took us to the kennel, not considering that perhaps we preferred a hundred times to be with the ladies in the garden. We listened for a while to his narratives, till at last I remembered something I had to say to Pani d'Yves, and Selim said right out, —

"All this is very well, lord benefactor. The dogs are beautiful; but what is to be done if we both have a greater wish to go to the young ladies?"

"Ah, a farce, gracious benefactor! What is it called? Well, go then; I will go with you."

And we went. Soon, however, it appeared that I had nothing to wish for so greatly. Hania, who somehow kept apart from her companions, did not cease to ignore me, and occupied herself with Selim perhaps purposely. It fell to my lot, moreover, to amuse Panna Lola. What I talked of, how I avoided talking nonsense, how I answered her friendly questions, I know not; for I followed Selim and Hania incessantly, catching their words, observing their looks and movements. Selim did not notice me; but Hania did, and lowered her voice designedly, or looked with a certain coquettishness on her companion, who permitted himself to be borne away by that flood of favor. "Wait, Hania," thought I; "thou art acting thus to torment me; I will treat thee in the

same way." And taking things in that fashion, I turned to Panna Lola. I have forgotten to say that this young person had a special weakness for me, and showed it too plainly. I began to pay court to her. I flattered her, and laughed, though I had a greater wish to cry; but Lola looked at me, radiant, with her moist, dark blue eyes, and fell into a romantic frame of mind.

Ah, if she had known how I hated her at that moment! But I was so absorbed in my rôle that I even did something dishonorable. When Panna Lola, in the course of conversation, made some malicious remark about Selim and Hania, though in my soul I was quivering with anger, I did not answer her as I should have done, but merely smiled rather stupidly and passed it over in silence.

We spent about an hour in this way; then lunch was served under a weeping chestnut, which touched the earth with the tips of its branches and formed a green dome above our heads. Then I first learned that Hania's repugnance to visiting Ustrytsi did not regard me; she had better reasons.

The matter stood simply in this way: Pani d'Yves, as a descendant of an ancient noble French house, and, besides, better educated than other governesses, thought herself somewhat superior to the French woman at Ustrytsi, but especially superior to the German; while those two in their turn thought themselves better than Hania, because her grandfather had been a servant. The well-bred Pani d'Yves did not let them know her feelings, but they slighted Hania even to rudeness. Those were common

feminine quarrels and ambitions; still I could not permit my dear Hania, who alone was worth a hundred times more than all Ustrytsi, to be their victim. Hania endured the slight with tact and sweetness which did honor to her character, but still such treatment was bitter to her. Had Pani Ustrytski been present, nothing of the kind would have happened, but at that moment both governesses took advantage of the favorable occasion. As soon as Selim sat near Hania, whispers and jests began, in which even Panna Lola took some part, because she was jealous of Hania's beauty. I rebuffed those taunts a number of times sharply, perhaps even too sharply; but soon Selim took my place in spite of me. I saw a flash of anger shoot across his brows; but he bethought himself quickly and turned a calm, sneering glance on the governesses. Incisive, witty, and eloquent as few persons at his age, he soon confused them so much that they knew not where to take refuge. Pani d'Yves, with her dignity, aided him, and also I, who would have driven out the two foreign women. Panna Lola, not wishing to offend me, came over also to our side, and, though insincerely, showed Hania a kindness twofold greater than usual. In a word, our victory was perfect, but unfortunately, and to my great vexation, the chief merit this time fell also to Selim. Hania, who, notwithstanding all her tact, hardly restrained tears from suffusing her eyes, looked at Selim as her savior, with thankfulness and homage. So when we rose from the table and began to walk again through the garden in couples, I saw her incline toward Selim, and heard her whisper, —

"Pan Selim! I am very – "

Then she stopped suddenly, for she was afraid of weeping; emotion was uppermost in spite of her.

"Panna Hania, do not mention that. Do not mind it; do not be troubled."

"You see how difficult it is for me to speak of this matter, but I wished to thank you."

"For what, Panna Hania? For what? I cannot endure tears in your eyes. For you I would gladly – "

Now in his turn he did not finish, for he could not find the expression; and perhaps he noticed in season that he had let the feelings with which his breast was filled go too far, so he turned away his face not to let his emotion be seen, and was silent.

Hania looked at him with eyes bright from tears, and I then did not ask what had happened.

I loved Hania with all the power of a youthful soul; I deified her; I loved her with the love which is only in heaven. I loved her form, her eyes, every hair of her head, the sound of her words. I loved every bit of her dress. I loved the air which she breathed; that love pervaded me through and through, and was not only in my heart, but in my whole being. I lived only in her and through her; that love flowed in me as my blood; it radiated from me as the warmth of my body. For others something besides love might exist; for me the whole world existed in love; there was nothing beyond it. To the world I was blind, deaf, and indifferent, for my reason and senses were held by that single

feeling. I felt that I was blazing like a lighted torch, that that flame was devouring me, that I was dying. What was that love? A mighty voice, a mighty calling of one soul to another, "My deified, my sacred one, my love, hear me!" I did not inquire what had happened, for I understood that not to me, not to me, was Hania answering that heart question. In the midst of indifferent people, a man thirsting for love wanders as in a forest, and he shouts and calls as in a forest, waiting to learn if some voice of sympathy will answer him; so now I did not ask any longer what had happened, for beside my own love and my own useless shouting, I felt and overheard two voices in sympathy, the voices of Selim and Hania. They were calling to each other mutually with the voices of hearts; they were calling unfortunately for me, and they themselves did not know that. One was to the other as a forest echo, and one followed the other as the echo follows the voice. And what could I do against this necessity which they could call happiness, but which I must call misfortune? What could avail against that order of nature, against that fatal logic of things? How win Hania's heart when some irresistible power was impelling it in another direction?

