

CHAPTER IV.

THE next day after their arrival at Bogdaniec, Macko and Zbyszko began to look around their old home; they soon realized that Zych of Zgorze-lice was right when he told them that at first they would be uncomfortable.

With the farming they could get along quite well. There were several fields cultivated by the peasants whom the abbot had settled there. Formerly there had been much cultivated land in Bogdaniec; but after the battle at Plowce¹ where the family Grady perished, there was a scarcity of working hands; and after the invasion of the Germans from Szlonsk and after the war of Nalenczs with Grzymalits, the formerly rich fields became overgrown with trees. Macko could not help it. In vain he tried for several years to bring farmers from Krzesnia and rent the land to them; they refused to come, preferring to remain on their own strips of land rather than to cultivate some one else's. His offer however attracted some shelterless men; in the different wars, he captured several slaves whom he married and settled in the houses; and in that way he populated the village. But it was hard work for him; therefore as soon as he had an opportunity, Macko pledged the whole of Bogdaniec, thinking that it would be easier for the powerful abbot to settle the land with peasants, and that the war would bring to him and to Zbyszko some people and money. In fact, the abbot was

¹ In 1331.

energetic. He had increased the working force of Bogdaniec with five peasant families ; he increased the stock of cattle and horses ; then he built a barn, a stable and a cow house. But as he did not live in Bogdaniec, he did not repair the house. Macko, who had hoped to find the *grodek* surrounded with a ditch and hedge when he returned, found everything just as he had left it, with this difference only, that the walls were more crooked and seemed to be lower, because they had settled deeper in the earth.

The house contained an enormous hall, two large rooms with alcoves, and a kitchen. In the rooms there were windows made of bladders ; and in the centre of each room, there was a fireplace made of lime, and the smoke escaped through a hole in the ceiling. From the ceilings now blackened from smoke, during former times used to hang the hams of boars, bears and deer, rumps of roes, sides of beef and rolls of sausages. But now the hooks were empty as well as the shelves fastened to the walls, on which they used to put the tin and earthen dishes. The walls beneath the shelves were no longer empty, however, because Zbyszko had ordered his servants to hang helmets, cuirasses, long swords and short swords on them ; and further along boar-spears and forks, caparisons and saddles. The smoke blackened the weapons, and it was necessary to clean them very often. But Macko, who was careful, ordered the servants to put the costly clothes in the alcove in which his bed stood.

In the front rooms there stood near the windows, pine tables and benches of the same, on which the lords used to sit during the meals, with all their

servants. People accustomed to war were easily satisfied; but in Bogdaniec there was neither bread nor flour and no dishes. The peasants brought what they could; Macko expected that the neighbors, as was then customary, would help him; and he was not mistaken, at least as far as Zych of Zgorzelice was concerned.

The second day, when the old *wlodyka* was sitting on a log in front of the house, delighted with the bright autumn day, Jagienka came, riding a black horse; she dismounted and approached Macko, out of breath on account of fast riding, and rosy as an apple; she said:

"May you be blessed! *Tatulo* sent me to inquire about your health."

"I am no worse," answered Macko; "and at least I have slept in my own house."

"But you cannot be comfortable at all, and a sick person needs some care."

"We are hardened people. It is true that at first there was no comfort; but we were not hungry. We ordered an ox and two sheep killed, so there is plenty of meat. The women brought some flour and eggs; the worst is that we have no dishes."

"Well, I ordered my servants to load two wagons. On one there are two beds and dishes, and on the other different provisions. There are some cakes and flour, some salt pork and dried mushrooms; there is a barrel of beer and one of mead; in fact a little of everything we had in the house."

Macko, who was grateful for this kindness, caressed Jagienka's head, and said:

"May God reward your father and you. When our housekeeping improves, we will return the provisions."

"How clever you are! We are not like the Germans, who take back what they give."

"Well, so much more may God reward you. Your father told us what a good housekeeper you are, and that you had taken care of Zgorzelice the whole year?"

"Yes! If you need anything else, send somebody; but send some one who will know what is needed, because a stupid servant never knows what he has been sent for."

Here Jagienka began to look round, and Macko having noticed it, smiled and asked:

"For whom are you looking?"

"I am looking for no one!"

