

**ГЕНРИК
СЕНКЕВИЧ**

WHIRLPOOLS

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Whirlpools

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Whirlpools: A Novel of Modern Poland:

Содержание

PART FIRST	4
I	4
II	16
III	29
IV	35
V	41
VI	52
VII	59
VIII	75
IX	108
Конец ознакомительного фрагмента.	115

Henryk Sienkiewicz

Whirlpools: A Novel of Modern Poland

PART FIRST

I

Gronski arrived at the Jastrzeb manor-house about midnight. In the house all were asleep excepting an old servant and the young heir, Ladislaus Krzycki, who awaited his guest with supper and greeted him with great cordiality, for notwithstanding the disparity in their ages they were bound by ties of an old intimacy. It continued from those days when Gronski, as a university student, surrounded with a tutelary friendship the youthful Krzycki, who was attending the gymnasium. Later they met frequently and the closer friendly relations between Gronski and the Krzycki family did not undergo any interruption.

Therefore when, after the first greetings, they repaired to the dining-room the young heir of Jastrzeb again began to embrace Gronski. After a while, having seated him at the table, he shook from his eyes the remnants of drowsiness which had

oppressed him, became thoroughly animated, and said with sincere happiness:

"How immensely fortunate I am that at last we have you at Jastrzeb; and Mother, how she has been expecting you! I, whenever I am in Warsaw, always begin with you, but a year has passed since your last visit here."

Gronski inquired about Pani Krzycki's health and that of the younger members of the household, after which he said:

"It is, indeed, strange that I have not been out in the country, not only with you but elsewhere. In summer time they dispatch me every year to Carlsbad, and after Carlsbad one strays somewhere in the west. Besides, in Warsaw matters are now seething as in a caldron, and it is difficult to tear one's self from all this."

The conversation, which started with a lengthy discussion of public affairs, was afterwards turned by Ladislaus towards private matters:

"Did you," he said, "besides the notification of the death of Uncle Zarnowski, receive a letter from Mother? I ask for this reason: I mailed first the notification, and later in the day Mother decided to write the letter."

"I received both and for that reason I am here. I tell you candidly I would not come merely to attend your uncle's funeral. It is true that a year ago, when he was in Warsaw for medical treatment, we dined together for several months at the same club, but that was all; though people were astonished that such a

misanthrope, who avoided everybody, did not somehow run away from me. How were your relations? Were they cool to the end?"

"Rather, there were none. He would not receive anybody and did not wish to see any one, not even his parish-priest. Extreme unction was administered by the Canon of Olchowa. When he became seriously ill, we visited him in Rzeslewo, but he received us with blunt discourtesy. Mother did not mind it and repeated her visits, though at times he was disagreeable towards her. As for myself, I confess that I did not call there again until he was in a very critical state."

"Did he leave a large estate?"

"Rzeslewo is a huge patch of that kind of soil in which you can anywhere plant at least onions. There is not one copper coin of indebtedness. At one time Uncle had a house in Warsaw, to which he removed the entire equipment from Rzeslewo, which was not, by any means, despicable. We thought that he would reside permanently in the city, but he later sold everything; from which I infer he must have left funds. Some, as is customary with people who are fond of exaggeration, say hundreds of thousands. The Lord only knows. But this much is certain: he inherited a great deal from his brothers. I do not know whether you have ever heard that there were three of them. One perished, while yet a student, in a duel at Dorpat; the other died, also young, from typhoid fever, and Uncle Adam got everything they left."

"It is said that he lived very poorly."

"He stayed a great deal in Warsaw and abroad for his health.

How he lived there I do not know, but, after his return to Rzeslewo, very wretchedly. I think, however, that this was more due to whimsicality than to greed, for he was not greedy. You would not believe how that manor appeared; how everything was denuded and abandoned. In every room the roof was leaky, and if some unexpected guests or unknown relatives arrive for the funeral, I will have to invite them to Jastrzeb, for there I would not know where to house them."

"Do you know of any other relatives?"

"Yes, there are Pani Otocka and her sister; also Dolhanski, who undoubtedly will come, and ourselves. I have not heard of others, though in all probability they will be found, as in Poland everybody is related. Mother insists that we are the nearest, but, to tell the truth, we are not very close; as the deceased was a distant cousin of Mother's."

"And Pani Otocka and Panna Marynia?"

"Better ask Mother about that; yesterday for an hour she was expounding to me as to who was born to whom; what he was to whom; whom did who's sister marry, and what was who's relation to the deceased. I could not grasp it all. Those ladies will be here to-morrow at one o'clock, and with them an English lady, their friend."

"I know; they told me about that in Warsaw, not knowing that they would chance upon the funeral. But that English lady speaks Polish almost as well as we do."

"What? How is that?"

"Her father owned a factory in which he employed many Polish workmen. The young lady, while a child, had a Polish nurse, and later some emigrant taught her Polish."

"And that she should care for it!"

"Among the English people you will find many odd characters, and this Mr. Anney was an odd character in this respect, that he could, like Lord Dudley, select for his heraldic device: '*Causas non fata sequor*,' because, like him, he also loved Poland, Polish history, and the Poles. The workmen were sometimes turbulent and caused him much annoyance, but this did not dishearten him. He established schools for them, procured priests, took charge of the orphans, etc."

"That was a righteous man. But Miss Anney, is she pretty? – young?"

"About Pani Otocka's age—a year younger or older—and they are very fond of each other. How long is it since you have seen Pani Otocka and Marynia?"

"It is six years. Pani Otocka was not yet married and Panna Marynia Zbyltowska was a girl, perhaps ten years old, in short dresses. I well remember her because even then she played the violin and was regarded as a child-wonder. My mother drew nearer to them last summer in Krynica and has become extraordinarily captivated with them. She insisted that this winter I should renew their acquaintance, but they left Warsaw for the winter. Even then she commanded me to invite them in my own name to Jastrzeb, and a few days before the death of Uncle, she

wrote to them to come for a lengthy visit. Day before yesterday we received a dispatch that they will come. You are on intimate terms with them?"

"Yes, on intimate and very sincere terms," answered Gronski.

"Because I wanted to speak with you a little about them, but the hour is late and you are after a journey. Perhaps it would be better to defer it until to-morrow."

"I slept on the train and it is not far from the station to your place. Besides, I have the bad habit of not retiring to sleep before two o'clock."

Ladislaus' countenance bore slight traces of perplexity. He poured out for himself a glass of wine, drank it, and then said:

"The matter is somewhat delicate. I am certain that Mother has concocted some scheme. Perhaps she may have written to you about this and, if not, she will speak about it, because she is much concerned about your opinion, and in a certain contingency will ask your assistance. Several times she incidentally spoke about your influence with Pani Otocka. I believe that you have influence with everybody, not excluding my mother. For that reason I would like to ask a favor of you."

Gronski glanced at the young nobleman and afterwards at the servant, as if he wanted to say: "Why is this witness here?" Ladislaus understood and said:

"He is very deaf, so we can speak quite freely. He wheezes because he has the asthma."

Afterwards he continued:

"Mother for the past two years has been bent upon my getting married, so she bustles about, writes voluminous letters, and sends me every winter to Warsaw, and I am certain that last summer she was in Krynica not so much for her own health, which, God be praised, she preserves so well, but to look over the young ladies and make a selection. And there these cousins of mine have so bewitched her that she returned, as I surmise, with a prepared project."

"I must give you warning," interrupted Gronski, "that so far as Panna Marynia is concerned you are building an edifice upon ice, as in the first place she is but sixteen; and again she will, at the end of autumn, return to the conservatory in Brussels; and thirdly her whole soul is wrapped up in her violin and in all probability will always remain there."

"May it stay there. You say 'you are building,' but I not only am not building, but would prefer that Mother would not build, as it will be unpleasant for her. After all, my dear mother is the most upright soul in the world, and beyond doubt all she desires is that I should have a good and estimable woman for a wife; but I would prefer that my future spouse should not resemble too much a Grecian statue."

"Well then?"

"Well then, Panna Marynia is not involved but only an ideal and, at the same time, a warm young widow: to which arrangement I cannot by any means assent."

"I will answer with a Lithuanian anecdote, according to which

an old woman, to a peasant's assertion that he did not fear the master, replied, 'Because thou hast never seen him.' Likewise, you have never seen Pani Otocka, or have forgotten how she looks."

But Ladislaus repeated:

"Not for the world, even if she looked like a sacred painting."

"Then perhaps you love another?"

"Why, you yourself tormented me last winter about Panna Rose Stabrowska, and I admit that she has made an impression upon my heart. But I did not permit myself to fall in love with her, because I know her parents would not give her to me. I am not and will not be rich enough for them. For that reason I escaped from Warsaw before the close of the carnival. I did not wish to envenom with vain feeling my life or hers, if she should love me."

"But in case of a will in your favor? Would you not rush into the smoke like a Uhlan of old? Is it not true?"

"Most assuredly; but as I cannot depend upon that, and as that will not happen, there is no necessity of talking further about it."

"You spoke, however, of asking a favor of me. In what can I serve you?"

"I wanted to beg you not to fortify my mother in her designs as to Pani Otocka."

"How queer you are! Why, when your mother perceives your disinclination towards her, she will banish the thought."

"Yes, but there will remain a little regret for herself and for me. A person is always disappointed when his plans miscarry,

and Mother is so eternally worried, though often without reason, because, after all, no ruin is threatening us. But she has so much confidence in your judgment that if you will explain to her that it is better to abandon those thoughts, she will abandon them. However, you will have to contrive it so that it will appear to her that she herself came to that conclusion. I know you can do it, and I rely upon your friendship."

"My dear Laudie," said Gronski, "in these affairs I have less experience, and therefore less judgment, than the first female neighbor on the border of your estate. In your mother's letter there appears, word for word, the same expression: 'I rely upon your friendship.' In view of this, there remains only one thing to do, and that is not to meddle in the affair at all, – especially as I will candidly state to you that I entertain for Pani Otocka no less friendship than I do for you. Considering the matter from another light, it is peculiar that we should speak of Pani Otocka without considering her. It is allowable for your mother to believe that every woman, if you would but stretch out your hand towards her, would grab it with alacrity; but not for you. For you renounce things in such a way as if everything depended upon you, and I assure you that it is not so, and that if Pani Otocka should ever decide to marry, she will be exceedingly particular in her choice."

"You are perfectly right," answered Krzycki, "but I am not, of course, so foolish or so vain as to imagine that the whole thing depends upon me. If I have expressed myself in an unsuitable manner, it is because I thought only of Mother and myself and

not at all of Pani Otocka. All that I care about is that Mother should not urge me to seek her hand, as I conjecture I might, after all, get the mitten."

Gronski scanned the shapely figure of the youth and answered with a certain benevolent petulance:

"That is well, although I do not know whether you are talking sincerely; for men like you, the deuce knows why, have great luck with women and they know it perfectly well. What have you against Pani Otocka? Why, you hardly know her. Let me tell you that both of those ladies are of such high quality as you rarely find."

"I believe it, I believe it; but, in the first place, Pani Otocka is fully three years younger than myself, which means that she is twenty-four, and yet she is a widow."

"Then you have a prejudice against widows?"

"I confess that I have. Let matrimony give me everything that it can possibly give, but a marriage with a widow will not give me all that. A widow! – To think that every word which the maiden blushing and with palpitating heart whispers, the widow has already told to some one else: and that which in a maid is, as it were, a sacrifice to love, in a widow is but a repetition. No, I thank you, for a flower which somebody else has previously plucked. Good fortune is not inherited with a heritage, nor procured at second hand. Let not only matrimony, but also love, give me all they can give, and, if not, then I prefer remaining an old bachelor."

"My dear," answered Gronski, "between the heart and a bag of money there is, however, a vast difference. Money, after you once part with it, you have no more, but the heart is a living organism which regenerates and creates new forces."

"That may be, – in every case, however, the memory of the past remains. Finally, I am not enunciating any general theories, but merely my personal views. Plainly, I could not love a widow and I do want to love my wife, even though slightly. Otherwise what enjoyment would I have in life? A rural estate? Good! I am an agriculturist and I agree to plough and sow until death. But whoever imagines that this will give peace and happiness, simply has no conception of the load of care, bitterness, affliction, deception, self reproach, and strife with the bad will of mankind and nature which one must endure. There are, it is true, brighter moments, but far oftener one must defend himself against downright loathsomeness. Now I want at least this: that I shall return willingly home from the field or barn; that in the home there shall await me fresh, rosy, and tempting cheeks which I crave to kiss, and eyes into which I would long to gaze. I want to have some one on whom I can bestow all that is best in me. I speak of this, not as one who is infatuated with the romantic, but as a sober man who can keep accounts of expenditures and receipts, not only in husbandry but also in life."

Gronski thought that in reality every matured masculine life should bear two faces; one with wrinkled brow, expressive of intense mental strain, turned towards the problems of humanity,

and the other calm and peaceable at the fireside in the home.

"Yes," he said, "I would be delighted with such a home as a refuge from care and in it 'fresh, rosy and tempting cheeks' as an attraction."

Ladislaus, in his laughter, displayed his sound, shining teeth and answered joyously:

"Ah, how it does delight me! the soul almost squeaks."

And they both began to laugh.

"But," said Gronski, "one must be lucky enough to find that and courageous enough to win."

To Krzycki there suddenly came the recollection of a certain ball in Warsaw; of Panna Rose Stabrowska, her pensive eyes, and her white, half-childlike shoulders protruding from the net-lace like watery foam. He therefore sighed quietly.

"Sometimes," he said, "courage also is necessary to bridle one's self."

In the chamber for an interval could be heard only the measured tick-tack of the cumbrous clock and the wheezing of the asthmatic servant, who dozed, leaning against the sideboard.

The hour was late, Gronski rose and, having roused himself from a momentary revery, said, as if speaking to himself:

"And those ladies will be here to-morrow."

Afterwards he added with a touch of sadness:

"Ah, at your age it is not permissible to bridle one's self."

II

The ladies did actually arrive at Jastrzeb the next day about noon, followed immediately afterwards by Dolhanski, who did not, however, see them on the road, because at the station he became occupied entirely with the receipt of the baggage and therefore arrived in a separate conveyance. The guests did not find Krzycki at home. As the burden of the funeral, and all cares connected with it, fell upon him, he left an hour earlier for Rzeslewo. The obsequies were to take place at three o'clock. Ladislaus' mother arrived at the Rzeslewo church with Pani Otocka, Panna Marynia, and their friend Miss Anney. In the second carriage Gronski and Dolhanski came, while the third and last one brought the younger members of the Krzycki family, – eleven-year-old Anusia and Stas, who was a year younger, together with their French instructress and the tutor, Laskowicz. Pani Krzycki reminded her son of his feminine relatives and introduced him to Miss Anney, but he barely had time to bow and cast a glance at her when he was summoned away on some matter relating to the final funeral arrangements. Alighting from the carriage, the ladies could scarcely press their way into the church, although an effort was made to clear a path for them, for in the church and adjacent enclosure an unusual throng held sway. The greater landed gentry were represented in extremely scant numbers, as the deceased Zarnowski did not associate with any

one, and besides Jastrzeb, Gorek, and Wiatrak, did not visit any of the manors in the neighborhood. In their place, the Rzeslewo peasantry appeared as one man, with their wives and children. The reason for this was that from some unknown source and for some inexplicable reason, a rumor circulated among them that the deceased had bequeathed to them his entire fortune. Quite a number stood outside the church fence, and their loud voices and anxious faces indicated the impression which the rumor of the bequest had made upon them.

After chanted vigils and a sufficiently long mass, white surpliced priests, preceded by a cross, appeared at the church doorway. After them the coffin was borne. The hearse stood ready to receive the remains, but peasants, in implicit faith of the bequest, lifted it upon their shoulders to carry to the cemetery, which was a verst distant and in which was located the tomb of the Zarnowskis. Gronski gave his arm to Pani Krzycki, Dolhanski to Pani Otocka, while the duty of escorting the light-haired Miss Anney fell to Krzycki. After an interval, the funeral cortege slowly proceeded in the direction of the cemetery.