I separated from the company and sat on a bench of the garden, and thoughts like these were sounding in my head, like flocks of frightened birds. A madness of despair and suffering seized me. I felt that in the midst of my family, in the midst of well-wishing hearts, I was lonely. To me the whole world seemed a desert, seemed orphaned; the heaven above me was

so indifferent to the wrong done by people that in spite of me one thought beyond others mastered me, swallowed everything, and covered me with its gloomy peace. The name of it was death. And then, an escape from that vicious circle, an end to sufferings, an end of all that sad comedy, a cutting of all the painful knots binding the soul, and repose after torture, – ah! that repose, for which I was so thirsty, that dark repose, that repose of nothingness, but calm and eternal.

I was one exhausted by tears, by suffering and drowsiness. Oh, to sleep! to sleep at any price, even at the price of life. Then from the calm immense blue of heaven to which my former faith of childhood had fled, one thought flew to me like a bird and sat in my brain. That thought was in the brief words: but if —

That was a new circle in which I was involved by the force of implacable necessity. Oh, I suffered greatly, but there from the neighboring alley joyous words came to me, or low, half-audible whispers of conversation. Around me was the odor of flowers; on the trees twittering birds were settling themselves to rest; above me hung the calm sky, ruddy with the evening twilight. All was peaceful, all happy; amidst that bloom of life, in pain and with set teeth, I alone desired to die. Suddenly I trembled; before me rustled the dress of a woman.

I looked; it was Panna Lola. She was calm and mild; she looked at me with sympathy, and perhaps with more than sympathy. Amidst the light of evening and the shadows cast by the trees, she seemed pale; her abundant tresses, unwound as if

by chance, fell upon her shoulders.

At that moment I did not feel any hatred toward her. "Oh; thou single compassionate soul!" thought I, "dost thou come to console me?"

"Pan Henryk, you are somehow sad, perhaps suffering?"

"Oh, yes, suffering," cried I, with an outburst; and seizing her hand I placed it against my burning forehead, then I kissed it quickly and ran off.

"Pan Henryk!" cried she after me, in a low voice.

But at that moment, at the crossing of the paths, appeared Selim and Hania. Both had seen my outburst, had seen me kiss and press Lola's hand to my forehead, so smiling, they exchanged glances, as if saying to each other, "We understand what that means."

But soon it was time to go home. Immediately beyond the gate Selim's road lay in another direction, but I was afraid that he might wish to conduct us. I mounted in haste, and said aloud that it was late, and time for Selim and me. When parting, I received from Panna Lola a wonderfully warm pressure of the hand, to which I gave no response.

Selim turned immediately beyond the gate; for the first time he kissed Hania's hand for good-night, and she did not forbid.

She ceased to ignore me. She was in too mild a mood to remember the morning anger, but I interpreted that mood of mind in the worst sense possible. Pani d'Yves fell asleep after a few moments, and began to nod in all directions. I looked at

Hania. She was not asleep; her eyes, opened widely, were bright as if from happiness. She did not break the silence; she was evidently too much occupied with her own thoughts. Only when near the house did she look at me, and, seeing that I was so meditative, she asked, —

"Of what are you thinking? Is it of Lola?"

I did not answer a word; I only gritted my teeth. Tear, tear me, if that gives thee pleasure; from me thou wilt not get one groan.

Hania in reality had not even dreamed of tearing me. She asked, for she had a right to ask. Astonished at my silence, she repeated the question. Again I gave no answer. She thought, therefore, that it was pouting continued since morning, and so was silent.

CHAPTER VIII

ONE morning, some days later, the first ruddy light of early dawn came in through a heart cut in the window-shutter, and roused me from sleep. Soon after, some one knocked on the shutter; and in the rosy opening appeared, not the face of Mitskewich's Zosia, who in a similar manner roused Tadeush, nor of my Hania either, but the mustached face of Vah, the forester, and his deep voice cried, —

"Panich!"

"What?"

"Wolves are following a wolf bitch in the Pohorovy woods. Shall we go to lure them?"

"Right away!"

I dressed, took my gun and hunter's knife, and went out. Vah was all wet from the morning dew; on his shoulder was a single-barrelled gun, long and rusty, but he never missed aim with this piece. It was early; the sun had not risen yet. People had not gone to their work, nor cattle to pasture. The sky was only colored blue, rosy and golden on the east; on the west it was sombre. The old man hurried in his fashion.

"I have a horse and cart. Let us ride to the Pits," said he.

We took our seats and drove on. Just beyond the granaries a hare, or rabbit, sprang out of the oats, ran across the road and into the meadow, marking with a darker trace the surface silvered

over by dew.

"A cat crosses the road!" said the forester; "a charm on a dog!" Then added: "It is late already. The earth will soon get a shadow."

This meant that the sun would rise before long, for with the light of dawn bodies cast no shadow.

"But is it bad hunting when there are shadows?" asked I.

"With long shadows it is passable, but with short ones useless work."

In hunter's language this meant that the later the hour, the worse the hunting, for, as is known, the nearer midday the shorter the shadows.

"Where shall we begin?" asked I.

"At the Pits in the Pohorovy woods."

The Pohorovy woods were a part of the forest which was very dense, – that part where "the Pits" were; that is, holes made by the roots of old trees thrown down by storms.