"I will send Zbyszko to thank you and your father. Do you like Zbyszko?"

"I have not looked at him."

"Then look at him now, because he is just coming."

In fact Zbyszko was coming from the stable. He was dressed in a reindeer jacket and round felt cap like those worn under the helmets; his hair was without a net, cut evenly over his eyebrows and hung in golden curls on his shoulders; he walked swiftly, having noticed the girl; he was tall and graceful, looking like the shield-bearer of a rich nobleman.

Jagienka turned toward Macko as if to show that she came only to see him; but Zbyszko welcomed her joyfully, and having taken hold of her hand, raised it to his mouth, notwithstanding her resistance.

"Why do you kiss my hand?" asked she. "Am I a priest?"

"Such is the custom; you must not resist."

"Even if he had kissed both your hands," said Macko, "it would not be enough for all that you have brought us."

"What have you brought?" asked Zbyszko, looking around the court-yard; but he did not see anything except the black horse tied to the post.

"The wagons have not come yet; but they will soon be here," answered Jagienka.

Macko began to enumerate what she had brought; but when he mentioned the two beds, Zbyszko said:

"I am satisfied to sleep on the urus' skin; but I thank you because you thought about me also."

"It was not I; it was *Tatulo*," answered the girl, blushing. "If you prefer to sleep on the skin, you can do it."

"I prefer to sleep on what I can. Sometimes after a battle, I slept with a dead Krzyzak instead of a pillow under my head."

"You do not mean to tell me that you have ever killed a Krzyzak? I am sure you have not."

Zbyszko, instead of answering, began to laugh. But Macko exclaimed:

"For heaven's sake, girl, you do not know him yet! He has never done anything else, but kill the Germans. He can fight with an axe, a spear or with any weapon; and when he sees a German from afar, one must tie him with a rope, or else he will rush against him. In Krakow he wanted to kill the envoy, Lichtenstein, and for that he barely escaped execution. Such a man! I will tell you also about the two Fryzes, from whom we took their retinues and so much rich booty, that one could redeem Bogdaniec with half of it."

Here Macko began to tell about his duel with the Fryzjans; also about other adventures which had

happened to them, and about the deeds they had performed. How they had fought from behind the walls and in the open fields, with the greatest knights living in foreign lands; how they had fought Germans, Frenchmen, Englishmen and Burgundians. He also told her what they had seen! They had seen German castles of red brick, Lithuanian wooden *grodzce*¹ and churches, more beautiful than one could see around Bogdaniec; also large cities and the dreadful wilderness in which during the nights Lithuanian gods cried, and many different, marvelous things; and everywhere, in any fight, Zbyszko was victorious, so that even the greatest knights were astonished at him.

Jagienka, who was sitting on the log beside Macko, listened with open mouth to that narrative, tossing her head and looking at the young knight with increasing admiration and amazement. Finally when Macko was through, she sighed and said:

“I am sorry I was not born a boy!”

But Zbyszko, who during the narration had been looking at her attentively, evidently was thinking about something else, because he suddenly said:

“What a beautiful girl you are now!”

Jagienka answered, half in displeasure and half in sadness:

“You have seen many more beautiful than I am.”

But Zbyszko could truly answer her that he had not seen many as pretty as she, because Jagienka was beaming with health, youth and strength. The old abbot used to say that she looked like a pine tree. Everything was beautiful in her; a slender

¹ Stronghold—castle.

figure, a broad bosom that looked as if it were cut out of marble, a red mouth, and intelligent blue eyes. She was also dressed with more care than when in the forest with the hunting party. Around her neck she had a necklace of red beads; she wore a fur jacket opened in front and covered with green cloth, a homespun skirt and new boots. Even old Macko noticed this beautiful attire, and having looked at her for a moment, asked:

“Why are you dressed as if you were going to church?”

But instead of answering, she exclaimed:

“The wagons are coming!”

In fact the wagons now appeared and she sprang toward them, followed by Zbyszko. The unloading lasted quite a long time to the great satisfaction of Macko who looked at everything, and praised Jagienka all the time. It was dusk when the girl started home. While she was getting ready to mount her horse, Zbyszko suddenly caught her, and before she was able to say a word, lifted her into the saddle. Then she blushed like the dawn and turning her head toward him, said with emotion in her voice:

“What a strong boy you are!”