From under the shade of church lindens it soon advanced upon the field-road, flooded with sunshine, and extended itself in a long line. At the head went the priests; after them the coffin, swung high up on the shoulders of the peasants; the relatives and guests followed, and after them came swarms of gay peasant national dresses and feminine handkerchiefs gaudily spotted with yellow and red colors, which glaringly contrasted

with the green, sprouting spring corn. Church flags, with skulls and pictures of saints, floated heavily in the golden air and at times heaved with a flap when assailed by the wind. In this manner, glistening in the sun, the crowd approached the poplars which shaded the cemetery. From time to time the chant of priests resounded, breaking out suddenly and with great sadness. Nearer the cemetery the peasants commenced the litany and gusts of wind seized these Polish and Latin songs and carried them with the odor of candles, which were continually blown out, and the scent of the drippings of the torches to the forests.

Krzycki, who escorted Miss Anney, observed that her hand, which rested upon his arm, trembled considerably. It occurred to him that she probably had tired it, holding her parasol on the road from Jastrzeb to Rzeslewo, and he paid no more attention to it. In the conviction that such a solemnity as a funeral exempted him from starting the usual social conversation, he walked in silence. He was fatigued and hungry. Disordered thoughts rushed into his head. He thought of his uncle, Zarnowski, of his inability to mourn for him, of the funeral, of his newly-arrived cousins, and of yesterday's conversation with Gronski. At times he would gaze, abstractedly, at the near by fields and half-consciously would note that the winter-corn on the fertile Rzeslewo soil, as well as the spring grain, gave promise of a bountiful harvest. After a certain time he recollected that it would be proper for him to devote a little more attention to his companion.

Somehow, after a few stealthy glances, his curiosity, which

thus far had been deadened by fatigue, hunger, and ill-humor, was awakened. The proximity of a woman, young and, as he observed, stately, began to affect him. It seemed strange to him in the first place that he was conducting over the Rzeslewo highway an Englishwoman, who came, the Lord knew from where; that a short while before he was unacquainted with her and at present felt the warmth of her arm and hand. He observed also that her hand, tightly incased in a glove, though shapely, was not at all small; and he thought that the reasons for this were the English sports-tennis, rowing, archery, and the like. "Our Polish women," he thought, "look differently." Under the influence of these reflections upon English sports, it seemed to him that from this quaintly attired form some peculiar power, healthiness, and energy emanated. His companion began to interest him more and more. Leading her on his arm, he could see only her profile, upon which he bestowed increased attention. As a consequence of more exact observation, his curiosity intensified. In the first moments he conceded only that she was a comely and buxom person, but later he soliloquized in this fashion: "How vastly more stately and, sincerely speaking, more beautiful she is than Pani Otocka or that child, whose dresses reach to her ankles and whose soul, as Gronski says, is in the violin!" But this, however, was not the strict truth, for Pani Otocka, a slender brunette with the expression of a blonde, was of a type more exquisite and racial, and the "child" had a countenance simply angelic. But at that particular moment, if a secret ballot had been taken upon

this question, Krzycki, owing perhaps to his opposition to his mother's designs, would have cast his vote for Miss Anney.

After a certain time, it seemed to him that Miss Anney also was casting stealthy glances at him. He determined to catch her in the act and looked at her more openly. And then he saw something which astonished him in the highest degree. On the cheeks of the young Englishwoman tear after tear coursed. Her lips were compressed as if she desired to stifle her impressions and her hand, supported on his arm, did not cease to tremble.

"Either this is affected sensibility," Krzycki thought, "or else her English nerves are jangled. Why the deuce should she weep over a man whom she never saw in her life? Unless it reminded her of her father's burial or that of some near relative?"

Miss Anney did not look at all like a person with jangled nerves. Somehow, after a time, her emotion passed. She began to gaze with particular interest and attention upon the throng of people, the neighborhood, the fields, and the distant fringe of the forest as if she desired to retain them all permanently in her memory.

"She should have taken a kodak with her," thought Ladislaus.

They were already not far from the cemetery gates. But in the meanwhile a wind stronger than the former gusts broke loose. It swept suddenly across the field of sprouting grain, raised a cloud of dust on the highway, snuffed out the mendicant candles which were not extinguished before, and entwined Krzycki's neck with Miss Anney's long boa.

She relinquished his arm and, freeing him from his ties, said in Polish with an almost imperceptible foreign accent:

"I beg your pardon. The wind-"

"That is nothing," answered Ladislaus. "Perhaps you would prefer to take a carriage, for the squalls are breaking out more frequently."

"No, thank you," she replied; "I believe we are near the cemetery. I will walk alone, because I must hold my boa and dress."

During this conversation they stood opposite each other for a moment and, although that moment was brief, Ladislaus made a new discovery. Not only did he confirm his previous opinion that Miss Anney was, in reality, very beautiful and had an extraordinarily transparent complexion, set off with light hair, but above all else that her blue eyes did not radiate with two separate beams, but rather with a single, gentle, blue, slightly misty, soulful light. He was unable to explain to himself in what lay the distinct and peculiar charm of that look, but he felt it perfectly.

In the meantime, they reached the cemetery. A short prayer detained all at the gates, after which the funeral cortege moved between the poplars, swung by the winds, and crosses overgrown by luxuriant grass on the mounds, under which slept the Rzeslewo peasantry. The Zarnowski tomb stood in the centre. In its front walls could be seen an opening, knocked out for the reception of a new member of the family. At the side there were two

masons, with whitened aprons, having at their feet prepared cement and a pile of new bricks. The coffin was placed upon the sand near the opening and the priests began a long chant over it. Their voices rose and then fell, like waves, in a rolling and dreamy rhythm, which was accompanied by the roar of the poplars, the flapping of the flags in the air, and the hum of prayers uttered, as if mechanically, by the peasants. Then the parish-priest of Rzeslewo began a discourse. As he did not live on good terms with the deceased, he commended his soul to the divine mercy rather than praised him. About could be seen the faces of the Zarnowski relatives, grave and appropriately grouped for the occasion, but no grief, not a tear. They were rather indifferent, with an expression of expectancy, and even tedium. The coffin appeared to be only awaiting the close of the rites, as if it was anxious to enter that vault and darkness, for which it was appropriately designed. In the meantime, after the sermon, songs began to ring. At moments they subsided, and then could be heard only the revelry of wind among the poplars. At last a high voice, as if startled, intoned "requiem aeternam" and fell suddenly like a pillar of dust twirled by the storm; and after a momentary silence "eternal repose," full of solace, resounded and the ceremony was over.

On the coffin they threw a few handfuls of sand, and then pushed it into the opening which the masons began to wall up, laying brick upon brick and coating them with mortar. The barrier, which was to forever separate Zarnowski from the world

and light, grew with each moment. Groups of peasants slowly left the cemetery. Two female neighbors from Gorek, a Pani Wlocek, an old and pathetic dame, and her daughter, who was not young, approached Pani Krzycki and felt it incumbent upon them to offer a "few words of consolation," which nobody expected and which were absolutely unnecessary. Gronski began to converse with Ladislaus:

"Observe," he quietly said, looking at the work of the masons, "yet a few more bricks and then, as Dante says, 'Aeterna silenza.' No sorrow, not a tear; no one will ever come here expressly for him. Something similar awaits me, and you remember that thus they bury old bachelors. Your mother is quite right in wanting to have you married."

"To tell the truth," answered Krzycki, "the deceased was not only an old bachelor, but also was unsocial. But finally, is it not all the same?"

"After death, certainly. But during life, when you think of it, it is not at all the same. This 'lust for posthumous grief' may be illogical and foolish, but nevertheless it exists."

"Whence does it come?"

"From an equally unwise desire to outlive self. Look, the work is finished and Zarnowski is sealed up. Let us go."

At the gates the rattle of the approaching carriages was heard. The party moved towards the exit. The ladies now were in the lead; after them the priests and guests walked, with the exception of Dolhanski, who was talking to the Englishwoman.

Suddenly Ladislaus turned to Gronski and asked:

"What is Miss Anney's Christian name?"

"While we are in the cemetery you might have thought of something else. Her Christian name is Agnes."

"A beautiful name."

"In England it is quite common."

"Is she rich?"

"And that question you could defer to another time, but if you are in a hurry, ask Dolhanski. He knows those things best."

"I ask you because I see him with her and hear him chattering in English."

"Oh, that is a play within a play! He is after Pani Otocka."

"Ah!"

"Equally as old as it is fruitless. For it is yet difficult to ascertain with any exactness how much Miss Anney possesses, while the amount which the late Director Otocki left his wife is perfectly known."

"I have a hope that my beautiful cousin will give him the mitten."

"Which would increase a beautiful collection. But tell me, what do you think of your cousins?"

"Certainly-Pani Otocka-certainly-both have what the Galicians call 'something ennobling.' But Panna Marynia is still quite a child."

Gronski directed his eyes at the slim and slender figure walking before them and said:

"That is a child who could as well fly in the air as walk on earth."

"An aëroplane or what?"

"I warn you that she is the object of my highest adoration."

"So I have heard. It is already known to all men."

"Only they do not know that that adoration is not of a red color, but heavenly blue."

"I do not understand that very well."

"When you are better acquainted with her you will understand me."

Krzycki, who was more interested in Miss Anney, wanted to turn the conversation to her, but they passed the gates, before which the horses waited. The young man proceeded to assist the ladies to their seats, in which operation he saw directed towards himself for a moment the soulful eyes of the Englishwoman. Preparatory to her departure, his mother asked him whether he had finished his duties connected with the funeral and whether he would return immediately to Jastrzeb.

"No," he answered; "I have made an arrangement with the parish-priest that he should permit me to invite the priests to the rectory, and I must entertain them there. But as soon as I greet them and eat something, I will excuse myself to the guests and return as soon as possible."

Here he bowed to the ladies, after which he removed his hands from the carriage, cast a glance at the chestnut thill-horse to see if he did not overreach, and shouted:

"Go ahead!"

The carriage trundled over the road on which the funeral cortege had passed. Of the participants who were dressed in surtouts, besides Ladislaus, only Dolhanski remained. He felt that, as a relative of the deceased, it was also his duty to entertain the priests who officiated at the obsequies; and besides, he had other reasons which induced him to remain in Ladislaus' company.

They had barely settled in the britzska, when he began to look around among the peasants, who still stood here and there in groups, and then asked:

"Where is the notary Dzwonkowski?"

Ladislaus smiled and replied:

"He rode ahead with the priests, but to-night you will see him at Jastrzeb, for he invited himself there."

"So; then I regret that I did not return with the ladies. I wanted to wring from him some information regarding the will, and I thought that later that might not be possible."

"Patience. The notary told me that the will is to be opened the day after to-morrow in his office and that we will have to drive over there for that purpose."

"But I wished to know to-day whether it will be worth while for me to wait until to-morrow or the day after. If this precious uncle of ours has let us drift, as the saying is, upon a swift current of water, then Pani Wlocka was right in offering us words of consolation. I, at least, will need them for a long time."

"How can you talk that way?"

"I am saying aloud what you all secretly think. I am very anxious about that will. I care more for Dzwonkowski at the present moment than for the entire terrestrial globe together with the five parts of the world; and more particularly since I have seen that he brought a bundle of papers with him."

"As to that you may rest at ease. He is the greatest musico-maniac that I have ever met. He worships Panna Marynia, with whom he became acquainted at Krynica. From Gronski I have learnt that in the moonlight sonata, in the Benois arrangement for the violin, he arranged the notes for the flute and sent them to her in Warsaw. Today he wants to see how they will go. Therefore he invited himself to Jastrzeb, and he brought with him, besides the sonata, a bundle of other notes. I assure you that he will not want to talk or speak of anything else."

"In that case, may the devils carry off Dzwonkowski's flute, Panna Marynia's violin, your Jastrzeb piano, and music in general."

On this Ladislaus looked at him spitefully and said:

"Be careful about our Jastrzeb piano, because if you hear a trio to-night, you will find Pani Otocka at the piano."

"I have a hope that it will be, at least, as much out of tune as I am at present and, in that case, I will not envy either her or the auditors. But I see that Gronski has filled you with idle gossip. Good! Unlike him, I do not have an old bachelor's hankering after boarding-house misses and I like young teals only on a

platter. Let him feast his eyes with his Marynia; let him pray to her, but let him leave me alone. They all have gone crazy on music there, and are ready to infect you in Jastrzeb. Only Miss Anney does not play on anything, and has a little sense."

"Ah, Miss Anney does not play on anything?"

"Yes. But that does not prevent her from playing, in a certain case, upon me or on you, but much more easily upon you than me."

"Why more easily upon me?"

"Because I am that particular kind of instrument that wants to know in advance how much the concert will bring."

Ladislaus, accustomed of old to Dolhanski's cynicism, shrugged his shoulders, but did not have time to reply as they had in the meantime arrived at the rectory.

III

Dolhanski, in fact, could not extract from the notary, anything but testy replies. Immediately after his reception at the rectory the old notary became very garrulous, but spoke with Ladislaus only about Marynia, for whom he had an unbounded admiration. At present he feared that Pani Krzycki might not consent to an evening musicale on the day of the funeral of a relative, and that fear did not cease to disturb him. Under this impression he began to demonstrate that music may as well be associated with death as with life; that impressive music always attends funerals, and that as mankind has not devised anything better than music, not even for the worship of God, therefore it may be taken for granted that music facilitates the flight of the soul to heaven, and even salvation. Ladislaus bit his mustache and, without qualification, concurred in this reasoning, knowing that the amiable old gentleman was wont to berate his opponents unmercifully. With this kind of talk, in which, to Dolhanski's great irritation, there was no mention of the will, they passed their time on the way to Jastrzeb. There they were served with tea. As the wind had subsided entirely before the setting sun and the evening was delightful, the ladies, with Gronski, were in the garden. When Ladislaus and his companions followed them, they found Pani Krzycki and Pani Otocka on the bank of the pond, while Miss Anney and Marynia were in a boat on the pond. A

ruddy lustre permeated the whole air; the scent of elders, which grew near the water's edge, blended with the odor of the turf, duck-weed, and fish. The water was dark green on the border from alders and willows which hemmed it in, but in the centre, on the overflow, it was golden, with reflections of purple and peacock feathers. The boat floated towards the point, whose narrow girdle from the garden side served as a landing-place. Marynia sat in the middle of the boat, but Miss Anney, standing at the stern, manipulated it with a single oar, propelling and at the same time steering with uncommon skill. On the background of water and sky she loomed up from head to foot with strong and graceful form, her rounded bosom moving in unison with the movements of the oar. At moments she ceased to paddle and when the boat, gliding each moment more slowly, at last stood still upon the smooth water, there could be seen in the mirrored pellucidness another boat, another Marynia, and another Miss Anney. In this picture there was great pastoral calm. The lustre in the heavens grew ruddier as if the entire western world had been embraced in a conflagration. High above the pond, under the flaming cupola of heaven, strings of wild ducks appeared as if tied together by black crosses.

The trees stood motionless and the silence was broken only by the sounds of the windmill, coming from the direction of the dam.

After a while Miss Anney touched shore. Gronski, who was anxious that his "adoration" should not wet her feet, hastened

to assist her out of the boat, while the Englishwoman leaped unassisted upon the sand and, approaching the company, said:

"How charming it is here in Jastrzeb!"

"Because the weather is fine," said Ladislaus, drawing nearer. "Yesterday it was cloudy, but to-night it is beautiful."

And having scanned the heavens, he, like a true husbandman, added:

"If it will continue thus, we will start mowing the hay."

And Miss Anney gazed at him, as if she discovered something unusual in the sounds of those words, and began to repeat them in the same fashion that one repeats words which he desires to firmly implant in the memory.