"And do you think that luring will succeed?"

"I will begin to play as a wolf bitch, perhaps some wolf will come."

"But he may not."

"Ei! he will come."

When we reached Vah's cottage we left the horse and cart, and went forward on foot. After half an hour's walk, when the sun had begun to rise, we sat down in a pit.

Round about us was a thicket of impenetrable small growth; only here and there were enormous trees. The pit was so deep

that even our heads were concealed in it.

"Now back to back!" muttered Vah.

We sat back to back; above the surface of the ground appeared only the crowns of our heads and the gun-barrels.

"Listen!" said Vah. "I will play."

Putting two fingers in his mouth and modulating his drawling voice with them, he began to imitate a wolf bitch; that is, to howl like a she-wolf when she entices he-wolves.

"Listen!"

And he placed his ear to the ground.

I heard nothing, but Vah took his face from the earth and whispered, —

"Oh, there is sport, but far away, two miles."

Then he waited a quarter of an hour; again he put his fingers to his mouth and howled. The doleful, ominous sound passed through the thicket; and far, far away it flew over the damp earth, rebounding from pine to pine. Vah put his ear to the ground again.

"They are playing, but not farther than a mile away."

Indeed, I heard then, as it were a distant echo of howling, very far away yet, barely audible.

"Where will it come out?" asked I.

"On you, Panich."

Vah howled a third time; a howling answered quite near now. I grasped the gun more firmly, and we held the breath in our breasts. The silence was absolute; a breeze merely shook from

hazel-nut bushes dewdrops, which fell pattering on the leaves. From afar, from the other edge of the forest, came the calling of wood grouse.

Suddenly, some three hundred yards distant, something shook in the forest. The juniper bushes moved quickly, and from the midst of the dark needle-like leaves emerged a triangular head, gray, with pointed ears and red eyes. I could not shoot, for the head was too far away, so I waited patiently, though with beating heart. Soon the whole beast came out of the junipers, and with a few short springs ran up toward the pit, smelling carefully on every side. At one hundred and fifty yards the wolf halted and listened, as if foreboding something. I saw that he would not come nearer, and drew the trigger.

The report of the gun was mingled with the painful cry of the wolf. I sprang out of the pit, Vah after me, but we did not find the wolf at the place. Vah, however, examined the spot carefully where the dew was wiped away on the ground, and said, —

"He colors!"

Indeed, there were traces of blood on the grass.

"You haven't missed, though far. He is coloring. Oh, he is coloring! We must follow."

And so we went. Here and there we came upon trampled grass and more traces of blood. The wounded wolf rested from time to time; that was evident. Meanwhile an hour passed in woods and thickets, then a second. The sun was now high; we had gone over an immense piece of road without finding a thing except traces,

which at times disappeared altogether. Then we came to the corner of the forest; traces continued for about two versts more through a field toward the pond, and were lost at last in swampy ground covered with reeds and sweet flag. It was impossible to go farther without a dog.

"He will stay there; I shall find him to-morrow," said Vah, and we turned toward home.

Soon I ceased to think of Vah's wolf and the result of the hunt, which was rather unfortunate. I returned to my usual circle of suffering. When we were approaching the forest, a hare sprang up almost from under my feet; instead of shooting it, I trembled, as if roused from sleep.

"Ah!" cried Vah, in indignation, "I would shoot my own brother if he jumped up in that way."

I only laughed and went on in silence. When crossing the so-called "forest road" which led to the highway of Horeli, I saw fresh tracks of a horse wearing shoes.

"Do you know, Vah, what tracks these are?"

"It seems to me that they are made by the young Panich from Horeli, on his way to the mansion."

"Then I will go to the mansion. Farewell, Vah."

Vah begged me timidly to go to his cottage, which was not far, to refresh myself a little. I saw that in case of refusal I should cause him great pain; still I refused, but promised to come next morning. I did not wish to leave Selim and Hania together long without me.

During the five days which had passed since the visit to Ustrytsi Selim had come almost daily. But I guarded them like the eye in my head, and to-day for the first time came the chance that they could be alone. "Now," thought I, "it will come to a confession between them," and I felt that I was growing as pale as he who loses hope of hope.

I feared this as a misfortune, an unavoidable sentence of death, which we know to be coming, but which we delay as long as possible.

On reaching home, I met Father Ludvik in front of the mansion, with a bag on his head, and a wire net over his face; he was going to the beehives.

"Is Selim here, Father Ludvik?" asked I.

"He is; he came about an hour and a half ago."

"Where shall I find him?"

"He went to the pond with Hania and Evunia."

I ran to the garden quickly, then to the brink of the pond where the boats were. One of the largest was missing. I looked out over the pond, but at first could see nothing. I guessed that Selim must have turned to the right toward the alders; in this way the boat and those in it were concealed by the reeds on the bank. I seized an oar, sprang into a one-seated boat, pushed out quietly, kept among the reeds, did not leave them. There I could see without being visible.

In fact, I soon saw them. On a broad part of the pond, free of reeds, was a motionless boat, the oars hanging. At one end

was sitting my little sister, Evunia, turned away from Hania and Selim; at the other end were the two. Evunia, bending over the boat, struck the water joyously with her little hands, and was occupied entirely with this amusement; but Selim and Hania, almost leaning against each other, seemed absorbed in conversation. Not the least breath of wind wrinkled the transparent blue surface; the boat, Hania, Evunia, and Selim were reflected in it as in a mirror, calm, motionless.