But he, not having noticed her confusion nor her blushes because it was dark, laughed and said:

“Are you not afraid of wild beasts? It is night!”

“There is a boar-spear in the wagon. Give it to me.”

Zbyszko went to the wagon, took the boar-spear and handed it to Jagienka; then he said:

“Be in good health!”

“Be in good health!” she answered.

"May God reward you! To-morrow, or the day after, I will be in Zgorzelice to thank Zych and you for your kindness."

"Come! You will be welcome!"

Having touched her horse, she disappeared among the bushes growing on the sides of the road.

Zbyszko returned to his uncle.

"You must go inside."

But Macko answered, without moving from the log:

"Hej! what a girl! She made the court-yard brighter!"

"That is true!"

There was a moment of silence. Macko seemed to be thinking about something while looking at the stars; then he said, as if he were speaking to himself:

"She is pretty and a good housekeeper, although she is not more than fifteen years old."

"Yes!" answered Zbyszko. "Therefore old Zych loves her dearly."

"And he said that the estate of Moczydoly will be her dowry; and there on the pastures is a herd of mares with many colts."

"Are there not a great many marshes in the Moczydowski estate?"

"Yes; but in those marshes there are plenty of beavers."

There was silence again. Macko looked intently at Zbyszko for a while, and finally he asked

"About what are you thinking?"

"Seeing Jagienka reminded me of Danusia, and something pricked me in the heart."

"Let us go into the house," answered the old *włodyka*. "It is getting late."

Having risen with difficulty, he leaned on Zbyszko, who conducted him to the alcove.

The next day Zbyszko went to Zgorzelice, because Macko urged him. He also insisted that he take two servants with him for ostentation, and that he dress in his best clothes, to show respect and gratitude to Zych. Zbyszko did as he was asked and went attired as if for a wedding, in his *jaka* made of white satin, bordered with gold fringe and embroidered with gold griffins. Zych received him with open arms, with joy and with singing; as for Jagienka, when she entered, she stopped as if she were rooted to the ground and almost dropped the bucket of wine which she was carrying; she thought that a son of some king had arrived. She became timid and sat silently, rubbing her eyes from time to time as if she would like to awaken from a dream. The inexperienced Zbyszko thought that, for some reason unknown to him, she did not wish to talk to him; therefore he conversed only with Zych, praising his munificence and admiring the house at Zgorzelice, which in fact was quite different from that in Bogdaniec.

Everywhere comfort and wealth were evident. In the rooms there were windows with panes made of horn, cut in thin slices and polished so that it was as transparent as glass. Instead of fireplaces in the centre, there were large chimneys in the corners. The floors were made of larch tree planks, while on the walls were hung suits of armor and many polished dishes, also silver spoons. Here and there were costly rugs brought from the wars. Under the tables there were enormous urus' skins. Zych showed his riches willingly, saying that it was Jagienka's household. He conducted Zbyszko

to the alcove, fragrant with rosin and peppermint, in which were hanging from the ceiling, large bunches of wolf skins, fox skins, beaver skins and marten skins. He showed to him the provisions of cheese, honey, wax, barrels of flour, pails of dried bread, hemp and dried mushrooms. Then he went with him to the granaries, barns, stables, cow houses, and to the sheds filled with plenty of hunting implements and nets. Zbyszko was so dazzled by all this wealth that during supper, he could not refrain from admiration.

"What a pleasure to live in Zgorzelice!" exclaimed he.

"In Moczydoly, there is almost the same wealth," answered Zych. "Do you remember Moczydoly? It is not far from Bogdaniec. Formerly our forefathers quarreled about the boundaries and challenged each other; but I shall not quarrel."

Here he filled Zbyszko's goblet with mead and said:

"Perhaps you would like to sing?"

"No," answered Zbyszko; "but I shall listen to you with pleasure."

"Zgorzelice will belong to the young bears."

"What do you mean by 'young bears?'"

"Why, Jagienka's brothers."

"Hej! they will not have to suck their paws during the winter."

"No; but Jagienka will also have plenty in Moczydoly."

"That is true!"