"The hay-the hay."

The party turned towards the house, which was being bleached, or rather rouged, amidst the lime-trees, conversing a little about the funeral and the late Zarnowski, but more about the village, the spring evening, and music. Pani Krzycki assured the newly-arrived ladies that in Jastrzeb before their arrival music was not wanting, as there were so many nightingales in the park that at times they would not let any one sleep. At this Gronski, who was a man of great erudition, began to discourse upon country life; that, in truth, it was, from time immemorial, considered the only real and normal life. He mentioned incidentally the Homeric Kings, "who rejoiced in their hearts, counting sheaves with the sceptre," and various Roman poets. In conclusion he announced, as his opinion, that

socialism will shatter to pieces upon agriculture and the soil, because it considers them only as a value, while they are also an affection, or, in other words, not only is a price placed upon them, but they are also loved. Men know what cares are coupled with country life, but in truth it is the only life they prize, as if in it "even bird's milk was not lacking."¹

To Pani Krzycki, who, next to her children, loved, above everything else in the world, Jastrzeb, the words of Gronski appealed very convincingly, but Dolhanski, recalling a village he once owned and squandered, replied, drawling his words as usual:

"Bird's milk may not be lacking, but money is lacking. Besides, it is amusing to hear these eulogies upon country life pronounced by a rich man who could buy for himself a tract of land and settle in the country, but whom it is necessary to pull out of the city with hooks." Then addressing Gronski:

"Apropos of your Homeric Kings, and with them your Virgils and Horaces, why, in their days there certainly were not such hotels on the Riviera and such clubs in Nice as at present."

But this observation was passed in silence, or rather it was interrupted by a musical passage intoned to Marynia in an old wooden voice by the notary who wanted in this manner to illustrate the junction of two phrases in Bruch's concerto. Afterwards various other phrases incessantly resounded until the

¹ "Even bird's milk is not lacking," a Polish proverbial expression signifying "abundance," "living in clover."

party returned to the house. Gronski knew the mania of the old man and envied him for having found something in life which filled it out so completely for him. He was a highly educated dilettante, but had settled upon nothing permanently in life and did not consecrate all his spiritual powers to anything exclusively. This was partly due to his environment, and partly to his own fault. The profoundest essence of his soul was a sad scepticism. One of his friends, Kloczewski, called him "an ecclesiastic in a dress-suit." Somehow, the final result of Gronski's meditation upon the future and human life, individual as well as collective, was the conviction that the future and the human life may, with time, become different, but never better. So he thought that it might be worth while not to spare efforts to make them sometime better, but it would not be worth while that they should be different only. This thought protected him, however, from the bordering pessimism, as he understood that the measure of happiness and misfortune rested not on the external, but in the man himself, and that as long as otherwise did not mean *better*, then by the same reasoning it did not also mean *worse*. At bottom he was persuaded that the one and the other were only a mistake and a delusion, and that everything, not excluding life, was one great vanity. In this manner, he revered, across the sea of ages, the true Ecclesia.

But, being at the same time a man of sentiment, he fell in a continual clash with himself, his sentiment always craving for something, while his sad scepticism iterated that it was not

worth while to desire anything. His feelings were preyed upon by the thought that his views were in conflict with life, while life was an imperative necessity. Therefore, whoever with doubts corroded its roots injured humanity, and Gronski did not desire to injure anybody, much less his own people. For this reason the ecclesiastic, contending that all was vanity, wrangled within him, with the patriot who said, for instance, that national suffering was not in vain. But this state of affairs bred within him such incessant discord that he envied men of action who journey through life without any whys or wherefores, as well as people who absolutely succumb to one great feeling.

For the old notary and Marynia, such a great feeling was music; so that as often as Gronski saw them together, so often did he have before his eyes a living example that things do exist with which one can fill out his life from dawn until the last moments, — if only one does not subject them to a too close analysis.

IV

At the supper the aged notary was occupied solely with music and Marynia. To the others, with the exception of the lady of the house, upon whom permission for the concert depended, he replied irascibly; especially to Dolhanski, who several times tried to elicit from him some information about the will. His angry and apoplectic face cleared up only after Pani Krzycki announced that she would have no objections to devoting the remainder of the evening to decorous music, and that she herself would be glad to listen to Marynia, whom she had not heard since the last charitable concert in Krynica.

Towards the close of the supper the old gentleman again began to get impatient, remarking that it was a pity to waste time in eating, and discussing even music, if light and frivolous, with profane individuals who had no conception of the real art. He became more interested after listening to the reasonings of Gronski, who began to talk about the origin of music and refute the Darwinian theory that songs and the sounds of the primitive string instruments arose in some misty era of the human race from the amorous declarations and calls of men and women in the forests. Gronski shared the opinion of those who against these views cited the fact that among the most savage tribes no traces of love-songs exist, but in their place are found war-songs and martial music. The theory of calling through the forests

appeared to the ladies more poetical. Gronski placated them with the statement that this did not lessen the civilizing importance of music, that it, with the dance, was one of the first factors which promoted among the scattered tribes of men a certain organization.

"The Papuans," he said, "who gather together for the performance of a war or ceremonial dance in accordance with the rhythm of even their wildest music, by that act alone submit to something, introduce some kind of order, and form the first social ties."

"That means," observed Dolhanski, "that every nation owes its origin to some primitive 'high-diddle-diddle, the cat and the fiddle.'"

"Of course it is so," angrily answered the old notary.

Afterwards turning to Gronski, he said: "Please proceed. We can at least learn something."

"Yes, please proceed," repeated Marynia.

So Gronski began further to speak of the history of music; how through the entire course of ages it served war, ceremonies of state, as well as religious and secular, and how considerably later it outspread its own wings, on which it soars as at present, like an eagle, over the entire human race.

"A strange art," he concluded; "the most primitive; yet to-day resting more than any other upon science; the most precisely confined within certain technical requirements, as if bound by dams and dykes; yet the most illimitable, the most mystical;

overflowing the borders of existence and life. Perhaps this gives it such incomprehensible power over the human soul; speaking the least expressive of tongues and at the same time the most idealistic. It is the most powerful spur to action. Yes, to the Polish regiments in the battle of Gravelotte the Prussian bands played 'Poland is not yet lost,' and everywhere you may behold the same. Play to the Frenchmen the 'Marseillaise,' the Germans 'Wacht am Rhein,' how their hands begin to quiver! Even the eyes of phlegmatic Englishmen and Americans sparkle when they hear 'Rule Britannia' or 'Yankee Doodle.' Strange art! – the most cosmopolitan and at the same time the most national, – universal and individual."

"One thing you did not say and that is that of all arts it is the purest," added Pani Otocka.

"Attempts have been made to illegitimatize it," answered Gronski, "but licentiousness never can be rhythmical nor harmonical, and for that reason from these attempts there was born an antichrist of music."

But Ladislaus, who was a trifle bored and would have preferred to talk with the light-haired Miss Anney, spoke out with the evident desire to close the discussion.

"Yes, it is plain that not only every nation but every man has his own music. I, for instance, am always willing to hear a concert or an opera, but I admit, that when sometimes the boys and girls at work in the field sing until the pitchforks and harrows ring, that is the only music for me."

"Slavonian, Lechite, Piast-come to my arms," drawled Dolhanski.

Ladislaus blushed a little from fear that the young Englishwoman and his refined female relatives might judge him too rustical, but they glanced at him with a certain sympathy. Only the beard of the old classical notary drooped with his nose in a manner boding no good, and from his lips he mumbled a half-distinct grumble:

"To some folks it is sufficient, when anything jingles in their ears."

But recollecting that it would not be agreeable to Pani Krzycki if caustic remarks were directed against her son, he cast an uneasy look at her and became silent.

The supper was finished. The company went to the salon in which prevailed coolness and the slight scent of jasmine blown in from the garden by the light evening breezes before the windows were closed. In the glass doors appeared the big full moon, which but recently arose slowly in the heaven, still ruddy after a bath in the evening twilight. Pani Otocka sat at the piano; beside her the notary began to blow, as if with anger, into the flute; while behind them stood Marynia with a violin at her shoulder. Gronski with rapture gazed at her luxuriant dark hair; her peaceful, arched eyebrows under a forehead plainly immaculate; her small countenance; her slender, growing, childlike form, and thought that this sight alone would suffice for music, or at least that such a violinist might pass for its incarnation and symbol. Ladislaus,

although he had previously enlisted in the ranks of the English faction, could not remove his eyes from her. After completing his university education, he had accompanied his mother on a journey to Italy. He visited various galleries and, though he lacked solid artistic culture, nevertheless the thought crossed his mind that this maiden with the bright and peaceful countenance, bending over the violin, might have served the old masters as a model for Saint Cecilia or for one of those angelic violin-players which he had seen in the paintings of Fra Angelico.

The other listeners, like Pani Krzycki, her children, the instructress, and Miss Anney, gazed at her as if at a miracle-working image. Only one, Laskowicz, young Stas' tutor, did not share in the general rapture. He was a medical student who, owing to the closing of the university, was earning money by teaching for the further pursuit of his studies, and he found himself, together with his inexorable hatred for the "pampered" of this world, like Pilate in Credo, in this country home. His convictions by this time were not a secret to anybody in Jastrzeb; he was tolerated, however, with that improvident indulgence of which the Polish nobility is only capable, upon the principle that "the greatest radical must eat," and also in the hope that Stas was yet too young to be infected with the "evil spirit" by his tutor.

To Laskowicz, when he looked at the gentle young lady, it seemed that she was a flower which grew higher than the hands of a proletaire could reach; therefore she was bred to the injury of the proletariat. This was sufficient for him to look on both

sides with reluctance and a readiness to hate.

But, in the meanwhile, the moment for beginning the concert had arrived. For some time Marynia had been drawing the bow over the chords, turning the ringlets of the violin, and passing her fingers over the notes, indicating something to her sister and the notary; afterwards silence ensued, interrupted only by the indistinct talk of the servants, assembled beyond the windows, who for the first time in their lives were to hear the young lady play on the violin.

V

The first chords of the moonlight sonata are sounded and a vision begins. Lo! a pale ray creeps stealthily through a crevice and touches the forehead of a sleeper, as if it wanted to arouse thought; afterwards the lips, as if it wished to waken words, and later the bosom, as if it desired to stir the heart. But the weary body slumbered in a heavy sleep. In its place the soul emerges from its embrace, like a butterfly from a cocoon, and flies into space. The night is bright and silent. Below, alders are dimly wrapped in muslin mists. On the sylvan meadows nymphs dance their rites, accompanied by the playing of a faun on a flute. About, stand with flaming azure eyes, stags, crowned with antlers. On the heath, glow-worms glimmer; on the moss, phosphorate toadstools, under whose canopies tiny elves watch the gambols. From the decaying vegetation and fens rise Jack-o'-lanterns which flit about lightly and mysteriously, as if seeking something in vain. The moon ascends each moment higher and higher, and bounteous dew falls.

Over the vast fields rivers wind in silvery ribbons and tracks of the roadways can be seen leading to towns and castles. Through the narrow Gothic windows the moon's lustre invades silent castle-halls, where lurk the ghosts of dead knights and maidens. At the feet of the castles, cities slumber. In the calm light the roofs of houses whiten and crosses on the towers glitter. From

the blossoming orchards, with the vapors rises the fragrance of flowers and grass. But lighter than the fragrance and the moonlight the winged soul soars higher and farther. The lowly habitations of men vanish; likewise vanish the forests, vales, sparkling shields of ponds, and the white threads of streams. Gradually lofty regions are attained.

And lo, the mountains! Amidst the crags sleeps the translucent buckler of the lake. In the chasms lies concealed cool dusk. The needles of the glaciers shine verdantly. On the declivities and rocky nests rest the weary clouds and mists; and on the peaks, on the eternal snow the moonlight reposes. Even the wind has fallen asleep. How still, ethereal, and immense! Here the moon is the only sentinel of silence and the human soul the only living entity. Free as a mountain eagle, detached from the flesh, enamoured with the expanse, desolation, and silence, happy, and sad with a supernal sorrow, dissolved in the stillness, she hovers and courses above the precipices; and again flies farther on, entirely abandoned to pleasure, flight, and speed.

And the mountains have already disappeared beneath her and lo! some voices rise and reach from below as if summoning her to them. It is the sea. It, alone, never sleeps; restless and vast, it dashes wave after wave against the shore, as if it were an immense pulsation of life. Its monstrous lungs heave and fall eternally and at times groan in complaint of endless toil.

The ruffled expanse of the sea throbs with the opalescent lunar lustre and the silvery laces of stars, and on those illuminated

tracks, in the distance appears, wakeful as the sea itself, a ship with sails and a sanguinary light in the rounded windows.

But thou, oh soul, mountest higher and higher. Already the earth is left somewhere at the bottom of the abyss. Thou, light as down, dost pass feathery clouds, which have strayed upon the heights and dost pierce space flooded with splendor-empty and cool. There thou liest upon thine own wings and floatest about in luminous nothingness; higher and higher; and now doth scintillate and change color over thee, in gold and purple, the jewels of heaven, and thou dost frolic and swing in the unattainable ether, serene, freed from the dross of matter as if, beyond the limits of time and space, thou wert already partly admitted into heaven.

The firmament of heaven grows each moment darker, but the moon, great as the world, shines more and more brightly. Already we behold her glistening plains, mangled, wild, studded by mountain peaks, perforated with the blackness of craters, bleak, frosty, and lifeless. Thus in the abyss of space appears this silvery, corpse-like wanderer, who speeds around the earth as if condemned by a divine command to a perpetual race. Above and about her, an immensity which the swooning brain is incapable of comprehending. A new galaxy of stars twinkle sanguinarily and powerfully, like distant fire-places. The music of spheres is heard. Here Eternity fans with her breath and a supernal chill prevails.

Return, over-indulged swan, return, oh soul, before some

occult rapids and whirlpools seize thee and tear thee forever from the earth.

Thou returnest from the pinnacle of all-existence, bathed in the waves of infinity, purer and more perfect. Lo, thou furlest thy wings! Look, in the depths beneath are those downy, light clouds, which now thou greetest as thine own and kin. Below, the earth. The protuberances of the mountains flash to the moon; at their feet sobs the sea. And now lower, the vague outlines of forests, enveloped in mist. Again whiten the cities, silent towers and roofs of villages sunk in sleep. The night grows pale. On the moors, ostlers build fires and play on fifes. The roosters crow. The day breaks. It is dawn.

The strains subsided and silence ensued. Marynia stood near the piano with a countenance, composed as usual, but seemingly, awakened from a dream.

The aged notary sat for a while with bowed head, moving his toothless jaws; afterwards he rose, and when the young maid placed the violin beside the key-board, he ardently kissed her hands; after which he threw a challenging look at those present as if he sought the person who would dare to protest against that mark of homage or deem it a superfluous act. Nobody, however, protested because under the enchantment of that music that happened with the listeners which always happens with mankind, when fanned by the breath of genius. As sometimes in a dream it seems to a person that having shoved himself off the earth with his feet, he afterwards reels a long time in the air,

so, too, their bodies became lighter, less material, as if deprived of those heavy and gross elements which bound them to the earth. Their nerves became more susceptible and subtle and their souls more volatile, approaching more closely those boundaries on which eternity begins. It was an unconscious feeling; after the passage of which the daily life was to encompass and drag them down. But during this momentary exaltation there awakened within them, unknown to themselves, a power of apprehending, appreciating, and feeling beauty, and in general such things as in their customary moods they had not felt and did not know that they could have felt.