That was a very beautiful picture, perhaps, but at sight of it the blood rushed to my head; I understood everything. They had taken Evunia, for the child could not be in their way or understand their confessions. They took her for appearance' sake. "All is over," thought I. "All is over!" sounded the reeds. "All is over!" blurted out the ripple, striking the side of my boat; and it grew dark in my eyes. I felt cold and hot. I felt that pallor was covering my face. "Thou hast lost Hania! thou hast lost her!" cried voices above me and in me. Then I heard, as it were, the same voices crying, "Jesus, Mary!" and then these continued, "Push up nearer; hide in the reeds; thou wilt see more!" I obeyed, and pushed on with the boat as silently as a cat. But at that distance I could not hear conversation; I only saw more distinctly that they were sitting side by side on one bench, not holding each other's hands, but Selim was turned toward Hania. It seemed to me after a while that he was kneeling before her, but it only seemed so. He was turned toward her and was looking at her entreatingly; she was not looking at him, but seemed to glance

on every side and unquietly; then she raised her eyes. I saw that she was confused; I saw that he was begging for something. I saw finally that he placed his palms together before her, that she turned her head and eyes toward him slowly, that she began to lean toward him, but suddenly recovered herself and pushed back toward the edge of the boat. Then he seized her hand, as though fearing that she might fall into the water. I saw that he did not let the hand go; after that I saw nothing. I let the oar drop, and I fell on the bottom of the boat, for a cloud covered my eyes. "Save! save, O God!" cried I, in spirit; "here they are killing a man!" I felt that breath lacked me. Oh, how I loved her, and how unhappy I was! Lying on the bottom of the boat and tearing my clothing with rage, I felt all the helplessness of that rage. Yes; I was powerless, powerless as an athlete with bound hands, for what could I do? I might kill Selim; I might drive my boat against theirs and sink both in the water; but from Hania's heart I could not tear her love for Selim and take it for myself alone, – that was impossible.

Ah, that feeling of powerless rage, that conviction that there is no help, seemed almost worse at that moment than any other. I had always been ashamed to cry even before myself. If pain pressed tears from my eyes by force, pride kept them back with force not inferior. But now at last burst forth the helpless rage which was rending my breast; and in my loneliness, in presence of that boat with the loving pair reflected in the water, in presence of that calm sky and those reeds rustling plaintively above my

head, and in my sadness and misfortune, I burst into measureless sobbing, into one great wave of tears, and, lying on my back with hands clasped above my head, I almost bellowed with mighty, unspeakable sorrow.

Then I grew weak. A numbness came over me. My thinking power almost ceased to act; I felt cold at the points of my fingers and toes. I grew weaker and weaker. I used the remnant of my thought. It seemed that death and a great and icy calm were drawing near. It seemed that that gloomy queen of the grave was taking me into her possession, so I greeted her with a calm, glassy eye. "It is over," thought I, and a great weight, as it were, fell from my breast.

But it was not over. How long I lay thus on the bottom of the boat, I could not tell. Light, downy clouds were moving along the vault of heaven. Lapwings and storks, calling sadly, flew by in succession. The sun had risen high in the heavens and was burning with heat. The breeze had gone down; the motionless reeds had ceased to rustle. I woke, as if from sleep, and looked around. The boat with Hania and Selim was no longer before me. The silence, repose, and delight which reigned in all nature were in wonderful contrast to the torpor in which I had wakened a moment before. Round about all was calm and smiling. Dark sapphire water-grasshoppers were sitting on the edges of the boat and on the leaves of water-lilies which were as flat as shields; little gray birds were swinging on the reeds, twittering sweetly; here and there buzzed an industrious bee that had wandered in

over the water; sometimes from the sweet flag wild ducks were heard; teal escorted their young to the plain of water. Before my eyes, the kingdoms and commonwealths of birds drew aside the curtains concealing their daily life; but I looked at nothing. My torpor had not passed. The day was hot; I felt an unendurable headache. Bending over the boat, I seized water with my hands and drank it with parched lips. That brought back some strength to me. Taking the oar, I moved among reeds toward the landing-place. How late it was! and at home they must have inquired for me.

On the road I tried to calm myself. "If Selim and Hania have confessed that they love each other," thought I, "it may be better that all is passed. At least, the cursed days of uncertainty are over." Misfortune had raised its visor and stood before me with clear face. I knew it, and must struggle with it. Wonderful thing! this thought began to have for me a certain painful charm. But still I was uncertain, and resolved to examine Evunia adroitly, at least in as far as was possible.

I was at home for dinner. I greeted Selim coldly, and sat down at the table in silence. My father looked at me and asked, —

"What is the matter with thee, – art sick?"

"No; I am well, but weary. I rose at three in the morning."

"What for?"

"I went with Vah to hunt wolves. I shot one. Later on I lay down to sleep, and my head aches somewhat."

"But look in the glass, and see what a face thou hast."

Hania stopped eating for a while, and looked at me carefully.

"Perhaps yesterday's visit to Ustrytsi has acted on you, Pan Henryk," said she.

I looked her straight in the eyes and inquired almost sharply, —

"What dost thou mean by that?"

Hania was confused and began to explain something indistinctly. Selim came to her aid, —

"But that is very natural. Whoever is in love grows thin."

I looked now at Hania, now at Selim, and replied slowly, putting a sharp accent on each syllable, —

"I do not see that ye are growing thin, either thou or Hania."

A scarlet flush covered the faces of both. A moment of very awkward silence followed. I myself was uncertain whether I had not gone too far, but fortunately my father had not heard what was said. The priest took it as the usual chaffing of young people.