"Why don't you eat and drink? Jagienka, pour for him and for me."

"I am drinking and eating as much as I can."

"Ungird your belt; then you will be able to eat

and drink more. What a beautiful girdle you have! You must have taken rich booty in Lithuania!"

"We cannot complain," answered Zbyszko, gladly seizing the opportunity to explain that the heirs of Bogdaniec were no longer *wlodykas*. "A part of our booty, we sold in Krakow and received forty silver *grzywiens* for it."

"You don't say so! Why, one can buy an estate for that."

"Yes. There was one Milanese armor which my uncle, expecting to die, sold for a good price."

"I know! Well, it is worth while to go to Lithuania. I wanted to go there also; but I was afraid."

"Of what? Of the Knights of the Cross?"

"Ej, who would be afraid of Germans? I was afraid of those heathenish gods or devils. It seems there are plenty of them in the woods."

"They do not have any other place for shelter, because their temples have been burned. Formerly they were well-to-do; but now they live on mushroom rooms and ants."

"Did you see them?"

"No, I did not see any myself; but I heard of people who had seen them. Sometimes one of them sticks out a hairy paw from behind a tree and shakes it, begging for something."

"Macko told me the same," answered Jagienka.

"Yes! He told me about it on the road," said Zych. "Well, no wonder! In our country also, although it has been a Christian country for a long time, one can hear laughter in the marshes; and although the priests scold about it in the churches, it is always good policy to put a dish filled with something to eat, for the little devils; otherwise

they will scratch on the walls so much that one can hardly sleep. Jagienka, my dearest! put a dish at the threshold."

Jagienka took an earthen porringer full of noodles and cheese, and placed it at the threshold. Zych said:

"The priests scold! But the Lord Jesus will not be angry about a dish of noodles; and a god, as soon as his hunger is satisfied, will protect one from fire and from thieves."

Then he turned to Zbyszko:

"But will you not ungird yourself and sing a little?"

"You had better sing, or perhaps *Panna*¹ Jagienka will sing."

"We will sing by turns," exclaimed Zych. "We have a servant who will accompany us on a wooden fife. Call the boy!"

They called the servant who sat down on the bench and put the fife to his mouth, waiting to learn whom he was to accompany.

None of them wanted to be first. Finally Zych told Jagienka to begin; therefore Jagienka, although bashful because Zbyszko was present, rose from the bench and having put her hands under her apron, began:

"If I only could get
The wings like a birdie,
I would fly quickly
To my dearest Jasiek."

Zbyszko opened his eyes wide; then he jumped up and shouted:

"Where did you learn that song?"

¹ Miss.

Jagienka looked at him astonished.

"Everybody sings that. What is the matter with you?"

Zych thinking that Zbyszko was a little intoxicated, turned his jovial face toward him and said:

"Ungird! It will relieve you!"

But Zbyszko stood for a while with astonishment on his face; then, having recovered from his emotion, said to Jagienka:

"Excuse me, I suddenly remembered something. Sing further."

"Perhaps it makes you sad?"

"Ej, not at all!" he answered, with a quivering voice. "I could listen to it the whole night."

Then he sat down, covered his face with his hand, and listened.

Jagienka sang another couplet; but when she finished, she noticed a big tear rolling down Zbyszko's fingers.

Then she sat down beside him, and began to touch him with her elbow.

"What is the matter with you? I do not want to make you cry. Tell me what is the matter with you?"

"Nothing! Nothing!" answered Zbyszko, sighing. "I could tell you much. But it is over. I feel merry now."

"Perhaps you would like to have some sweet wine?"

"Good girl!" exclaimed Zych. "Call him 'Zbyszko,' and you call her 'Jagienka.' You have known each other since you were children."

Then he turned toward his daughter:

"Do not mind because he struck you when you were children. He will not do it now."

"I will not!" answered Zbyszko, mirthfully.
"If she wishes, she may beat me now for it."

Then Jagienka, wishing to cheer him up, began to play that she was striking him with her little fist.

"Give us some wine!" shouted the merry *Pan* of Zgorzelice.

Jagienka sprang to the closet and brought out a jug of wine, two beautiful silver goblets, engraved by a silversmith of Wroclaw¹ and a couple of cheese.