Even the young and unfledged physician, Laskowicz, notwithstanding all his prejudices, could not resist this influence. The moment when Marynia stood up to play, he began to scrutinize her from his dark corner in the salon and examine her form as an anatomist. He was conscious that there was something brutal in this, but such a viewpoint gave him satisfaction, as being proper for an investigator and a man of his convictions. He started to persuade himself that this young lady of the so called higher spheres was for him merely an object which one should examine in the same manner as a corpse on the dissecting-table is examined. So, when tuning her violin, she bent her head, he took a mental inventory of the Latin names of all her cranial bones, repelling the thought which, against his will, rushed to his head that this was, however, an extraordinarily noble skull. Afterwards, during the first moments after the beginning of

the concert, he became occupied with the nomenclature of the muscles of her hands, arms, breast, limbs, outlined under her dress and whole figure. But as he was not only a medical student and a socialist, but also a young man, this anatomical review ended in the conclusion that this was a girl, not yet sufficiently developed, but exceedingly pretty and attractive, resembling a spring flower. From that moment he began, to a certain extent, to forgive her connection with spheres living "from the wrongs of the proletariat," and could not get rid of the thought that if, as a result of some unheard-of social upheaval, such "a saintly doll" became dependent upon his favor or disfavor, then such a state of affairs would bring to him an indescribably coy delight.

But when Beethoven placed his hands upon his head, there awakened within him better and higher instincts. He saw during the performance the lips and eyebrows of the young lady contract, and began to concede that "she, however, felt something." In consequence of this, his ill-will towards her began to melt away, although slowly and with difficulty. He half confirmed, half conjectured that not only the hands but also the soul played. He did not have sufficient culture for music to appeal to him as it did, for instance, to Gronski, nevertheless there awakened within him a certain dismal consciousness that this was something, like the air, which all breasts can breathe, regardless of whether they love or hate. Amazement seized him at the thought that there were things lying beyond the swarm of human passions. At the conclusion he so identified music with

the figure of the playing girl that when the old notary, at the end of the concert, kissed her hands, he almost felt inclined to do the same.

In the meanwhile, Ladislaus said to Miss Anney:

"As long as Jastrzeb has been Jastrzeb, never yet has such music been heard. I am not a connoisseur, but must admit that this has captivated me. Besides, though I am often in the city, it has always so happened that I never have had an opportunity of seeing a woman play on the violin. And this is so beautiful that I now have an impression that only women should play the violin."

"One gets such an impression when he hears Marynia play."

"Assuredly. I even begin to understand Pan Gronski. You, of course, know that she is his adoration?"

"The greatest in the world. And mine and everybody's who knows her, – and soon she will be yours."

"I do not deny that she will be, only I doubt whether she will be the greatest."

A temporary pause in the conversation followed, after which Ladislaus, not desiring that Miss Anney should take his words as an untimely compliment, added:

"In any event, I owe her gratitude for music which is slightly different from that which we hear every evening in spring and summer."

"What kind of music is that?"

"From dusk to moon-rise the orchestra of frogs, and afterwards the concert of nightingales, which, after all, I do not

hear, as, after daily toil, I am sound asleep. The frog band has already commenced. This also has its charm. If you care to hear it, let us go out upon the veranda. The night is almost as warm as in summer."

Miss Anney rose and together they went on the veranda, which the servants, who listened under the windows to Marynia's performance, had already left, and only in the distance the blooming jasmines, shaded by the dusk, whitened. From the pond came the croakings of the confederation of frogs, drowsy and, at the same time, resembling choral prayers.

Miss Anney for a while listened to these sounds and afterwards said:

"Yes, this also has its charm, particularly on a night like this."

"Are not nights the same in England?"

"No, not as quiet. There is hardly a corner there to which the whistling of locomotives or the factory noises do not reach. I like your villages for their quiet and their distance from the cities."

"So, then, this is not the first time that you have seen a Polish village?"

"No. I have passed the last month with Zosia Otocka."

"I wish that our Jastrzeb would find favor in your eyes. It is too bad that you chanced here upon a funeral. That is always sad. I saw that you were even affected."

"It reminded me of something," answered Miss Anney.

Whereupon, evidently desiring to change the subject of the conversation, she again began to peer into the depths of the

garden.

"How everything blooms and smells agreeably here!"

"Those are jasmines and elders. Did you observe on the forest road, riding to Jastrzeb, that the edges of the woods are planted with elders? That is my work."

"I only observed it at the bridge, where an old building stands. What kind of building is that?"

"That is an ancient mill. At one time there was a great deal of water in the stream beside it, but later my uncle, Zarnowski, drained it off to the fish-ponds in Rzeslewo and the mill stood still. Now it is a ramshackle building in which for over ten years we have stored hay instead of keeping it in hayricks. Folks say that the place is haunted, but I myself circulated, in its time, that myth."

"Why?"

"First, so that they should not steal the hay, and again because it was of much concern to me that no one should pry in there."

"What an invention!"

"I told them that near the bridge during night-time the horses get frightened and that something in the mill laughs; which is true, because owls laugh there."

"Perhaps it would have been better to have told them that something in there weeps."

"Why?"

"For greater effect."

"I do not know. Laughter in the night in the solitude creates a

greater impression. People fear it more."

"And nobody peeps in there?"

"Not a soul. Now, if they only would not steal the hay, it would be all the same to me, but at that time I was anxious to screen myself from the eyes of men--"

Here Ladislaus bit his tongue, observing in the moonlight that Miss Anney's eyebrows frowned slightly. He understood that in repeating twice that it was important to him that no one should pry into the mill, he committed a breach of etiquette and, what was worse, had presented himself to the young English lady as some provincial boaster, who gives the impression that often he has been forced to seek various hiding-places. So desiring to erase the bad impression, he added quickly:

"When a student, I wrote verses and for that reason sought solitude. But now all that has passed away."

"That usually passes away," answered Miss Anney. And she turned to the doors of the salon, but without unnecessary haste, as if she desired to show Ladislaus that she accepted as good coin his explanations and that her return was not a manifestation of displeasure. He remained a while, angry at himself and yet more angry at Miss Anney for the simple reason that the indiscretion was committed solely by him and he could not blame her for anything.

"In any case," he said to himself, "that is some deucedly penetrating Puritan."

And he began to repeat, with some indignation, her last words:

"That usually passes away."

"Did she," he thought, "intend to give me to understand that from such grist as is in me nobody could bake any poetry. Perhaps it is true, and I know that better than anyone else, but it is unnecessary for anybody to corroborate the fact."

Under the influence of these thoughts he returned to the salon in not quite good humor, but there the duties of host summoned him to his feminine cousins and that evening he did not converse any more with Miss Anney.

VI

The notary left the same night because his official duties required his presence in the city the following morning. On the day after, Gronski, whom Pani Otocka requested to act as her representative, with Ladislaus and Dolhanski departed for the notarial bureau. All three were troubled and curious about the will, of which the notary did not drop a single hint. Dolhanski feigned a jocose mien and displayed more sangfroid than he really possessed. He was most anxious that something should "drop off" for him. He was a man who had squandered a large fortune, but, not having changed his habits, kept on living as if he had not lost anything. Therefore he sustained himself upon the surface of life by the aid of extraordinary, almost acrobatic, efforts, of which after all he made no secret. In general, he was a sponger and possessed a million faults, but also certain social qualities for which he was esteemed. Belonging to an aristocratic club, he played cards with unusual good luck, but irreproachably. He never borrowed money from people in his own sphere; never gossiped, and was a tolerably loyal friend. Lack of education he supplied with cleverness and a certain intellectual grasp. He jested about himself, but it was unsafe to jest at him, because he possessed, besides wit, a certain candor which bordered upon cynicism. So he was not only countenanced but willingly received. Gronski, for whom Dolhanski had such

high regard that he permitted him alone to jest about him, said that if Dolhanski only had as great a gift of making money as he had of spending it, he would have been a millionaire.

But while waiting for such a change, heavy moments fell upon Dolhanski, particularly in spring when the play at the club slackened or when the outing season began. Then he felt fatigued after the winter struggles and sighed for something to turn up which would not require any labor. The will of Zarnowski might be such a gratuity, although Dolhanski did not expect much, as during the lifetime of the deceased he did nothing to deserve it. He even frankly repeated that his precious uncle bored him. He reckoned, however, that something might be sliced off for him; enough for the temporary pacification of his creditors or, better still, for a trip to a fashionable, aristocratic French seaside resort.

Before leaving Warsaw he announced in the club that he would return sitting upon a pillow stuffed with pawn-tickets. At present he attempted, with a certain affected humor, to convince Gronski and Ladislaus that by rights neither Pani Otocka with her sister, nor the Krzyckis, but himself ought to be the chief beneficiary.

"One of the female cousins," he said, "is a warm widow, who has a fat fortune from her husband, and the other is a budding muse, who ought to be satisfied with ambrosia. What a pity, that I am not the sole relative of the deceased!"

Here he addressed Ladislaus:

"The Krzyckis, I think, need not be considered, because you have had, as I heard, a dispute about the Rzeslewo boundary. I

hope that you will not get anything."

"What is the use of your hoping?" said Gronski. "Limit, above all things, your wants."

"You remind me of my lamented father," answered Dolhanski.

"He certainly must have repeated that to you often."

"Too often, and besides, he set himself up as an example, but I demonstrated to him, as plainly as two times two are four, that I could and ought to live on a higher scale than he."

"What did you tell him?"

"I spoke to him thus: Firstly, Papa has a son, while I am childless, and again, I am a better noble than he."

"In what respect?"

"Very plainly, since I can count one generation more in my line of nobility."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Krzycki. "What did your father say to that?"

"He called me a dunce, but I saw he was pleased with it. Ah, if my conceits would only please Pani Otocka as they once did Papa. But I am convinced that my constancy and my appetite will avail me naught. My dear cousin is after all more practical than she seems. You would imagine that both sisters live only on the fragrance of flowers; and yet when they learned of a possible inheritance, they hastily arrived at Jastrzeb."

"I can assure you that you are mistaken. Mother invited them last year while in Krynica and now, at least a week before the

death of Uncle Zarnowski, she reminded them of their promise. They wrote back that they could not come because they had a guest. Then mother invited the guest also."

"If that is so, it is different. Now, not only do I understand your mother, but as you are a shapely youth and, in addition, younger than myself, I begin to fear for Cousin Otocka's fortune, which more justly belongs to me."

"You need have no fear," answered Krzycki drily.

"Does that mean that you prefer pounds to roubles? Considering the rate of exchange, I would prefer them also, but I fear that too many of them might have sunk in the Channel on the way from England."

"If you are so much concerned about that," said Gronski, "you might ask Miss Anney about the precise amount. She is so sincere that she will reply to a certainty."

"Yes, but it is necessary that I should believe her."

"If you knew a little of human nature, you ought to believe her."

"In any case, I would fear a misunderstanding; for if she answered me in Polish, she could make a mistake, and if in English, I might not understand her perfectly."

"She speaks better Polish than you do English."

"I admit that this astonishes me. Whence?"

"Haven't I told you," answered Gronski, with some impatience, "that she was taught from childhood, because her father was an Englishman who had great sympathy for the

Poles?"

"De gustibus non est disputandum," answered Dolhanski.

And afterwards he again began to speak of the deceased and of the old notary, mimicking the movements of his toothless jaws and the fury of his look; and finally he announced that if something was not "sliced off" for him he would either shoot himself upon Pani Otocka's threshold or else would drive over to Gorek and offer himself for the hand of Panna Wlocek.

But Gronski was buried in thought about something else during the time of this idle talk, while Ladislaus heard him distractedly as his attention was attracted by the considerable number of peasant carts which they were continually passing by. Supposing that he had forgotten some market-day in the city, he turned to his coachman.

"Andrew," he asked, "why are there so many carts on the road to the city?"

"Ah, those, please your honor, are Rzeslewo peasants."

"Rzeslewo? What have they to do there?"

"Ah! please your honor, on account of the will of the deceased Pan Zarnowski; it is to give them Rzeslewo."

Krzycki turned to Gronski.

"I heard," he said, "that somebody circulated among them such a story, but did not think that they would believe it."

And afterwards again to the coachman:

"Who told them that?"

The old driver hesitated somewhat in his reply:

"The people gossip that it was the Tutor."

Ladislaus began to laugh.

"Oh, stupid peasants!" he said. "Why, he never in his life saw Pan Zarnowski. How would he know about the will?"

But after a moment of meditation he said, partly to his companions and partly to himself:

"Everything must have some object, so if Laskowicz did that, let some one explain to me why he did it."

"Do you suspect him of it?" asked Gronski.

"I do not know, for heretofore I had assumed that one could be a socialist and keep his wits in order."

"Ah, so he is a bird of that nest? Tell me how long has he been with you and what manner of a man is he?"

"He has been with us half a year. We needed an instructor for Stas and some one recommended him to us. We were informed that he would have to leave Warsaw for a certain time to elude the police and, in fact, for that reason received him more eagerly, thinking that some patriotic matter was involved. Later, when it appeared that he was of an entirely different calibre, mother would not permit his dismissal in hope that she might convert him. At the beginning she had lengthy heart-to-heart talks with him and requested me to be friendly with him. We treated him as a member of the family, but the result has been such that he hates us, not only as people belonging to a sphere which he envies, but also, as it seems, individually."

"It is evident," said Dolhanski, "he holds it evil of you that you

are not such as he imagined you would be; neither so wicked nor so stupid. And you may rest assured that he will never forgive that in you."

"That may be so. In any case, he will shortly despise us from a distance, for after a month we part. I understand that one can and ought to tolerate all convictions, but there is something in him, besides his principles and hatreds, which is so conflicting with all our customs, and something so strange that we have had enough of him."

"My Laudie," answered Dolhanski, "do not necessarily apply this to yourself, for I speak generally, but since you have mentioned toleration, I will tell you that in my opinion toleration in Poland was and is nothing else than downright stupidity, and monumental stupidity at that."

"In certain respects Dolhanski is right," answered Gronski. "It may be that in the course of our history we tolerated various ideas and elements not only through magnanimous forbearance, but also because in our indolence we did not care to contend with them."

To this Ladislaus, who did not like to engage in general argumentation, said:

"That is all right, but all that does not explain why Laskowicz should spread among the peasants the news that Uncle Zarnowski devised Rzeslewo to them."

"There is, as yet, no certainty that he did," answered Gronski. "We will very soon learn the truth at the notary's."

VII

The hour was five in the afternoon. The ladies sat on the veranda, at tea, when the young men returned from the city. Miss Anney rose when they appeared and, not wishing to be present, as a stranger, at the family conversation, left on some pretext for her room. Pani Krzycki greeted them with slightly affected calm, because in reality the thought of the will did not leave her for a moment. She was not greedier than the generality of common mortals, but she was immensely concerned that, after her demise, at the distribution of the estate, Ladislaus should have enough to pay off the younger members of the family and to sustain himself at Jastrzeb. And some respectable bequest would in a remarkable manner facilitate the making of such payments. Besides, at the bottom of the noble soul of Pani Krzycki there lay hidden the faith that Providence owed, to a certain extent, greater obligations to the Krzycki family than to any ordinary family. For that reason, even if the whole of Rzeslewo fell to the lot of that family, she would with readiness and willingness submit to such a decree of Providence. Finally, descending from the blood of a people who in certain cases can sacrifice fortune, but love extraordinarily to acquire it without any effort, she fondled all day the thought that such an easy acquisition was about to occur.

But in the countenances of Ladislaus and Gronski she could at once discern that they brought specific intelligence. Dolhanski,

who was the first to alight from the carriage, was the first to begin the report.

"I anticipate the question, what is the news?" he said, drawing his expressions with cold irony, "and I answer everything is for the best, for the Rzeslewo Mats and Jacks will have something with which they can travel to Carlsbad."

Pani Krzycki grew somewhat pale and, turning to Gronski, asked:

"What, in truth, gentlemen, have you brought with you?"

"The will in its provisions is peculiar," answered Gronski, "but was executed in a noble spirit. Rzeslewo is devised for a peasants' agricultural school and the interest of the funds is to be devoted to sending the pupils of the school, who have finished their courses, for a year's or two years' practice in country husbandry in Bohemia."