"Oh, that is a wasp with a sting!" cried he, taking snuff. "He has given it to you. See now, don't tackle him."

O Lord, how little that triumph comforted me, and how gladly I would have transferred it to Selim!

After dinner, in passing through the drawing-room, I looked in the glass. Really, I looked like Piotrovin. [3] It was blue under my eyes; my face was sunk. It seemed to me that I had grown wonderfully ugly, but that was all one to me then. I went to find Evunia. Both my little sisters had dined earlier than we, and were

[3] A man raised from the dead by Saint Stanislav.

in the garden, where a gymnasium for children had been fixed. Evunia was sitting carelessly on a wooden platform hung by four cords to the crossbeam of a swing. While sitting there, she was talking to herself, shaking the locks of her golden head from time to time and swinging her feet. When she saw me she laughed and stretched forth her little hands. I took her in my arms and went down the alley with her. Then I sat on a bench, and, putting Evunia before me, asked, —

"What has Evunia been doing to-day?"

"Evunia went to walk with her husband and Hania," answered the little girl, boastingly.

Evunia called Selim her husband.

"And was Evunia polite?"

"She was."

"Ah, that is well, for polite children always listen to what older people say, and remember that they have something to learn. But does Evunia remember what Selim said to Hania?"

"I have forgotten."

"Ei, maybe Evunia remembers a little?"

"I have forgotten."

"Thou art not polite! Let Evunia remember right off, or I shall not love Evunia."

The little girl began to rub one eye with her fist; and with the other, which was full of tears, she looked at me from under her brow, and frowning, as if to cry, her lips already quivering and in the form of a horseshoe, she said, —

"I have forgotten."

What could the poor little thing answer? Indeed, I seemed to myself idiotic, and immediately was ashamed of having spoken with deceitful tongue to that innocent little angel, – to ask one thing, wishing to learn another. Besides Evunia was the pet of the whole house, and my pet, so I did not wish to torment her any further. I kissed her, stroked her hair, and let her go. The little girl ran at once to the swing, and I walked off as wise as before, but still with the conviction in my heart that a confession had passed between Selim and Hania.

Toward evening Selim said to me, —

"I shall not see thee for a week; I am going on a journey."

"Where?" asked I, with indifference.

"My father commands me to visit his brother in Shumna. I must stay there about a week."

I looked at Hania. That information called out no impression on her face. Evidently Selim had told her of the visit already.

She smiled, raised her eyes from her work, looked at Selim somewhat cunningly, somewhat perversely, and asked, —

"But are you glad to go there?"

"As glad as a mastiff to go to a chain," answered he, quickly; but he restrained himself in time, and seeing that Pani d'Yves, who could not endure anything trivial, was making a wry face, he added, —

"I beg pardon for the expression. I love my uncle; but you see it is pleasanter here for me, near Pani d'Yves." And speaking

thus, he cast a sentimental glance at Pani d'Yves, which roused laughter in all, not excluding Pani d'Yves herself, who, though she was easily offended, had a special weakness for Selim. She took him gently by the ear and said with a kindly smile, —

"Young man, I might be thy mother."

Selim kissed her hand, and there was concord; but I thought to myself, what a difference between me and that Selim! If I had Hania's affection, I should merely dream and look toward the sky. What place should I have for jokes! but he laughs, jokes, is joyous as never before. Even when radiant with happiness, he was always joyful. Just before going he said to me, —

"Dost know what I will say? Come with me."

"I will not; I have not the least intention."

The cold tone of the answer struck Selim somewhat.

"Thou hast become strange," said he. "I do not know thee for some time – but – "

"Finish."

"But everything is forgiven those who are in love."

"Unless those who cross our path," answered I, with the voice of the stone Comandore.

Selim struck me with a glance as sharp as lightning, and went to the bottom of my soul.

"What dost thou say?"

"I say that I will not go, and, secondly, that one does not forgive everything!"

Had it not been that all were present at this conversation, Selim

certainly would have made the whole question clear at once. But I did not wish to make it clear till I had more positive proof. I saw, however, that my last words had disquieted Selim and alarmed Hania. He loitered yet awhile, putting off his departure under trifling pretexts, and then, choosing the moment, said to me in a low voice, —

"Take a horse and conduct me. I wish to speak to thee."

"Another time," answered I, aloud. "To-day I feel somewhat weak."

CHAPTER IX

SELIM went really to his uncle and stayed there, not a week, but ten days. For us those days passed in gloom. Hania seemed to avoid me and look on me with concealed fear. I had no intention indeed to speak with her sincerely about anything, for pride tied the words on my lips; and she, I know not why, so arranged affairs that we were never alone for an instant. At last she grew sad, looked wretched and thin. Noting this sadness, I trembled and thought, "Indeed, this is not the passing caprice of a girl; it is a genuine, deep feeling, unfortunately."

I was irritable, gloomy, and sad. In vain did my father, the priest, and Pani d'Yves inquire what the matter was. Was I sick? I answered in the negative; their solicitude simply annoyed me. I passed whole days alone, on horseback; sometimes I was in the woods, sometimes among the reeds in a boat. I lived like a savage. Once I spent a whole night in a forest, with a gun and a dog, before a fire which I had kindled purposely. Sometimes I spent half a day with our shepherd, who was a doctor, and grown wild through continual solitude; he was eternally collecting herbs and testing their properties. This man initiated me into a fantastic world of spells and superstitions.

But would any one believe it, there were moments when I grieved for Selim and my "circles of suffering" as I called them.