Zych, being a little intoxicated, began to hug the jug and said to it as if he were talking to his daughter:

"Oj, my dear girl! What shall I do, poor man, when they take you from Zgorzelice; what shall I do?"

"And you must give her up soon!" said Zbyszko.

Zych began to laugh.

"Chy! Chy! The girl is only fifteen; but she is already fond of boys! When she sees one of them, she begins immediately to rub knee with knee!"

"*Tatusiu*,² if you don't stop, I will leave you," said Jagienka.

"Don't go! It's better with you here." Then he continued to say to Zbyszko:

"Two of them visit us. One of them is young Wilk, the son of old Wilk of Brzozowa; the other is Czta³ of Rogow. If they meet you here, they will gnash their teeth, as they do at each other."

"Owa!" said Zbyszko. Then he turned to Jagienka and asked:

¹ Breslau in German. ² Diminutive of *tata* -father

³ Abbreviation of Przeclaw.

"Which do you prefer?"

"Neither of them."

"Wilk is a great boy," said Zych.

"Let him go in another direction!"

"And Cztan?"

Jagienka began to laugh:

"Cztan," said she, turning toward Zbyszko, "he has hair on his face like a goat; one can hardly see his eyes; and he has as much grease on him as a bear."

Zbyszko now touched his head with his hand as if he had just remembered something important, and said:

"I must ask you for one thing more; have you any bear's grease? I want to use it for medicine for my uncle; and I could not find any in Bogdaniec."

"We used to have some," answered Jagienka; "but the boys have used some to grease their bows, and the dogs have eaten the rest."

"Is there none left?"

"Not a bit!"

"Well, then, I must find some in the forest."

"Have a hunting party for bears; there are plenty of them; and if you want some hunting implements, we will lend you some."

"I cannot wait. I will go some night to a *barcie*."

"Take a few men with you."

"No, I shall not do that, for they will frighten the beast."

"But you will take a crossbow!"

"What can I do with a crossbow during the night? There is no moon now! I will take a fork and a strong axe, and I will go alone to-morrow."

Jagienka was silent for a while; but great uneasiness was reflected on her face.

"Last year," said she, "the huntsman, Bezduch, was killed by a bear. It is dangerous, because as soon as the bear sees a man near the *barcie*, he immediately stands up on his hind feet."

"If he ran away, I could not get him," answered Zbyszko.

At that moment Zych who had been dozing, suddenly awakened and said to Zbyszko:

"You know? There are two of them, Wilk of Brzozowa and Cztan of Rogow; and you?"

But Jagienka being afraid that Zych would say too much, swiftly approached Zbyszko, and began to inquire:

"When are you going? To-morrow?"

"To-morrow after sunset."

"And to which *barcie*?"

"To ours in Bogdaniec, not far from your boundaries, near the marshes of Radzikow. They tell me it is very easy to get a bear there."

CHAPTER V.

ZBYSZKO went for the bear as he proposed, because Macko became worse. At first when he reached Bogdaniec, he was sustained by joy and the first cares about the house; but on the third day, the fever returned, and the pain was so great that he was obliged to go to bed. Zbyszko went to the *barcie* during the day, and while there he perceived that there were the footprints of a bear in the mud. He spoke to the beehive keeper, Wawrek, who slept in a shed not far away, with his two fearful Podhalan¹ dogs; but he intended to return to the village on account of the cold.

They destroyed the shed, and Wawrek took the dogs with him. But first they smeared the trees here and there with honey, so that the smell of it would attract the animal. Zbyszko returned home and began to prepare for the expedition. He dressed himself in a warm reindeer jacket without sleeves; on the top of his head, he put a bonnet made of iron wire; finally he took a strong fork and a steel axe. Before sunset he had taken his position; and having made the sign of the cross, he sat down and waited.

The red beams of the setting sun were still shining between the branches of the gigantic pines. In the tops of the trees, the crows were flying, croaking and beating the air with their wings; here and there the hares were leaping toward the water, making a noise on the dried leaves; some-

¹ Podhale is part of the mountains of Karpaty.

times a swift marten passed by. In the thickets, the chirping of the birds was at first heard—but gradually ceased.