"Or, as I stated, to Carlsbad, Marienbad, Teplitz, and other places of the same character," explained Dolhanski.

A moment of silence followed. Marynia, who was pouring the tea, began, with teapot in hand, to gaze with inquiring look at those present, desiring evidently to unriddle whether they praised or condemned it and whether it gave them pleasure or annoyance. Pani Otocka looked at Gronski with eyes which evinced delight; while Pani Krzycki leaned with both hands upon the cane which she used owing to rheumatism in her limbs, and after a certain time asked in a slightly hoarse voice:

"So, it is for a public purpose?"

"Yes," answered Gronski, "the organization of the school and afterwards the division of the funds for the stay in Bohemia is to be assumed by a special Directory of the Trust Society of this province, and the designated curator of the school is Laudie."

"Too bad it is not I," interposed Dolhanski. "I would arrange it very quickly."

"There are specific bequests," continued Gronski, "and these are very strange. He bequeaths various small sums to the household servants and ten thousand roubles to some Skibianka, daughter of a blacksmith at the Rzeslewo manor, who in his time emigrated to America."

"Skibianka!" repeated Pani Krzycki with astonishment.

Dolhanski bit off the ends of his mustache, smiled, and started to grumble that the nobility was always distinguished for its love of the common people, but Gronski looked at him severely; after which he drew from his pocket a memorandum and said:

"That provision of the will is worded as follows: Whereas the parents of Hanka Skiba or Skibianka emigrated during my sojourn abroad for medical treatment, and I have not had the opportunity of ascertaining where they can be found, therefore I obligate my relative, Ladislaus Krzycki, to cause to be published in all the Polish newspapers printed in the United States and in Parana, advertisements. If the said legatee does not within two years appear to receive the bequest, the entire sum with interest becomes the property of the said Ladislaus Krzycki."

"And I already have announced that I do not intend to accept

that specific bequest," cried the young man excitedly.

All eyes were turned toward him; he added:

"I would not think of it; I would not think of it."

"Why not?" asked his mother after a while.

"Because I cannot. Let us suppose that the legatee appears, say for instance, within three years instead of two, what would happen? Would I pocket the bequest and drive her away? No! I could not do that. Finally, there are other considerations of which I do not wish to speak."

In fact, only by these "other considerations," could such a considerable bequest to a simple village girl be explained; therefore Pani Krzycki became silent. After a while she said:

"My Laudie, nobody will coerce, nor even try to persuade you to accept."

But Dolhanski asked:

"Tell me, is this some mythical disinterestedness or is it ill humor caused by your not receiving a greater bequest?"

"Do not judge by yourself," answered Krzycki; "but I will tell you something which you certainly will not believe; since this estate is to be devoted to such an object as a peasants' agricultural school, I am highly delighted and have much greater esteem for the deceased. I give you my word that I speak with entire sincerity."

"Bravo!" exclaimed Pani Otocka, "it is pleasant to hear that."

Pani Krzycki looked with pride first upon her son, then upon Pani Otocka; and, though a feeling of disappointment lingered

in her heart, said:

"Well, let there be a peasants' school, if only our Jastrzeb peasants will be permitted to send their sons to it."

"That does not admit of any doubt," explained Gronski. "There will be as many pupils as accommodations can be provided for. They may come from all parts, though preference is to be given to Rzeslewo peasants."

"What do they say about the bequest?"

"There were more than a dozen of them at the opening of the will, as they expected a direct gift of all the manor lands to them. Somebody had persuaded them that the deceased left everything to them to be equally divided. So they left very much displeased. We heard them say that this was not the genuine will and that they do not need any schools."

"Most fully do I share their opinion," said Dolhanski, "and in this instance, contrary to my nature, I will speak seriously. For at present there is raging an epidemic of founding schools and no one asks for whom, for what, how are they to be taught in them, and what is the end to be attained. I belong to that species of birds who do not toil, but look at everything, if not from the top, then from the side, and, perhaps for that very reason, see things which others do not observe. So, at times, I have an impression that we are like those children, for instance, at Ostend, who build on the sea-shore forts with the sand. Every day on the beach they erect them and every day the waves wash them away until not a trace of them remains."

"In a way you are right," said Gronski; "but there, however, is this difference: the children build joyfully and we do not."

Afterwards he meditated and added:

"However, the law of nature is such that children grow while the adults rear dykes, not of sand, but of stone upon which the weaves dash to pieces."

"Let them be dashed to pieces as quickly as possible," exclaimed Ladislaus.

But Dolhanski would not concede defeat.

"Permit me then," he said, "since we have not yet grown up and have not yet started to build of stone, to remain a pessimist."

Gronski gazed for a while into the depths of the garden like a man who was pondering over something and then said:

"Pessimism-pessimism! We hear that incessantly nowadays. But in the meanwhile if there exists anything more stupid than optimism, which often passes for folly, it is particularly pessimism, which desires to pose as reason."

Dolhanski smiled a trifle biliously and, turning to the ladies, said, pointing to Gronski:

"Do not take this ill of him, ladies. It often happens for him in moments of abstraction to utter impertinences. He is a good-even intelligent-man, but has the unbearable habit of turning over everything, examining it from all sides, pondering over it, and soliloquizing."

But Marynia suddenly flushed with indignation in defence of her friend and, shaking the teapot which at that moment she held

in her hand, began to speak with great ardor:

"That is just right, that is just sensible; that is what everybody ought to do-"

Dolhanski pretended to be awe-stricken and, bowing his head, cried:

"I am vanquished; I retreat and surrender arms."

Gronski, laughing, kissed her hand, while she, abashed at her own vehemence and covered with blushes, began to ask:

"Is it not the truth? Am I not right?"

But Dolhanski already recovered his presence of mind.

"That does not prove anything," he said.

"Why?"

"Because Gronski once promulgated this aphorism: It is never proper to follow the views of a woman, especially if by accident she is right."

"I?" exclaimed Gronski. "Untangle yourself from me. I never said anything like that. Do not believe him, ladies."

"I believe only you, sir," answered Marynia.

But further conversation was interrupted by Pani Krzycki, who observed that it was time for the May mass. In the Jastrzeb manor-house, there was a room especially assigned for that purpose and known as the chapel. At the main wall, opposite the windows, stood an altar with a painting of the Divine Mother of Czestochowo. The walls, altar, painting, and even the candles were decorated with green garlands. On the side tables stood bouquets of elders and jasmines whose fragrance

filled the entire room. Sometimes, when the rector of Rzeslewo arrived, he conducted the services; in his absence the lady of the house. All the inmates of the house, with the exception of Laskowicz, during the entire month of May met every evening in the chapel. At present the gentlemen followed the ladies. On the way Ladislaus asked Gronski:

"Is Miss Anney a Catholic?"

"To tell you the truth, I do not know," answered Gronski, "but it seems-but look, she is entering also. So she must be a Catholic. Perhaps her name is Irish."

In the chapel the candles were already lit, though the sun had not entirely set and stood in the windows, low, golden, and ruddy, casting a lustre on the white cloth which covered the altar and on the heads of the women. At the very altar the lady of the house knelt, behind her the lady visitors; after them the female servants and the old asthmatic lackey, while the gentlemen stood at the wall between the windows. The customary songs, prayers, and litanies began. Their sweetness struck Gronski. There was in them something of spring and at the same time of the evening. The impression of the spring was created by the flowers, and of the evening by ruddy lustre entering through the windows, and the soft voices of the women who, repeating the choral words of the litanies, reminded one of the last chirp of birds, subsiding before the setting of the sun. "Healer of the sick. Refuge of sinners, Comforter of the afflicted," repeated Pani Krzycki; and those soft, subdued voices responded, "Pray for us," – and thus

did that country home pray on that May evening. Gronski, who was a sceptic, but not an atheist, like a man of high culture, at first felt the æsthetic side of this childlike "good-night" borne by these women to a benign deity. Afterwards, as if desiring to corroborate the truth of Dolhanski's assertion that he was wont to turn over every subject on every side and to ponder over every phenomenon, he began to meditate upon religious manifestations. It occurred to him that this homage rendered to a deity was an element purely ideal, possessed solely by humanity. He recalled that as often as he happened to be in church and saw people praying, so often was he struck by the unfathomable chasm which separates the world of man from the animal world. As a matter of fact, religious conceptions can only be formed by higher and more perfect organisms; therefore he drew the conclusion that if there existed beings ten times more intelligent than mankind, they would, in their own way, be ten times more religious. "Yes, but in their own way," Gronski repeated, "which perhaps might be very different." His spiritual drama (and he often thought that there were many people like him) was this: that the Absolute appeared to him as an abyss, as some synthetic law of all the laws of existence. Thus he presumed that according to a degree of mental development it was impossible to imagine that law in the form of the kindly old man or in the eye on the radiant triangle, unless one takes matters symbolically and assumes that the old man and the eye express the all-basis of existence, as the horizontally drawn eight denotes infinity. But

in such case what will this all-basis be for him? Always night, always an abyss, always something inscrutable; barely to be felt by some dull sensation and not by any clear perception, from whose power can be understood the phenomenon of existence and an answer be made to the various whys and wherefores. "Mankind," mused Gronski, "possesses at the same time too much and too little intelligence. For, after all, to simply believe one must unreservedly shut the blinds of his intellectual windows and not permit himself to peer through them; and when he does open them he discovers only a starless night." For this reason he envied those middle-aged persons, whose intelligence reared mentally edifices upon unshaken dogmas, just as lighthouses are built upon rocks in the sea. Dante could master the whole field of knowledge of his time and yet, notwithstanding this, could traverse hell, purgatory, and paradise. The modern man of learning could not travel thus, for if he wished to pass in thought beyond the world of material phenomenon, he would see that which we behold in Wuertz's well-known painting, a decapitated head; that is, some element so undefined that it is equivalent to nothing.

But the tragedy, according to Gronski, lay not only in the inscrutability of the Absolute, in the impossibility of understanding His laws, but also in the impossibility of agreeing on them and acknowledging them from the view point of human life. There exist, of course, evil and woe. The Old Testament explains them easily by the state of almost continual rage of

its Jah. "Domine ne in furore tuo arguas me, neque in ira tua corripas me," and afterwards "sagittae tuae infixae sunt mihi et confirmasti super me manuo tuum." And once having accepted this blind fury and this "strengthening of the right hand," it is easy to explain to one's self in a simple manner misfortune. But already in the Old Testament, Ecclesiastes doubts whether everything in the world is in order. The New Testament sees evil in matter in contraposition to the soul; and that is clear. However, viewing the matter, in the abstract, as everything is a close chain of cause and effect, therefore everything is logical, and being logical it cannot per se be either evil or good, but may appear propitious or unfavorable in its relation to man. Besides, that which we call evil or misfortune may, according to the absolute laws of existence, and in its profundity, be wise and essential principles of development, which are beyond human comprehension, and therefore something which in itself is an advantageous phenomenon.

Yes, but in such case, whence does man derive the power to oppose his individual thoughts and his concrete conceptions to this universal logic? If everything is a delusion, why is the human mind a force, existing, as it were, outside of the general laws of existence? There is this something, unprecedented and at the same time tragical, that man must be subjected to these laws and can protest against them. On earth spiritual peace was enjoyed only by the gods, and is now only by animals. Man is eternally struggling and crying veto, and such a veto is every human tear.

And here Gronski's thoughts assumed a more personal aspect. He began to look at the praying Marynia and at first experienced relief. There came to his mind the purely æsthetic observation that Carpaccio might have placed such a maiden beside his guitar-player and Boticelli should have foreseen her. But immediately afterwards he thought that even such a flower must wither, and nothing withers or dies without pain. Suddenly he was seized with a fear of the future, which in her traveling-pouch carries concealed evil and woe. He recalled, indeed, the aphorism which he had uttered, a short time before, about pessimism; but that gave him no comfort, because he understood that the pessimism which flowed from the exertions of the intellect is different from the worldling's pessimism which Dolhanski, by shrugging his shoulders at everything, permitted himself to indulge in when free from card-playing. He moreover propounded to himself the question whether that debilitating pessimism could in any manner be well founded, and here unexpectedly there stood before his eyes another friend, entirely different from Dolhanski, though also a sceptic and hedonist, – Doctor Parebski. He was a college-mate of Gronski and in later years had treated him for a nervous ailment; therefore he knew him perfectly. Once, after listening to his various reflections and complaints about the impossibility of finding a solution of the paramount questions of life, Doctor Parebski said to him: "That is a pastime for which time and means are necessary. If you had to work for your bread as I have, you would not upset your own

mind and the minds of others. All that reminds me of a dog chasing his own tail. And I tell you, look at that which environs you and not at your own navel; and if you want to be well, then—carpe diem!" Gronski at that time deemed these words somewhat brutal and more in the nature of medical than philosophical advice, but now when he recalled them he said to himself: "In truth the road on which, as if from bad habit, I am continually entering leads to nowhere; and who knows whether these women praying this moment with such faith are not, without question, more sensible than I am, not to say more at ease and happier?"

In the meantime Pani Kryzcki began to speak: "Under Thy protection we flee. Holy Mother of God," and the women's voices immediately responded: "Our entreaties deign not to spurn and from all evil deign to preserve us forever." Gronski was swept by an intense longing for such a sweet, tutelary divinity who does not deign to scorn entreaties and who delivers us from evil. How well it would be with him if he could enjoy such peace of mind, and how simple the thought! Unfortunately he already had strayed too far away. He could, like women, yearn, but, unlike them, he could not believe.

Gronski mentally reviewed the whole array of his acquaintances and noted that those who fervently believed, in the depths of their souls, were very few in number. Some there were who did not believe at all; others who wanted to believe and could not; some acknowledged from social considerations the necessity of faith, and finally there were those who were simply occupied

with something else. To this latter category belonged men who, for instance, observed the custom of attending mass as they did the habit of eating breakfast every morning, or of donning a dress-coat each evening or wearing gloves. Through habit it entered into the texture of their lives. Here Gronski unwillingly glanced at Ladislaus, for it seemed to him that the young man was a bird from that grove.

Such, in fact, was the case. Krzycki, however, was neither a dull nor thoughtless person. At the university he, like others, philosophized a little, but afterwards the current of his life carried him in another direction. There existed, indeed, beside Jastrzeb and the daily affairs connected therewith, other matters which deeply interested him. He was sincerely concerned about his native land, her future, the events which might affect her destiny, and finally-women and love. But upon faith he reflected as much as he did upon death, upon which he did not reflect at all, as if he was of the opinion that it was improper to think of them, since they in the proper time will not forget anybody.

At present, moreover, owing to the guests, he was more than a hundred miles from thinking of such questions. At one time, while yet a student, when during vacation time he drove over with his mother to Rzeslewo to attend high mass, he cherished in the depths of his soul the poetical hope that some Sunday the rattle of a carriage would resound without the church doors and a young and charming princess, journeying from somewhere beyond the Baltic to Kiev, would enter the church; that he would

invite her to Jastrzeb and later fall in love with her and marry her. And now here unexpectedly those youthful dreams were in some measure realized, for to Jastrzeb there came not one but three princesses of whom he could dream as much as he pleased, for behold, they were now kneeling before the family altar, absorbed in prayer. He began to gaze—now at Pani Otocka and then at the form of Marynia, which resembled a Tanagra figurine, and repeated to himself: "Mother desires to give one of them to me as a wife." And he had nothing against the idea, but thought of Pani Otocka, "That is a book which somebody has already read, while the other is a fledgeling who can play a violin." Ladislaus was of the age which does not take into calculation any woman under twenty years. After a while, as if unwillingly, he directed his eyes towards Miss Anney, — unwillingly because she formed the most luminous object in the room, for the setting sun, falling upon her light hair, saturated it with such lustre that the whole head appeared aflame. Miss Anney from time to time raised her hand and shaded her head with it as if she desired to extinguish the lustre, but as the rays each moment became less warm, she finally discontinued the action. At times she was hidden from view by the figure of some dark-haired girl, whom Ladislaus did not know, but who, he surmised, must be a servant of one of these ladies. Towards the close of the services the girl bowed so low that she no longer obscured the view of the light hair or the young and powerful shoulders.