Once the idea came to me of visiting Mirza Davidovich in

Horeli. The old man was captivated by this, that I visited him for his own sake, and received me with open arms. But I had come with another intent. I wished to look at those eyes in the portrait of Sobieski's terrible colonel of light horse. And when I saw those evil eyes turning everywhere after a man, I remembered my own ancestors, whose counterfeits hung at home in the drawing-room; they were equally stern and iron-like.

My mind, under the influence of such impressions, came to a condition of wonderful exaltation. Loneliness, the silence of night, life with nature, – all these should have acted on me with soothing effect; but within me I carried, as it were, a poisoned arrow. At times I gave myself up to dreams, which made that condition still worse. More than once, while lying in some remote corner of a pine wood, or in a boat among reeds, I imagined that I was in Hania's apartment at her feet; that I was kissing her hands, her feet, her dress; that I was calling her by the most fondling names, and she, placing her hands on my heated forehead, was saying: "Thou hast suffered enough; let us forget everything! It was a bitter dream. I love thee, Henryk." But then came the awakening and the dull reality, – that future of mine, gloomy as a day of clouds, always without her, to the end of life without her; this future seemed to me all the more terrible. I grew misanthropic, avoided people, even my father, the priest, and Pani d'Yves. Kazio, with his talkativeness of a boy, his curiosity, his eternal laughter and endless tricks, disgusted me to the utmost.

And still those honest people tried to distract me, and suffered in secret over my condition, not knowing how to explain it. Hania, whether she divined something or not, – for she had strong reason to suppose that I was in love with Lola Ustrytski, – did what she could to console me. But I was so harsh even toward her that she could not free herself of a certain dread when talking to me. My father himself, usually severe and unsparing, strove to distract me, turn my attention to something, and meanwhile to test me. More than once, he began conversations which, as he judged, should be of interest. One day after dinner we went out in front of the mansion.

"Does not a certain thing strike thee at times?" asked he, looking at me inquiringly; "I wanted to ask thee about it this good while, – does it not strike thee that Selim is circling a little too much about Hania?"

Judging the case simply, I should have grown confused and let myself be caught, as they say, in the very act. But I was in such a state of mind that I did not betray by one quiver the impression which my father's words made on me, and replied calmly, —

"No; I know that he is not."

It wounded me that my father took part in those questions. I considered that, since the affair touched me alone, I alone should decide it.

"Wilt thou guarantee that?" asked my father.

"I will. Selim is in love with a schoolgirl in Warsaw."

"I say this, for thou art Hania's guardian, and 'tis thy duty to

watch over her."

I knew that my honest father said this to rouse my ambition, occupy me with something, and snatch my thoughts from that gloomy circle in which I seemed to be turning; but I answered, as if in perverseness, indifferently and gloomily, —

"What sort of guardian am I? Thou wert not here, so old Mikolai left her to me, but I am not the real guardian."

My father frowned; seeing, however, that in this way he could not bring me to terms, he chose another. He smiled under his gray mustache, half closed one eye, in the fashion of a soldier, took me gently by the ear, and asked, as if joking, —

"But has Hania, perhaps, turned thine own head? Speak, my boy."

"Hania? Not in the least. That would amuse thee."

I lied as if possessed; but it passed off more smoothly than I had expected.

"Then has not Lola Ustrytski? Hei?"

"Lola Ustrytski, a coquette!"

My father became impatient.

"Then what the devil is it? If thou art not in love, go as a soldier to the first muster."

"Do I know what the matter is? Nothing is the matter with me."

But I was tormented and made more impatient by questions which in their anxiety neither my father nor the priest spared, nor even Pani d'Yves. At last relations with them became

disagreeable. I was carried away by everything and enraged at every trifle. Father Ludvik saw in this certain traits of a despotic character coming to the surface with age, and looking at my father significantly he laughed and said, —

"Topknot chickens by blood!"

But even he lost patience sometimes. Between my father and me there were frequently very disagreeable passages. Once at dinner during a dispute about nobility and democracy I so forgot myself as to declare that I should prefer a hundred times not to be born a noble. My father ordered me to leave the room. The women fell to crying because of this, and the whole house was embittered for two days.

As to me, I was neither an aristocrat nor a democrat; I was simply in love and unhappy. There was no place in me whatever for principles, theories, or social convictions; and if I fought in the name of some against others, I did so only through vexation, to annoy it is unknown whom or why, just as I began religious disputes with Father Ludvik to annoy him. These disputes ended with slamming of doors. In short, I poisoned not the existence of myself only, but that of the whole house; and when after ten days Selim returned, a stone, as it were, fell from every one's breast. When he came I was not at home, for I was racing about through the neighborhood on horseback. I returned only toward evening and went straight to the farm buildings, where a stable-boy said, while taking my horse, —

"The Panich has come from Horeli."

At that moment Kazio came up and repeated the same news.

"I know that already," answered I, harshly. "Where is Selim now?"

"In the garden with Hania, I think. I will go and look for him."

We both went to the garden, but Kazio ran ahead. I, not hurrying purposely with the greeting, had not gone fifty steps when, at the bend of the alley, I saw Kazio hastening back.

Kazio, who was a great rogue and a joker, began from afar to make gestures and grimaces like a monkey. His face was red; he held his finger to his mouth and laughed, stifling laughter at the same time. When he came up to me he called in a low voice, —

"Henryk! He! he! he! Tsss!"

"What art thou doing?" asked I, in ill-humor.

"Tss! as I love mamma! he! he! Selim is kneeling before Hania in the hop arbor. As I love mamma!"