After sunset the noises of the forest began. Immediately a pack of boars passed near Zbyszko with a great bustle and snorting; then elks galloped in a long row, each holding his head on the tail of the one in front of him. The dried branches crackled under their feet and the forest resounded; but on they rushed toward the marshes where during the night, they were cool and safe. Finally the twilight was reflected on the sky, and the tops of the pine trees illuminated by it seemed to burn, as if on fire; then little by little everything began to be quieted. The forest was still. Dusk was rising from earth toward the gleaming twilight, which began finally to grow fainter, then gloomy, blacker and then was quenched.

“Now, everything will be quiet, until the wolves begin to howl,” thought Zbyszko.

He regretted that he had not taken his crossbow, because he could easily have killed a boar or an elk. In the meanwhile, from the marshes came muffled sounds similar to heavy panting and whistling. Zbyszko looked toward that marsh with some apprehension, because the peasant, Radzik, who used to live here in an earth-hut, disappeared with his whole family, as if devoured by the earth. Some people said they were seized by robbers; but there were others who saw some strange footprints, neither human nor of beasts, round the cabin. The people shook their heads very much about that, and they even spoke about bringing a priest from Krzesnia, to bless the hut. But they did not do it because nobody was willing to live in that

hut, which from that time, had an evil reputation. It is true that the beehive keeper, Wawrek, did not pay any attention to these reports.

Zbyszko being armed with the fork and axe, was not afraid of the wild beasts; but he thought with some uneasiness about the evil forces, and he was glad when that noise stopped.

The last reverberation ceased, and there was complete silence. The wind stopped blowing and there was not even the usual whispering in the tops of the pine trees. From time to time, a pine cone fell, making quite a noise amidst the deep silence; but in general, everything was so quiet that Zbyszko heard his own respirations.

Thus he sat quietly for a long time, thinking first about the bear, and then about Danusia. He recollected how he seized her in his arms when bidding the princess farewell, and how she cried; he remembered her fair head and bright face, her wreaths of bachelor buttons, her singing, her red shoes with long tips, and finally everything that happened from the moment he first saw her. Such a longing to see her, filled his heart, that he forgot that he was in the forest waiting for the bear; instead of that he began to talk to himself:

“I will go to see you, because I cannot live without you.”

He felt that he must go to Mazowsze; that if he remained in Bogdaniec, he would become good for nothing. He recollected Jurand and his strange opposition; then he thought that it was even more necessary he should go, and learn what that obstacle was, and if a challenge to combat could not remove it. Finally it seemed to him that Danusia stretched her hands toward him and cried:

"Come, Zbyszku! Come!" How could he refuse?

He was not sleeping, but he saw her as distinctly as in a dream. There she was, riding beside the princess, thrumming on her little lute, humming and thinking of him. Thinking that she would soon see him, and perhaps looking back.

Here Zbyszko aroused himself and listened, because he heard a rustling behind him. Then he grasped the fork in his hand more tightly, stretched his neck and listened again.

The rustling approached and then it became very distinct. Under some careful foot, the dried branches were crackling, the fallen leaves were rustling. Something was coming.

From time to time the rustling ceased, as if the beast halted beneath the trees; then there was such quietude that Zbyszko's ears began to ring; then again slow, careful steps were heard. That approach was so cautious that Zbyszko was surprised.

"I am sure 'the old'¹ must be afraid of the dogs which were here in the shed," said he to himself; "but it may be a wolf that has scented me."

Now the footsteps were no longer heard. Zbyszko, however, was sure that something had stopped twenty or thirty feet behind him.

He turned around once or twice; but although he could see the trunks of the trees quite well, he could not perceive anything else. He was obliged to wait.

He waited so long, that he was surprised a second time.

"A bear would not come here to stop under the *barcie*; and a wolf would not wait until morning."

¹ Nickname given to bears.

Suddenly a shiver ran through his body as he thought:

“Suppose it is something dreadful that comes from the marshes and is trying to surprise me from the rear! Suppose the slippery arms of a drowned man seize me, or the green eyes of a ghost look into my face; suppose a blue head on spider’s legs comes out from behind the tree and begins to laugh!”

He felt his hair begin to rise under his iron bonnet.