"That," he said to himself, "would be the greatest temptation,

but mother would be opposed, as she is a foreigner."

But suddenly, as if to rebuke his conscience, there came to his memory the pensive eyes and slender shoulders of Panna Stabrowska. Ah! if only Rzeslewo and the funds had fallen to his lot! But uncle bequeathed Rzeslewo for educational purposes and the funds for trips to Carlsbad by the Mats, as Dolhanski had said, and a few thousand for Hanka Skibianka. At this recollection his brow clouded and he drew his hand across his forehead.

"I unnecessarily became excited before mother and the ladies," he said to himself, "but I must explain this matter to Gronski."

Accordingly, at the close of the mass, he turned to him:

"I want to speak with you about various matters, but only in four eyes. Is that satisfactory?"

"All right," answered Gronski, "when?"

"Not to-day, for I must first go to Rzeslewo to question the men, look over the estate, and then attend to the guests. It will be best to-morrow evening or the day after. We will take our rifles with us and go to the woods. Now there is a flight of woodcocks. Dolhanski does not hunt, so we will leave him with the ladies."

"All right," repeated Gronski.

VIII

The very next day, towards evening, they strolled with their rifles and a dog in the direction of the mill, and on the way Ladislaus began to narrate all that he had learned the previous day.

"I was in Rzeslewo," he said, "but there you hear nothing good. The peasants insist that the will was forged and that the gentry twisted it about so that they could control, for their own benefit, the money and the lands. I am almost certain that Laskowicz is pouring oil upon that fire. But why? I cannot understand; nevertheless, that is the case. The landless, in particular, are wrought up and say that if the fortune is divided among them, they, themselves, will contribute for a school. In reality, they have no conception of the kind of school Zarnowski wanted, nor of the cost of establishing it."

"In view of this, what do you intend to do?" asked Gronski.

"I do not know. I will see. In the meantime I will try to convince them. I also begged the rector to explain the matter to them and spoke with a few of the older husbandmen. I seemed to have persuaded them; but unfortunately with them it is thus: that everyone, taken singly, is intelligent and even sensible, but when you talk to them together, it is like trying to smash a stone wall with your head."

"That is nothing strange," answered Gronski; "take ten

thousand doctors of philosophy together and they become a mob which is ruled by gesticulations."

"That may be," said Ladislaus, "but I did not wish to speak of the will only. I also saw the old Rzeslewo overseer and learned a great many, intensely curious things. Figure to yourself that our guesses were wrong and that Hanka Skibianka is not the daughter of Uncle Zarnowski."

"And that seemed so certain! But what kind of proof have you of this?"

"Very simple. Skiba was a native of Galicia and emigrated to Rzeslewo with his wife and daughter when the latter was five years old. As Zarnowski, while well, stayed in the village like a wall, and at that time for at least ten years had not travelled anywhere, it is evident that he could not have been the father of that girl."

"That decides the matter. I cannot understand why he bequeathed to her ten thousand roubles."

"There is an interesting history connected with that," replied Ladislaus. "You must know that the deceased, though now it appears that he loved the peasants, always kept them under very strict control. He managed them according to the old system; that is, he abused them from morning till night. They say that when he cursed in the corridor you could hear him over half the village. A certain day he went into the blacksmith's shop and, finding something out of order, began to berate the blacksmith unmercifully. The smith bowed and listened in humility. It

happened that little Hanka at that time was in front of the smithy and, seeing what was taking place, seized a little stick and started to belabor Zarnowski with it all over the legs. 'You will scold Tata, will you?' It is said that the deceased at first was dumbfounded, but afterwards burst into such laughter that his anger against the blacksmith passed away."

"That Hanka pleases me."

"So did she please Uncle. The very same day he sent a rouble to the smith's wife and ordered her to bring the child to the manor-house. From that time he became attached to her. He commanded the old housekeeper to teach her to read, and attended to it himself. The child likewise became devoted to him, and this continued for a number of years. In the end people began to say that the master wanted to keep the smith's daughter entirely at his residence and have her educated as a lady, but this, it seems, was untrue. He wanted to bring her up as a stout village lass and give her a dowry. The Skibas, whose only child she was, declared that they would not surrender her for anything in the world. Of course, I know only what the overseer told me, for our relations with the deceased were broken on account of the mill from which he drained the water for his ponds."

"And later the Skibas emigrated."

"Yes, but before that time Zarnowski began to fail in health and moved to Warsaw, and subsequently resided abroad; so that their relations relaxed. When the Skibas emigrated, the girl was seventeen. Uncle, on his return to Rzeslewo to die,

longed for her and waited for some news of her. But as he had previously removed even his furniture from Rzeslewo to the city, she evidently assumed that he never would return and did not know where to write."

"The bequest proves best that he did not forget her," said Gronski, "and from the whole will it appears that he was a man of better heart than people thought."

"Surely," answered Ladislaus.

For an interval they walked in silence; then Krzycki resumed the conversation.

"As for myself, I prefer that she is not the daughter of the deceased."

"Why? Has that any bearing on the bequest?"

"No. Under no circumstances will I accept that bequest. Never!"

"That is all very well, but tell me, why did you renounce it with such vehemence that everybody was astonished?"

"There is one circumstance which neither Mother nor anybody else even suspects, but which I will sincerely confess to you. In the proper time I seduced that girl."

Gronski stood still, gazed at Ladislaus, and ejaculated:

"What's that?"

As he was not prone to treat such matters with levity and, besides, the previous narrative of Krzycki had awakened within him a sympathy for Hanka, he frowned and asked:

"For the fear of God! You seduced a child? And you say it

was done in the proper time?"

But Ladislaus replied quite calmly:

"Let us not stop, for the dog has gone too far ahead of us," and here he pointed at the white spaniel running before them. "I did not seduce a child, for at that time she was sixteen. It happened more than seven years ago, while I was still a student and came to Jastrzeb on a vacation."

"Were there any consequences?"

"As far as I know there were none. You will understand that having returned the following vacation and not finding either her or the Skibas, I did not ask about them, for on the thief's head the cap burns.² But to-day I casually asked the overseer whether the Skibas had not probably emigrated because some mishap had befallen their daughter. He answered, 'No.'"

"Then it is better for her and for you."

"Certainly it is much better; for otherwise the matter would have been brought to light and would reach Mother's ears."

"And in such case you would suffer much unpleasantness."

There was irony in Gronski's voice, but Ladislaus, absorbed in his own thoughts, did not notice it and said:

"In such case, I would have unpleasantness because Mother in such matters is exceedingly severe. So, to-day, after mature deliberation, I am like a wolf, who will commit no injury in the neighborhood where he keeps his nest, but at that time I was more

² "On the thief's head the cap burns: " a Polish proverb meaning that persons, conscious of guilt, always fear detection. – Translator.

headstrong and less careful."

"May the deuce take you!" exclaimed Gronski.

"For what?"

"Nothing; speak on."

"I have not much more to say. Recurring to the will, you now understand why I could not accept it."

"Perhaps I do, but tell me 'thy exquisite reason,' as Shakespeare says."

"Well, as to the seduction of a girl, that does happen in villages, but to seduce a girl and appropriate to one's own use that which had been provided for her, – why, that would be too much. And perhaps she may be suffering, in want, somewhere in America."

"Everything is possible," answered Gronski.

"So that if the advertisements, which I will make, do not reach her notice, in such case, I would be using her money, while she would die of starvation. No. Everything has its limits. I am not extraordinarily scrupulous, but there are some things which I plainly cannot do."

"Tell me, but sincerely, do you entertain towards her any sentiment?"

"I will tell you candidly that I completely forgot her. Now I have recalled her and, in truth, I cannot have any ill-will towards her. On the contrary, that kind of recollection cannot, of course, be disagreeable, unless it is linked with remorse. But we were mere children-and a pure accident brought us together."

"Then permit me to ask one more question. If the deceased bequeathed to her the whole of Rzeslewo, and the funds, and if she did not within two years appear to claim them, would you renounce such a bequest?"

"I cannot answer a question to which I have not given any consideration. I would not want to represent myself to you any better or any worse than I am. But this much is certain: I would publish the advertisements, and would publish them for the two years. But after all, of what importance to you can my answer be?"

And here he abruptly paused, for from the direction of the adjacent birch grove some strange sound reached them, resembling a snort, and at the same time, above the tops of the birch and the lime-trees, there appeared upon the background of the twilight a gray bird, flying in a straight line to the underwood on the opposite side of the meadow.

"Woodcock!" cried Krzycki, and he bounded forward.

Gronski, following him, thought:

"He certainly never read Nietzsche, and yet in his veins, together with the blood, there courses some noble super-humanity. If anybody betrayed his sister, he would have shot him in the head like a dog, but as a village girl is concerned, he does not feel the slightest uneasiness."

Later they stopped at the edge of the birch grove. For a time intense silence prevailed; after which a strange voice resounded again above their heads and another woodcock

appeared. Gronski fired and missed; Krzycki bettered-and they saw how, with descending flight, the fowl fell in the underwood farther off. The white dog for a while lingered in the dusk of the thicket and returned carrying the dead bird in his mouth.

"She was already wounded when I fired," said Ladislaus. "It is your bird."

"You are a gracious host," answered Gronski.

And again silence ensued, which even the rustle of leaves did not disturb, as there was not a breath of air. But after a time two woodcocks snorted above their heads, one following the other, at which Gronski could not shoot, but Ladislaus winged both cleanly. Finally a more reckless one took pity on Gronski for she flew accommodatingly over him, as if she desired to save him any inconvenience. He himself felt ashamed at the thrill of pleasure he experienced when, after firing, he saw the bird hit the ground; and agreeable to his incorrigible habit of meditation upon every phenomenon, he came to the conclusion that his strange sensation could be attributed to the aboriginal times, when man and his family were dependent for subsistence upon skill in hunting. Thanks to this reasoning, he did not shoot at another bird that flew nearer the edge of the underwood and with which the flight evidently ended, as they waited for others in vain. In the meanwhile it grew dark, and after an interval the white spaniel emerged from the nightfall, and after him came Ladislaus.

"We had a bootless chase," he said, "but that is nothing. In

any case, there are four morsels for the ladies. Tomorrow we will try for more."

"This was but a slight interruption in your confessions," answered Gronski, slinging his rifle over his shoulder.

"My confessions?" said Ladislaus. "Aha! – yes."

"You said that a mere accident brought you together."

"That actually was the case. But we must now go ahead and you will kindly follow in my footsteps, as it is damp here in some places. This way we will reach the bridge and at the bridge we will have the road."

Not until they were on the road did he commence his narrative:

"It all began and ended in the mill, which even at that time served as a storage place for hay; and it did not continue more than a fortnight. It occurred thus: I once went out with a rifle to hunt for roebucks, for here roebucks come out in the evening at the clearing on the stream. It was very cloudy that day, but as it appeared to be clear in the west, I thought that the clouds would pass away. I took a position of a few hundred-and even more-steps from the mill, for nearer there was lying on the meadow, linen, which might scare the bucks; and about a half hour later I actually killed a buck. But in the meanwhile it began to rain, and in a short while there was such a downpour as I had never seen in Jastrzeb. I seized my buck by the hind legs and began to scamper off with all my might for the mill. On the way I noticed that some one had carried away the linen. I rushed into

the mill and buried myself up to the ears in the hay, when I heard somebody breathing close by me. I asked: 'Who is that?' A thin voice answered me, 'I.' 'What kind of an I?' 'Hanka.' 'What are you doing here?' 'I came for the linen.' Then it began to thunder so much that I thought the mill would fall to pieces; – and not until it had subsided somewhat did I learn by the aid of continuous questions that my female companion was from Rzeslewo; that her family name was Skibianka, and that she finished her sixteenth year on St. Anne's Day. Then, and I give you my word, without any sinister will or intent, but only as a jest and because it is customary to talk that way with village maids, I said to her: 'Will you give me a kiss?' She did not answer, but as at that moment a thunder clap pealed, she nestled closer to me – perhaps from fright. And I kissed her on the very lips and, as I live, I had the same impression as if I had kissed a fragrant flower. So I repeated it twice, three times, and so on, and she returned the tenth or twentieth. When the storm passed away and it became necessary for us to part, I had her arms about my neck and at the same time my cheeks were wet with her tears, – for she cried, but I do not know whether from the loss of innocence or because I was leaving."

Here, in spite of himself, the song of Ophelia, when insane, flitted through Krzycki's memory.

Ladislaus continued:

"On our departure she said that she knew I was the young lord of Jastrzeb; that she saw me every Sunday in Rzeslewo and gazed

upon me as upon some miracle-working painting."

"Ah, you certainly are handsome to the point of nauseousness," interrupted Gronski, with a certain irritation.

"Bah! – I have already three or four gray hairs."

"Surely, from birth. How often did you meet thereafter?"

"Before I left her, I asked her whether she could not slip away the following evening. She answered that she could, because in the evening she always gathered the linen, which was being bleached upon the meadow, for fear that some one might steal it, and that besides, in summer time she did not sleep in the cabin with her parents, but on the hay in the barn. After that we met every day. I had to conceal myself from the night watch, so I slunk out of the window into the garden, though this was an unnecessary precaution, for the watch slept so soundly that one time I carried off the trumpet and staff belonging to one of them. It was amusing also that, seeing Hanka only in the night time, I did not know how she really looked; though in the moonlight she appeared to me to be pretty."

"And in church?"

"Our collator's pew is near the altar, while the girls knelt in the rear. There are so many of the same red and yellow shawls, studded with so many flowers, that it is difficult to distinguish one from the other. At times it seemed to me that I saw her in the distance, but I could not see her perfectly. The vacation soon ended, and when I returned the following season the Skibas were gone."

"Did you bid her farewell?"

"I admit that I did not. I preferred to avoid that."

"And did you ever long for her?"

"Yes. In Warsaw I longed for her intensely, and during the first month I was deeply in love with her. After my return to Jastrzeb, when I again saw the mill the feeling revived, but at the same time I was content that everything should drop, as it were, into the water and that Mother should not know anything about it."

Conversing in this manner, they turned from the side road to the shady walk leading to the manor-house, whose low lights, from a distance of about a verst, at times glistened through the boughs of the linden, and then again hid themselves, screened by the thick foliage. The night was starry and fair. It was, however, quite dark, for the moon had not yet risen and the copper glow upon the eastern sky announced its near approach. There was not the slightest breath of air. The great nocturnal stillness was broken by the barks of dogs, barely audible, from the distant slumbering village. Involuntarily, Gronski and Ladislaus began to speak in lower tones. However, everything was not asleep, for a few hundred paces from the walk, on the meadow near the river, firelights were intermittingly flashing.

"Those are peasants pasturing the horses and catching crawfish by the lights of the resinous wood," said Krzycki. "I even hear one of them riding away."

And in fact at that moment they heard on the meadows the clatter of the horse's hoofs, deadened by the grass, and

immediately afterwards the loud voice of a herdsman resounded, who, amidst the nocturnal quiet, shouted in a drawling tone:

"Wojtek-Bring with you some more fagots, for these are not sufficient."

The night rider, having reached the road, soon passed by the chatting friends like a shadow. He, however, recognized the young heir, as in riding by them he pulled off his cap and saluted:

"Praised be the Lord!"

"Now and forever."

And for some time they walked in silence.

Ladislaus began to whistle quietly and to shout at the dog, but Gronski, who was cogitating upon what had occurred in the mill, said:

"Do you know that if you were an Englishman, for instance, your idyl would have ended, in all probability, differently, and you would throughout your life have had a chaste remembrance, in which there would be great poetry."

"We eat less fish, therefore have a temperament differing from the Englishmen. As to poetry, perhaps there also was a little of it in our affair."