I caught him immediately by the arms and drove my fingers into them.

"Be silent! Stay here! Not a word to anybody, dost understand? Stay here! I will go myself; but be silent, not a word before any one, if thy life is dear to thee."

Kazio, who from the beginning had considered the whole affair on the humorous side, seeing the corpse-like pallor that covered my face, was evidently frightened, and stood on the spot with open mouth; but I ran on, as if mad, toward the arbor.

Crawling forward quickly and silently as a serpent, between the barberry bushes which surrounded the arbor, I worked myself

up to the very wall; the wall was made of small short bits of sticks, so I could hear and see everything. The repulsive rôle of a listener did not seem repulsive at all to me. I pushed aside the leaves very delicately and thrust forward my ear.

"There is some one near by!" said the low, suppressed whisper of Hania.

"No; only leaves moving on the branches," answered Selim.

I looked at them through the green veil of the leaves. Selim was not kneeling near Hania now; he was sitting at her side on a low bench. She was as pale as linen; her eyes were closed, her head inclined and resting on his shoulder. He had encircled her waist with his arm, and drawn her toward him with love and delight.

"I love, Hania! I love! I love!" repeated he, whispering passionately; and inclining his head he sought her lips with his. She drew back, as if warding off the kiss, but still their lips met and remained joined in that manner long, long; it seemed to me whole ages.

And then I thought that all which they had wished to say to each other they said in that kiss. Some sort of shame stopped their words. They had daring enough for kisses, but not enough for speech. A deathlike silence reigned, and amid that silence there came to me merely their quick and passionate breathing.

I seized the wooden grating of the arbor with my hands, and feared lest I might crush it into bits with that convulsive pressure. It grew dark in my eyes; I felt a turning of the head; the earth flew

somewhere from under me into a bottomless pit. But even at the price of my life I wished to hear what they were saying; hence I mastered myself again, and catching the air with parched lips, with forehead pressed to the grating, I listened, counting every breath which they drew.

Silence continued some time yet. At last Hania began in a whisper, —

"Enough, enough! I dare not look you in the eyes. Let us leave this."

And turning her head aside, she tried to tear herself out of his arms.

"Oh, Hania! what is taking place in me? I am so happy!" cried Selim.

"Let us go from here. Some one will come."

Selim sprang up with gleaming eyes and distended nostrils.

"Let the whole world come," said he. "I love, and I will say so in the eyes of all people. I know not how this happened. I struggled with myself; I suffered, for it seemed to me that Henryk loved thee, and thou him. But now I care for nothing. Thou lovest me, and so it is a question of thy happiness. Oh, Hania! Hania!"

And here again was the sound of a kiss; and then Hania began to speak in a soft and, as it were, weakened voice, —

"I believe, I believe, Selim; but I have many things to tell thee. They want to send me abroad to the old lady, I think. Yesterday Pani d'Yves spoke of this to Henryk's father. Pani d'Yves thinks that I am the cause of Pan Henryk's strange conduct. She thinks

that he is in love with me. I myself do not know but that is the case. There are times when it seems to me that he is. I do not understand him. I fear him. I feel that he will hinder us, that he will separate us; but I – "

And she finished in a barely audible voice, —

"I love, much, much."

"Listen, Hania. No earthly power shall separate us. Should Henryk forbid me to come here, I shall write to thee. I have some one who will always bring a letter. I shall come myself too. By the side of the pond after dark. Go always to the garden. But thou wilt not go abroad. If they wish to send thee, I will not permit it, as God is in heaven. Do not say such things, Hania, or I shall go mad. Oh, my beloved, my beloved!"

Seizing her hands, he pressed them passionately to his lips. She sprang up quickly from the bench.

"I hear voices: they are coming," cried she, with fear.

Both went out, though no one was coming and no one came. The evening rays of the sun cast gleams of gold on them, but to me those gleams seemed as red as blood. I too dragged on slowly toward the house. Just at the turning of the alley I met Kazio, who was on the watch.

"They have gone. I saw them," whispered he. "Tell me what I am to do?"

"Shoot him in the head!" cried I, with an outburst.

Kazio flushed like a rose, and his eyes gave out phosphoric light.

"Very good!" said he.

"Stop! Don't be a fool! Do nothing. Meddle in nothing, and on thy honor, Kazio, be silent. Leave everything to me. When thou art needed, I will tell thee; but not a word before any one."

"I'll not even squeak though they kill me."

We went on awhile in silence. Kazio, penetrated with the importance of the question and sniffing some kind of terrible event, toward which his heart was rushing, looked at me with sparkling eyes; then he said, —

"Henryk?"

"What?"

We both whispered, though no one was listening.

"Wilt thou fight with Selim?"

"I know not. Perhaps."

Kazio stopped and suddenly threw his arms around my neck.

"Henryk! my golden brother! My heart! My only one! if thou wish to fight, let me do it. I will manage him. Let me try. Let me, Henryk; let me!"

Kazio was simply dreaming of deeds of knighthood, but I felt the brother in him as never before; therefore I gathered him to my breast with all my strength and said, —

"No, Kazio! I know nothing yet, and, besides, he would not accept thee. I know nothing yet of what will happen. Meanwhile give directions to saddle the horse in good season. I will go in advance, meet him on the road, and speak to him. Meanwhile watch both; but don't let them suspect that thou

knowest anything. Have the horse saddled."

"Wilt thou take arms?"

"Phe! Kazio; he has none. No; I only wish to speak with him. Be calm, and go at once to the stable."