But after a while, a rustling sounded in front of him, more distinct this time than formerly. Zbyszko breathed more freely; he thought that the same “wonder” had gone around him, and now approached from the front; but he preferred that. He seized his fork firmly, arose quietly and waited.

Now he noticed over his head the rustling of the pine trees, and he felt the wind blow in his face, coming from the marsh, and he smelt the bear.

There was not the slightest doubt that a *mys*¹ was coming!

Zbyszko was afraid no longer, and having bent his head, he strained to the utmost his hearing and his sight. Heavy, distinct steps were coming; the smell grew stronger; soon the snore and groaning were heard.

“I hope there are not two of them!” thought Zbyszko.

But at that moment, he perceived in front of him the large, dark form of the animal, which was walking in the same direction from which the wind was blowing, and could not get the scent of him; its attention was also attracted by the smell of the honey on the trees.

¹ Popular name for bear.

"Come, uncle!" exclaimed Zbyszko, coming out from beneath the pine tree.

The bear roared shortly as if frightened by an unexpected apparition; but he was too near to seek safety in flight; therefore, in a moment he reared and separated his forelegs as if for a hug. This was exactly what Zbyszko was waiting for; he gathered himself together, jumped like lightning and with all the strength of his powerful arms and of his weight, he drove the fork into the animal's chest.

The whole forest resounded now with the fearful roaring. The bear seized the fork with his paws, and tried to pull it out, but the incisions made by the points were too deep; therefore, feeling the pain, he roared still more fearfully. Wishing to reach Zbyszko, he leaned on the fork and thus drove it into his body still further. Zbyszko, not knowing that the points had entered so deeply, held on to the handle. The man and the animal began to struggle. The forest again resounded with the roaring in which wrath and despair were mingled.

Zbyszko could not use his axe until after he could drive the sharpened end of the fork into the ground. The bear having seized the handle, was shaking it as well as Zbyszko, and notwithstanding the pain caused by every movement of the points imbedded in his breast, he would not let it be "underpropped." In this way the terrible struggle continued, and Zbyszko finally felt that his strength would soon be exhausted. If he fell, then he would be lost; therefore, he gathered all his strength, strained his arms to the utmost, set his feet firmly and bent his back like a bow, so as not to be thrown

backward; and in his enthusiasm he repeated through set teeth:

“You or I will die!”

Such anger filled him that he really preferred at that moment to die, rather than to let the beast go. Finally his foot caught in the root of a tree; he tottered and would have fallen, if at that moment a dark figure had not appeared before him, and another fork “underpropped” the beast; and in the meanwhile, a voice shouted near his ear:

“Use your axe!”

Zbyszko, being excited by the fight, did not wonder even for a moment from whence came the unexpected help; but he seized the axe and cut with all his might. The fork cracked, broken by the weight and by the last convulsion of the beast, as it fell. There was a long silence broken only by Zbyszko's loud respirations. But after a while, he lifted his head, looked at the form standing beside him and was afraid, thinking that it might not be a man.

“Who are you?” asked he, with uneasiness.

“Jagienka!” answered a thin, womanly voice.

Zbyszko became dumb from astonishment; he could not believe his own eyes. But his doubts did not last long, because Jagienka's voice again resounded:

“I will build a fire.”

Immediately the clatter of a fire steel against a flint sounded and the sparks began to fall; by their glittering light, Zbyszko beheld the white forehead, the dark eyebrows and the red lips of the girl who was blowing on the tinder which began to burn. Not until then did he realize that she had come to the forest to help him, and that without her aid, he

would have perished. He felt such gratitude toward her, that he impulsively seized her around the waist and kissed her on both cheeks.

The tinder and the steel fell to the ground.

"Let me be!" she began to repeat in a muffled voice; but she allowed him to kiss her and even, as if by accident, touched Zbyszko's lips with her mouth. He released her and said:

"May God reward you. I do not know what would have happened without your help."

Then Jagienka, while searching for the tinder and fire steel, began to excuse herself:

"I was worried about you, because Bezduch also went with a fork and an axe, but the bear tore him to pieces. If you met with such a misfortune, Macko would be very desolate, and he hardly breathes now. So I took a fork and came."

"Then it was you whom I heard there behind the pines?"

"Yes."