"It is not so much different temperament as different usages, and in that is the relief. They have a soul, healthier and at the same time, more independent, and do not borrow their morality from French books."

After which he meditated for a while and then continued:

"You say that in your relations there was a little poetry."

Certainly, but looking at it only from Hanka's side, not yours. In her, really, there is something poetical, for, deducing from your own words, she loved you truly."

"That is certain," said Ladislaus. "Who knows whether I ever in my life will be loved as much?"

"I think that you will not. For that reason, I am astonished that this stone should drop into the depth of your forgetfulness and that you should have so completely effaced it."

These words touched Krzycki somewhat, so he replied:

"Candidly speaking, I related all this to you for the purpose of explaining why I do not accept the bequest, and, in the naïveté of my soul, I thought that you would praise me. But you are only seeking sore spots. Indeed, I would, after all, have preferred that this had not happened, but, since it happened, it is best not to think of it. For if I had as many millions as there are girls seduced every year in the villages, I could purchase not only Rzeslewo, but one half of the county. I can assure you that they themselves do not look upon it as a tragedy, neither do such things end in misfortune. It would plainly be laughable if I took this to heart more than Hanka who in all probability did not take it to heart and does not."

"How do you know?"

"That is usually the case. But if it were the reverse, what can I do? Surely I will not journey across the ocean to seek her. In a book that might perhaps appear very romantic, but in reality I have an estate which I cannot abandon and a family which it is

not permissible for me to sacrifice. Such a Hanka, with whom, speaking parenthetically, you have soured me by recalling, may be the most honest girl, but to marry her-of course I could not marry her; therefore what, after all, can I do?"

"I do not know; but you must agree that there is a certain moral unsavoriness in the situation in which a man, after committing a wrong, afterwards asks himself or others, 'What can I do?'"

"Oh, that was only a *façon de parler*," replied Krzycki, "for, on the whole, I know perfectly. I will publish the advertisements and with that everything will end. The penance, which the priest at the proper time imposed upon me, I have performed, and I do not intend to make any further atonement."

To this Gronski said:

"*Sero molunt deorum molæ*. Do you understand what that means in Polish?"

"Having assumed the management of Jastrzeb, I sowed all my latinity over its soil, but it has not taken root."

"That means: The mills of the gods grind late."

Krzycki began to laugh and, pointing his hand in the direction of the old mill, said:

"That one will not grind anything any more; I guarantee that."

Further conversation was interrupted by their meeting near the gates two indistinct forms, with which they almost collided, for though the moon had already ascended, in the old linden walk it was completely dark.

Ladislaus thought that they were the lady visitors enjoying an

evening stroll, but for certainty asked, "Who is there?"

"We," answered an unknown feminine voice.

"And who in particular?"

"Servants of Pani Otocka and Miss Anney."

The young man recalled the young girl whose dark head obstructed his view of the lustrous hair of the English woman during the May mass.

"Aha!" he said. "Do not you young girls fear to walk in the darkness? A were-wolf might carry off one of you."

"We are not scared," answered the same voice.

"And perhaps I am a were-wolf?"

"A were-wolf does not look like that."

Both girls began to laugh and withdrew a few steps; at the same time a bright ray darted through the leaves and illumined the white forehead, black eyebrows, and the whites of the eyes of one of them, which glittered greenishly.

Krzycki, who was flattered by the words that a werewolf did not look like that, gazed at those eyes and said:

"Good-night!"

"Good-night!"

The ladies, with Dolhanski, were already in the dining-room, as the service of the supper awaited only the hunters who, after their return, withdrew to change their apparel. Marynia sat at one end of the table with the children and conversed a little with them and a little with Laskowicz, who was relating something to her with great animation, gazing all the time at her with

intense fixedness and also with wariness that no one should observe him. Gronski, however, did observe him and, as the young student had interested and disquieted him from the time he learned of his agitation among the Rzeslewo peasants, he desired to participate in the conversation. But Marynia at that moment having heard the conclusion, joined the other ladies, who, having previously heard from the balcony the shooting in the direction of the old mill, inquired about the results of the hunt. It appearing that neither Miss Anney nor the two sisters had ever seen woodcocks except upon a platter, the old servant upon Krzycki's order brought the four lifeless victims. They viewed them with curiosity, expressed tardy commiseration for their tragic fate, and asked about their manner of life. Ladislaus, whom the animal world had interested from early years, began to relate at the supper the strange habits of those birds and their mysterious flights. While thus occupied he paid particular attention to Pani Otocka, for he was, for the first time, struck by her uncommonly fine stature. On the whole, he preferred other, less subtle kinds of beauty, and prized, above all else, buxom women. He observed, however, that on that night Pani Otocka looked extraordinarily handsome. Her unusually delicate complexion appeared yet more delicate in her black lace-stitched dress, and in her eyes, in the outlines of her lips, in the expression of her countenance, and in her whole form there was something so maidenly that whoever was not aware of her widowhood would have taken her for a maid of a good country family. Ladislaus,

from the first arrival of these ladies, had indeed enlisted on the side of Miss Anney, but at the present moment he had to concede in his soul that the Englishwoman was not a specimen of so refined a race and, what was worse, she seemed to him that day less beautiful than this "subtile cousin."

But at the same time he made a strange discovery, namely: that this observation not only did not lessen his sympathy for the light-haired lady, but in some manner moved him strongly and inclined him to a greater friendship for her; as if by that comparison with Pani Otocka he had done an undeserved wrong to the Englishwoman, for which he ought to apologize to her. "I must be on my guard," he thought, "otherwise I will fall." He began to search for the celestial flow in her eyes and, finding it, drank its dim azure, drop by drop.

In the meantime Pani Krzycki, desirous of learning the earliest plans of the sisters, began to ask Pani Otocka whether they were going to travel abroad, and where.

"The doctor," she said, "sends me to mineral baths on account of my rheumatism, but I would be delighted to spend one more summer with you somewhere."

"And to us your sojourn at Krynica left the most agreeable memories," replied Pani Otocka; "particularly, as we are in perfect health, we willingly would remain in the village and more willingly would invite Aunt to us, with her entire household, were it not that the times are so troublous and it is unknown what may happen on the morrow. But if it will quiet down. Aunt, after her

recovery, must certainly pay us a visit."

Saying this, she ardently kissed the hand of Pani Krzycki who said:

"How good you are and how lovable! I would with all my heart go to you, only, with my health, I must not obey the heart but various hidden ailments. Besides, the times are really troublous and I understand it is rather dangerous for ladies to remain alone in the villages. Have you any reliable people in Zalesin?"

"I do not fear my own people as they were very much attached to my husband, and now that attachment has passed to me. My husband taught them, above all things, patriotism, and at the same time introduced improvements which did not exist elsewhere. We have an orphanage, hospital, baths, stores, and fruit nurseries for the distribution of small trees. He even caused artesian wells to be sunk to provide enough healthful water for the village."

Dolhanski, hearing this, leaned towards Krzycki and whispered:

"A capitalist's fantasy. He regarded his wife and Zalesin as two playthings which he fondled, and played the rôle of a philanthropist because he could afford it."

But Pani Krzycki again began to ask:

"Who now is in charge of Zalesin?"

And the young widow, having cast off a momentary sad recollection, answered with a smile:

"In the neighborhood they say Dworski rules Zalesin. – He is

the old accountant of my husband and is very devoted to us. – I rule Dworski, and Marynia rules me."

"And that is the truth," interjected Miss Anney, "with this addition, and me also."

To this Marynia shook her head and said:

"Oh, Aunt, if you only knew how they sometimes twit me!"

"Somehow I do not see that, but I think that the time will come when somebody will rule you also."

"It has already come," broke out Marynia.

"So? That is curious. Who is that despot?"

And the little violinist, pointing with a quick movement of her little finger at Gronski, said:

"That gentleman."

"Now I understand," said Dolhanski, "why, after our return from the notary, he had a teapot full of hot water over his head."

Gronski shrugged his shoulders, like a man who had been charged with unheard-of things, and exclaimed:

"I? A despot? Why, I am a victim, the most hypnotized of all."

"Then Pan Laskowicz is the hypnotizer, not I," answered the young miss, "for he himself at supper was telling me about hypnotism and explaining what it is."

Gronski looked toward the other end of the table, in the direction of the student, and saw his eyes, strained, refractory, and glistening, fastened upon Marynia.

"Aha!" he thought, "he actually is trying his powers upon her."

He frowned and, addressing her, said:

"Nobody in truth knows what hypnotism is. We see its manifestations and nothing more. But how did Laskowicz explain it to you?"

"He told me what I already had heard before; that the person put to sleep must perform everything which the operator commands, and even when awakened must submit to the operator's will."

"That is untrue," said Gronski.

"And I think likewise. He claimed also that he could put me to sleep very easily, but I feel that he cannot."

"Excellent! Do such things interest you?"

"Hypnotism a little. But if it is to be anything mysterious, then I prefer to hear about spirits; especially do I like to hear the stories which one of our neighbors relates about fairies. He says they are called sprites, and indulge in all kinds of tricks in old houses, and they can be seen at night time through the windows in rooms where the fire is burning in the hearth. There they join hands and dance before the fire."

"Those are gay fairies."

"And not malicious, though mischievous. Our aged neighbor piously believes in them and quarrels about them with the rector. He says his house is full of them and that they are continually playing pranks: sometimes pulling the coils of the clock to make it ring; sometimes hiding his slippers and other things; making noise during the night; hitching crickets to nut-shells and driving with them over the rooms; in the kitchen they skim the milk and

throw peas into the fire to make them pop. If you do not vex them, they are benevolent, driving away spiders and mice, and watching that the mushrooms do not soil the floor. This neighbor of ours at one time was a man of great education, but in his old age has become queer, and he tells us this in all seriousness. We, naturally, laugh at it, but I confess that I very much wish that such a world did exist; – strange and mysterious! There would be in it something so good and nice, and less sadness."

Here she began to look off with dreamy eyes and afterwards continued:

"I remember also that whenever we discussed Boecklin's pictures, those fauns, nymphs, and dryads which he painted, I always regretted that all that did not exist in reality. And sometimes it seemed to me that they might exist, only we do not see them. For, in truth, who knows what happens in the woods at noontime or night time, when no one is there; or in the mists during the moonlight or upon the ponds? Belief in such a world is not wholly childish, since we believe in angels."

"I also believe in fairies, nymphs, dryads, and angels," answered Gronski.

"Really?" she asked, "for you always speak to me as to a child." And he answered her only mentally:

"I speak as with a child, but I idolize."

But further conversation was interrupted by the servant, who informed Ladislaus that the steward of Rzeslewo had arrived and desired to see the "bright young lord" on a very important matter.

Krzycki apologized to the company and with the expression, customary with country husbandmen, "What is up now?" left the room. As the supper was almost finished, they all began to move, after the example of the lady of the house, who, however, for a while endeavored in vain to rise, for the rheumatism during the past two days afflicted her more and more. Similar attacks occurred often and in such cases her son usually conducted her from room to room. But in this instance Miss Anney, who sat nearest to her, came to her assistance and, taking her in her arms, lifted her easily, skillfully, and without any exertion.

"I thank you, I thank you," said Pani Krzycki, "for otherwise I would have to wait for Laudie. Ah, my God, how good it is to be strong!"

"Oh, in me you have a veritable Samson," answered Miss Anney in her pleasant, subdued voice.

But at that moment Ladislaus, who evidently recalled that he had to escort his mother, rushed into the room and, seeing what was taking place, exclaimed:

"Permit me, Miss Anney. That is my duty. You will fatigue yourself."

"Not the least."

"Ah, Laudie," said Pani Krzycki, "to tell the truth, I do not know which one of you two is the stronger."

"Is it truly so?" he asked, looking with rapt eyes upon the slender form of the girl.

And she began to wink with her eyes in token that such was

the fact, but at the same time blushed as if ashamed of her unwomanly strength.

Ladislaus, however, assisted her to seat his mother at the table in the small salon, at which she was accustomed to amuse herself in the evenings by laying out cards to forecast fortunes. On this occasion he unintentionally brushed his shoulder against Miss Anney's shoulder and, when he felt those steel-like young muscles, a violent thrill suddenly penetrated through him and at the same time he was possessed by a perception of some elementary, unheard-of, blissful power. If he were Gronski and ever in his life had read Lucretius' hymn to Venus, he would have been able to know and name that power. But as he was only a twenty-seven-year-old, healthy nobleman, he only thought that the moments in which he would be free to hug such a girl to his bosom would be worth the sacrifice of Jastrzeb, Rzeslewo, and even life.

But in the meanwhile he had to return to the steward of Rzeslewo, who waited for him in the office upon an urgent matter. Their talk lasted so long that when Ladislaus reappeared in the small salon, the young ladies had already withdrawn to their rooms. Only his mother, who was purposely waiting, desirous of knowing what was the matter, remained, with Gronski and with Dolhanski, who was playing baccarat with himself.

"What is the news?" asked Pani Krzycki.

"Absolutely nothing good. Only let Mamma not get alarmed,

for we are of course here in Jastrzeb and not in Rzeslewo; and eventually we can brush this aside with our hands. But nevertheless, strange things are occurring there and Kapuscinski, in any event, did right to come here."

"For the Lord's sake, who is Kapuscinski?" exclaimed Dolhanski, dropping the monocle from his eye.

"The steward of Rzeslewo. He says that some unknown persons, probably from Warsaw, appeared there and are acting like gray geese in the skies. They issue commands, summon the peasants, incite them, promising them the lands and even order them to take possession of the stock. They predict it will be the same in all Poland as it is in Rzeslewo-"

"And what of the peasants? what of the peasants?" interrupted Pani Krzycki.

"Some believe them, while others do not. The more sensible, who attempt to resist, are threatened with death. The manor farm-hands will not obey Kapuscinski and say that they will only pasture and feed the cattle, but will not touch any other work. About fifteen of the tenants are preparing to go to the woods with hatchets and they declare that, if the foresters interfere with their right to cut wood, they will give them a good drubbing. Kapuscinski has lost his head completely and came to me, as one of the executors of the will, for advice."

"And what did you tell him?"

"As he declared to me that he was not certain of his life in Rzeslewo, I advised him by all means to pass the night with

us in Jastrzeb. I wanted first to consult Mother and you, for in fact, advice under the circumstances is difficult to give and the situation is grave. Of course such a situation cannot continue very long, and sooner or later the peasants themselves will suffer the most by it. This we must positively prevent. I will candidly state that for the past two days, I have been considering whether it would not be better if I renounced the curatorship of the new school and Rzeslewo matters in general. I hesitated only because it is a public service, but in truth, I have so much work to attend to here in Jastrzeb, that I do not know on what I shall lay my hands first. But now, since it is necessary to rescue the peasants, and since a certain amount of danger is connected with it, I cannot retreat."

"I will fear about you, but I understand you," said Pani Krzycki.

"I think that by all means, I should drive over to-morrow morning to Rzeslewo, but if I do not secure a hearing there, then what is to be done?"

"You will not get any," said Dolhanski, not pausing in his distribution of the cards.

"If you go, I will go with you," announced Pani Krzycki.

"Ah, that would be the only thing needful! Let Mamma only think that in such a case I would be terribly hampered and certainly would not gain anything."

After which he kissed her hand and said:

"No, no! Mamma does not understand that matters would be

worse and, if Mamma insists, then I would rather not go at all."

Gronski propped his head upon his hand and thought that it was easier to analyze at a desk the various phases of life than to offer sound advice in the presence of urgent events. Dolhanski at last stopped playing baccarat with himself and said:

"The position we are placed in passes all comprehension. But were we in any other country, the police would be summoned and the matter would end in a day."

To this Ladislaus replied with some anger:

"As for that, permit me! I will not summon the police; not only not against those peasants, but not even against those forbidden figures who now haunt Rzeslewo. No, never!"

"Very well; long live an epoch of true freedom!"