Kazio sprang away that moment according to my request. I returned slowly to the house. I was like a man struck on the head with the back of an axe. I have the right to say that I knew not what to do; I knew not how to act. I simply wished to shout.

Until I was perfectly certain that I had lost Hania's heart, I was anxious to be certain. I judged that in every case a stone would then fall from my heart: now misfortune had raised its visor. I was looking at its cold, icy face and stony eyes; but a new uncertainty was born in my heart, – not uncertainty as to my misfortune, but one a hundred times worse, the feeling of my own helplessness, the uncertainty as to how I was to struggle with that feeling.

My heart was filled with gall, bitterness, and rage. Voices of self-denial, voices of devotion, which at other times often spoke in my soul, saying, "Renounce Hania for the sake of her happiness; it is thy duty to think of that first of all; sacrifice thyself!" Those voices were perfectly dumb now. The angel of silent sadness, the angel of devotion and tears, had flown far away from me. I felt like a worm which had been trampled, but of which people had forgotten that it possessed a sting. I had let myself so far be hunted by misfortune as a wolf by a dog; but, too much despised and pressed upon, I had begun like a wolf to show my teeth. A new active power named revenge rose

in my heart. I began to feel a species of hatred for Selim and Hania. "I will lose life," thought I; "I will lose everything that may be lost in this world; but I will not permit those two to be happy." Penetrated by this thought, I grasped it as a sentenced man grasps a crucifix. I had found a reason for life; the horizon became bright before me. I drew in a full breath, broadly and freely, as never before. My thoughts, which had been scattered and stormed away, arranged themselves in order and were turned with all force in one direction ominous for Selim and Hania. When I reached the house, I was almost calm, and cool. In the hall were sitting Pani d'Yves, Father Ludvik, Hania, Selim, and Kazio, who had just returned from the stable and did not move one step from the two.

"Is there a horse for me?" asked I of Kazio.

"Yes."

"Wilt thou go a part of the way with me?" put in Selim.

"Yes; I can. I will go to the stacks to see if any damage is done. Kazio, let me have thy place."

Kazio yielded the place, and I sat down near Selim and Hania, on a sofa under the window. Involuntarily I remembered how we had sat there immediately after Mikolai's death, when Selim told the Crimean tale about Sultan Harun and the soothsaying Lala. But at that time Hania, still small and with eyes red from weeping, had rested her golden head on my breast and fallen asleep; now that same Hania, taking advantage of the darkness descending into the room, was pressing Selim's hand secretly.

In that time the sweet feeling of friendship had joined us all three; now love and hatred were soon to enter into combat. But all was calm apparently: the lovers were smiling at each other; I was more gladsome than usual. No one suspected what kind of gladsomeness that was.

Soon Pani d'Yves begged Selim to play something. He rose, sat at the piano, and began to play Chopin's mazurka. I remained alone for a time on the sofa with Hania. I noticed that she was gazing at Selim as at a rainbow, that she was flying away into the region of fancies on the wings of music, and I determined to bring her back to the earth.

"How many gifts that Selim has, has he not, Hania? He plays and sings."

"Oh, it is true!" said she.

"And, besides, what a beautiful face! Just look at him now."

Hania followed the direction of my eyes. Selim was sitting in the shade; but his head was illuminated by the last light of the evening, and in those gleams he seemed inspired, with his uplifted eyes, – and he was at that moment inspired.

"How beautiful he is, Hania, is he not?" repeated I.

"Are you very fond of him?"

"He cares nothing for my feelings, but women love him. Ah, how that Yozia loved him!"

Alarm was depicted on Hania's smooth forehead.

"And he?" inquired she.

"Ei! he loves one to-day, another to-morrow. He can never

love any one long. Such is his nature. If he should ever say that he loves thee do not believe him" (here I began to speak with emphasis); "for him it will be a question of thy kiss, not thy heart, dost understand?"

"Pan Henryk!"

"True! but what do I say? This does not concern thee. And, moreover, thou art so modest, wouldst thou give thy kiss to a stranger, Hania? I beg pardon, for it seems to me that I have offended thee even with the supposition. Thou wouldst never permit that, wouldst thou, Hania, never?"

Hania sprang up to go away, but I seized her by the hand and detained her by force. I tried to be calm, but rage was throttling me, as if with pincers. I felt that I was losing self-control.

"Answer," said I, with repressed excitement, "or I shall not let thee go."

"Pan Henryk! what do you want? What do you say?"

"I say – I say," whispered I, with set teeth, "that thou hast no shame in thy eyes. Hei?"

Hania sat down again on the sofa, helpless. I looked at her; she was pale as linen. But pity for the poor girl had fled from me. I grasped her hand, and squeezing its small fingers, continued, —

"Hear me! I was at thy feet. I loved thee more than the whole world – "

"Pan Henryk!"

"Be silent. I saw and heard everything. Thou art shameless, – thou and he."

"My God! my God!"

"Thou art shameless. I would not have dared to kiss the hem of thy garment, and he kissed thee on the lips. Thou thyself didst draw him to thy kisses. Hania, I despise thee! I hate thee! I hate thee!"

The voice died in my breast. I began to breathe quickly and catch for air, which was lacking in my breast.

"Thou hast felt," said I, after a while, "that I will separate you. If I had to lose my life, I will separate you, even if I had to kill him, thee, and myself. What I said a moment ago is not true. He loves thee, he would not leave thee; but I will separate you."

"Of what are you talking with so much earnestness?" asked Pani d'Yves, who was sitting at the other end of the room.

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