"Who knows," said Gronski, "but that the summoning of the police would just suit these gentlemen?"

"In what way?"

"Because they themselves, at the proper season, would disappear, but later would incite the people again and would cry all over Poland, 'Behold! who appeals to the police against peasants.'"

"That is a pertinent observation," said Ladislaus; "now I understand various things which I did not comprehend before."

"From the opening of the will," said Dolhanski, "Rzeslewo and its inhabitants did not concern me in the least. However, one thought occurred to me while dealing the cards. Laudie will drive over to Rzeslewo to-morrow on a fruitless errand. He may receive

only a sound beating, without benefiting anybody-"

"It has never yet come to that, and that is something I do not fear. Our family has lived in Jastrzeb from time immemorial, and the peasants of this neighborhood would not raise their hands against a Krzycki-"

"Above all, do not interrupt me," said Dolhanski. "If you do not get a sound thrashing-and I assume that you may not-then you will not secure a hearing, as you yourself foresaw a little while ago. If we two, that is, Gronski and myself, went over there, we would not effect anything because they have seen us at the funeral, and the estimable Slavonians of Rzeslewo look upon us as men who have a personal interest in the matter. It will be necessary that some one unknown go there, who will not argue, but who will act as if he had the right and power and will command the peasants to behave peaceably. Since you are so much concerned about them, that will be the only way. So, then, since by virtue of the unfathomable decrees of Providence there exist in this beloved land of ours National Democrats, whom, parenthetically speaking, I cannot endure any more than the seven-spot of clubs, but who, in all probability, have fists as sweaty and as heavy as the socialists, – could you not settle this matter with their assistance?"

"Of course, naturally, naturally!" exclaimed Gronski; "the peasants, after all, have great confidence in the National party."

"I also belong to that party with my whole heart," said Krzycki, "but, sitting, like a stone, in Jastrzeb, I do not know to

whom to apply."

"In any case, not to me," said Dolhanski.

But Gronski, though he did not belong to any faction, thoroughly knew the city and easily suggested the addresses and the manner in which the party could be notified. He afterwards said:

"And now I will give you one word of advice, the same which you, Laudie, gave Kapuscinski, namely, that we go to sleep, for you, especially, madam," – here he addressed the lady of the house – "were entitled to that long ago. Is it agreed?"

"Agreed," answered Ladislaus; "but wait a few minutes. After conducting Mother, I will accompany you upstairs."

Within a quarter of an hour he returned, but instead of bidding his guests the promised "good-night" he drew closer to them and resumed the interrupted conversation.

"I did not wish to relate everything before Mother," he said, "in order not to alarm her. But in fact the matter is much worse. So, speaking first of what concerns us, imagine for yourself that those strangers immediately after their arrival asked first of all about Laskowicz, and that Laskowicz was in Rzeslewo this afternoon and returned here an hour before we came back from the hunt. Now it is positively certain that we have in our midst an agitator."

"Then throw him out," interrupted Dolhanski. "If I were in your place, I would have done that long ago, if only for the reason that he has eyes set closely to each other, like a baboon. In a man

that indicates fanaticism and stupidity."

"Unquestionably I will be done with him to-morrow, and I would end with him even to-day, notwithstanding the late hour, were it not that I desire first to calm down and not create any foolish disturbance. I do not like this, and I would not advise those apostles to peer into Jastrzeb. As I live, I would not advise it."

"Have they any intention of paying you a visit?"

"Certainly. If not to me personally, then to my farmhands. They announced in Rzeslewo that they would cause an agrarian strike in the entire vicinity."

"Then my advice, to drive out one wedge with another, is the most feasible."

"Assuredly. I will adopt that course without delay."

"I know," said Gronski, "that they want to inaugurate agrarian strikes throughout the whole country. They will not succeed as the peasant element will repel their efforts. They, like most people from the cities, do not take into account the relation of man to the soil. Nevertheless, there will be considerable losses and the confusion will increase, and this is what they chiefly care for. Ah! Shakespeare's 'sun of foolery' not only shines in our land, but is in the zenith."

"If we are talking of that kind of a sun, we can, like a former king of Spain, say that it never sets in our possessions."

But Gronski spoke farther:

"Socialism-good! That, of course, is a thing more ancient

than Menenius Agrippa. That river has flown for ages. At times, when covered by other ideas, it coursed underground, and later emerged into the broad daylight. At times it subsides, then swells and overflows. At present we have a flood, very menacing, which may submerge not only factories, cities, and countries, but even civilization. Above all, it threatens France, where comfort and money have displaced all other ideas. Socialism is the inevitable result of that. Capital wedded to demagogism cannot breed any other child; and if that child has the head of a monster and mole, so much the worse for the father. It demonstrates that superfluous wealth may be a national danger. But this is not strange. Privilege is an injustice against which men have fought for centuries. Formerly the princes, clergy, and nobility were vested with it. To-day nobody has any; money possesses all. In truth, Labor has stepped forth to combat with it."

"This begins to smell to me like an apology for socialism," observed Dolhanski.

"No. It is not an apology. For, above all things, viewing this matter from above, what is this new current but one more delusion in the human chase after happiness? For myself, I only contend that socialism has come, or rather, it has gathered strength, because it was bound to grow. I care only about its looks and whether it could not have a different face. And here my criticism begins. I do not deem socialism a sin in the socialists, but only that the idea in their school assumes the lineaments of an malignant idiot. I accuse our socialists of incredible stupidity;

like that of the ants who wrangled with and bit the working ants, while the ant-eater was lying on the ant-hill and swallowing them by thousands."

"True," cried Ladislaus.

"And, of course," concluded Gronski, "on our ant-hills there lie a whole herd of ant-eaters."

Here Dolhanski again dropped the monocle from his eye.

"That you may not retire to sleep under a disagreeable impression," he said, "I will tell you an anecdote which will illustrate what Gronski has said. During the last exposition in Paris, one of the black kings of French Congo, having heard of it, announced his wish to see it. The Colonial government, which was anxious to send as many exotic figures as possible to Paris, not only consented, but sent to this monarch a few shirts with the information that in France such articles of attire were indispensable. Naturally the shirts excited general admiration and surprise. The King summoned ministers, priests, and leaders of parties for a consultation as to how such a machine was to be put on. After long debates, which undoubtedly could not be held without bitter clashes between the native rationalists and the native nationalists and progressionists, all doubts were finally set at rest. The king pulled the sleeves of the shirt over his legs, so that the cuffs were at his ankles. The bottom edge of the shirt, which in this instance became the top, was fastened under his arm-pits by a string in such a manner that the bosom was on his back and the opening was at his neck-somewhat lower. Delighted

with this solution of the difficulty, the ruler acknowledged that the attire, if not entirely, was, at least in certain respects, very practical and, above all, extraordinarily striking."

"Good," said Gronski, laughing, "but what connection has that with what I had previously said?"

"Greater than may appear to you," replied Dolhanski; "for the fact is that the various Slavonians are prepared to bear liberty and the socialists socialism in the same manner as that negro king wore his European shirt."

Saying this, he replaced the monocle in his eye and announced that as in virtuous Jastrzeb and in such company there could not be any talk of a "night card party," he would take his leave and go to sleep. The others decided to follow his example. Ladislaus took the lamp and began to light the way for the guests. On the stairs he turned to them with a countenance which depicted ill humor and said:

"May the deuce take it, but all these disturbances must occur at a time when we have in Jastrzeb such lovely ladies."

"Beware," answered Dolkanski, "and know that nothing can be concealed from my eyes. When you assisted Miss Anney to conduct your mother, you looked like an electrical machine. If anybody drew a wire through you, you could illuminate not only the mansion but the adjoining out-buildings."

Ladislaus raised the lamp higher so that the light would not fall upon his countenance, for he felt at that moment that he blushed like a student.

IX

Ladislaus Krzycki possessed such a happy nature that, having once lain down to sleep, he could a few minutes later fall into a deep slumber which would continue until the morning. That night, however, he could not fall asleep because the impressions of the day, together with the parting words of Dolhanski, had led him into a state of exasperation and anger. He was angry at Rzeslewo; at the disturbances which were taking place there; at Dolhanski because he had observed the impression which the young girl had made upon him-and particularly because he himself had afforded him an opportunity to comment upon it-and finally at the innocent Miss Anney. After a time, rolling from side to side, he opened an imaginary conversation with her, in which he assumed the rôle of a man, who, indeed, does not deny that he is deeply under the spell, nevertheless, can view matters soberly and sanely. Therefore he admitted to Miss Anney that she was handsome and amiable; that she had an immensely sympathetic voice, a strange, fascinating look, and a body like marble-ah, what a body! Nevertheless, he made the explicit reservation that she must not think that he loved her to distraction, or was even smitten with her. He would concede anything to her that she desired, but to admit that he was in love with her was as far removed from his thoughts as love is from matrimony, of which, of course, there could not be any talk. Above all, she was a

foreigner, and Mother in that respect had her prejudices, justly so; and he himself would prefer to have at his side during the remainder of his life a Polish soul and not a foreign one. True, there was something homelike in her, but after all, she was not a Pole. "Identical blood has its own meaning; it cannot be helped," he further told Miss Anney. "So, since you are an Englishwoman, marry some Englishman or Scotchman, provided, however, you do not require me to form the acquaintance of such an ape and become intimate with him, for that is something I can dispense with perfectly." And at that moment he was seized with such a sudden, unexpected antipathy to that eventual Englishman "with projecting jaw" and Scotchman "with bare knees," that he felt that upon a trivial misunderstanding he could flog them. But through this attack of rage he roused himself completely from that half-drowsy, half-wakeful condition in which whimsical fancies mingle, and having recovered his senses, he experienced a great relief in the thought that the betrothed person beyond the sea was only a figment of his imagination, and at the same time a wave of gratitude towards Miss Anney surged in his heart. "Here I am, quarrelling with her and making reservations," he thought, "while she is snugly nestling her bright head upon a pillow and peacefully slumbering." Here again his blood began to frisk, but soon the perverse musings vanished. This became easier for him, as he was encompassed by a yearning for honest affection and for that future being, yet unnamed, who was to share his life. Again he resumed his imaginary conversation with Miss Anney, but this

time in a meek spirit. He assured her, with a certain melancholy, that he was not solicitous about her, as he well knew that even if there were no obstacles she certainly would not have him, but that he was anxious that his future life-companion should resemble her a little; that she should have the same look and the same magnetic strength to which, if he did not succumb it would be a miracle. As to Miss Anney personally, plainly speaking, he owed only gratitude. Of course, nowhere was it so well with him as at his beloved Jastrzeb, but nevertheless he could not deny that in that exclusive den it became lively and bright after her arrival; and that after her departure it would become darker, more dreary and monotonous than ever before. So for those bright moments he would willingly kiss her hand and, if that seemed insufficient to her, then her feet. In the meantime he begged her pardon for the mad thoughts which passed through his brain when he brushed against her shoulder in the salon, for though he was always of the opinion that responsiveness upon her part was worth the sacrifice of life, yet at the same time he had to contend that Dolhanski was a blockhead and cynic who meddled with matters which did not concern him and who was unworthy of notice. Here renewed rage against Dolhanski possessed him, and he continued for some time to toss from side to side until finally the late hour, youth, hungry for sleep, and weariness sprinkled his eyes with poppy.³

There was, however, in the Jastrzeb manor-house another who

³ "Sprinkled his eyes with poppy: " proverbial expression denoting "lulled to sleep."

did not sleep and who talked with a person not present, and that was Laskowicz. After all that had taken place and what had been revealed in the past few days, he was prepared for his farewell parting with the Krzycki family, as he well knew that his further presence in Jastrzeb would be intolerable. And nevertheless he desired at present to stay in it, even though for a few days, in order that he might gaze longer upon Panna Marynia and, as he called it, "further narcotize himself." Somehow, from the first moment he had heard her play, she actually absorbed his thoughts in a way that no woman up to that time had done. Foremost among the prepared formulæ which he, with dogmatic faith, had adopted to judge mankind with, was the precept that a woman belonging to the so-called pampered class was a thoughtless creature. In the meantime he had to dissent at once from that formula as a soul had spoken to him through the violin. Later he was astonished to find in that young lady two entities, one of which manifested itself in music as a finished artist, concentrated, filled with exaltation within herself, dissolved in the waves of tones and playing as if she drew the bow over her own nerves; the other appeared in every-day life in her customary relations with people. The latter seemed at the first glance of the eye, if not an insignificant, a common girl, full of simplicity and even gaiety, who screamed like a cat when Dolhanski, for instance, said things disagreeable to her; who jested with Gronski, telling him absurdities about spirits or, to the great alarm of Gronski and her older sister, fled into the garden for a boat ride on the pond.

Laskowicz did not fully comprehend the world and was not a subtle person; nevertheless, he observed in the "common girl" something which made her, as it were, a little divinity, haloed with a quiet worship. Evidently she herself did not appear to be conscious of this and, viewing such a state of affairs as something which was self-understood, she lived the life of a flower or a bird. Confident that she will not suffer any harm from any one, gentle, bright, living beyond the misery and wretchedness of life, beyond its cares, beyond its chilling winds which dim the eyes with tears, beyond the dust which defiles, she resembled a pure spring which people look upon as blessed and whose translucency they fear to muddy. It seemed that the environment did not exact of her anything more than that she should exist, just as nothing more is demanded of a masterpiece.

To Laskowicz, as often as he gazed at her, there came recollection of his childhood days. He and his older brother, who, a few years before falling into consumption had committed suicide on the Riviera, were the sons of a woman who conducted near one of the churches in Warsaw a shop for the sale of consecrated wax candles, medals, rosaries, and pictures. Owing to this, both brothers were, in a way, bred upon the church portals and were in constant relations with the priests. Once it happened that the aged canon, the rector of the church, bought at an auction an alabaster statuette of some saint, and for an unknown reason took it for granted that it was not only the work, but the masterpiece of Canova. The statuette, which, in reality,

was pretty and finely executed, after consecration, was placed in a separate niche near one of the altars under the name of Saint Apollonia and from that time the gentle old rector surrounded it with great worship as a holy relic and with more particular care as the greatest church rarity. He led his guests and more pious parishioners before it and commanded them to admire the work and got angry if any one ventured to make any critical observation. In fact, the admiration of the canon was shared by the organist, the sexton, the church servants, and both boys. The thought that Panna Marynia amidst her environment was such a Saint Apollonia unwittingly suggested itself to Laskowicz. For that reason, after the first impression he called her "a saintly doll." But he also recalled that when in the course of time he lost his faith-and he lost it in the gymnasium where, speaking parenthetically, he completed his studies with the aid of the venerable canon-he often was beset with a desire to demolish that alabaster statuette. At present he was consumed with a greater desire, for it bordered upon a passion, to destroy this living one. And yet he did not in the least bear her any hatred. On the contrary, he could not resist the charm of this maiden, so loved by all, any more than one can resist the charm of dawn or spring. It even happened that what vexed and exasperated him also at the same time attracted him towards her with an uncontrollable force. Consequently he was drawn to her by her appurtenance to this world, the existence of which he deemed a social injustice, crime, and wrong; she attracted him in spite of

his internal anguish, and even by the thought that beside such a flower the proletariat was but manure. A lure for him was her refined culture and her art, though he regarded such things as superfluous and unnecessary for people of deflorated life; the fascination was her utter dissimilarity to the women whom he met up to the time of his arrival at the village, and her whole form was an intoxication. Never before was he under the same roof with a being like her; therefore he forgot himself and lost his head at the sight of her, and though he had not yet familiarized himself with the power which began to play in his bosom and had not christened it with the name of love, the truth was that during the past few days he was aflame like a volcano and loved her to distraction. He vaguely felt, however, that in this passion there was something of the lust of a negro for a white woman, and what was more, that in that particular love there was apostasy to principles. So then in the same germ he poisoned her with the virus of hatred and the wolfish propensity of annihilation.

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