"And I thought it was an evil spirit."

"I was very much frightened, because it is dangerous to be without fire here around the Radzikowski marshes."

"Then why did you not speak to me?"

"Because I was afraid you would send me away."

Having said this, she again began to strike sparks from the steel, and put on the tinder a bundle of hemp which began to burn.

"I have two resinous pieces of wood," said she; "you bring some dried branches quickly, and we will soon have a fire."

In fact, after a while a bright fire was burning, and lighted the enormous, brown body of the bear which was lying in a pool of blood.

"Hej, a dreadful beast!" said Zbyszko, boastfully.

"You split his head entirely open! O, Jesus!"

Then she leaned over and felt of the bear's body, to ascertain whether the beast was fat; then she arose with a bright face, and said:

"There will be plenty of grease for two years."

"But the fork is broken, look!"

"That is too bad; what shall I tell them at home?"

"About what?"

"*Tatus* would not let me come into the forest, therefore I was obliged to wait until everybody had retired."

After a moment she added:

"You must not tell that I was here, because they will laugh at me."

"But I will go with you to your house, because I am afraid the wolves will attack you, and you have no fork."

"Very well!"

Thus they sat talking for a while beside the bright fire, looking like two young forest creatures.

Zbyszko looked at the girl's pretty face, lighted by the flames, and said with involuntary admiration:

"There is not another girl in this world as brave as you are. You ought to go to the war!"

She looked into his face and then she answered, almost sadly:

"I know; but you must not laugh at me."

CHAPTER VI.

JAGIENKA herself melted a large pot of bear's grease. Macko drank the first quart willingly, because it was fresh, and smelt good. Jagienka put the rest of it in a pot. Macko's hope increased; he was sure he would be cured.

"That is what I needed," said he. "When all parts inside of me become greasy, then that dog's splinter will slip out."

But the next quarts did not taste as well as the first; but he continued to drink it and Jagienka encouraged him, saying:

"You will get well. Zbilud of Ostrog had the links of a coat of mail driven into his neck; but they slipped out because he drank grease. But when your wound opens, you must put some grease of a beaver on it."

"Have you some?"

"Yes, we have. But if it be necessary to have it fresh, we will go with Zbyszko and get a beaver. Meanwhile it would not do any harm, if you promised something to some saint, who is the patron for wounds."

"I was thinking about that, but I do not know to whom I should make the promise. Saint George is the patron of knights; he protects the warrior from any accident and always gives him victory, and it is said that sometimes he fights personally for the one who is right. But a saint who fights willingly, does not heal willingly; and for that, there must be another saint with whom he would

not want to interfere. It is known that every saint has his specialty. But they will not interfere with one another; because that would cause quarrels, and it is not proper to fight in heaven. There are Kosma and Damian to whom all doctors pray, that illness may exist; otherwise the doctors would not have anything to eat. There is Saint Apolonia for the teeth and Saint Liborius for stone; but they will not do for me. The abbot, when he comes, will tell me whom I must ask. Every *clericus* does not know all celestial secrets and everyone of them is not familiar with such things, but the abbot is."

"Suppose you make a vow to the Lord Jesus himself?"

"Of course he is over all of them. But suppose your father had injured my servant, and I went to Krakow to complain to the king; what would the king tell me? He would say thus: 'I am monarch over all the country, and you complain to me about one of your peasants! Do you not have my officials in your part of the country; why did you not go to the castellan?' So the Lord Jesus is the ruler over the whole universe; but for smaller affairs, he employs the saints."

"Then I will tell you what to do," said Zbyszko, who entered just now; "make a vow to our late queen, that if she intercede for you, you will make a pilgrimage to Krakow. Why should you search after strange saints, when we have our own lady, who is better than they?"

"Bah! if I only knew that she would intercede for wounds!"

"No matter! There is no saint who would dare to show her an angry face; or if he dared, Lord God

would punish him for it, because she was not an ordinary woman, but a Polish queen."

"Who converted the last heathen country to the Christian faith! That is right," said Macko. "She must have a high place in God's council and surely none would dare to oppose her. Therefore I will do as you say."

This advice pleased Jagienka, who admired Zbyszko's common sense very much. That same evening, Macko made a vow and drank with still greater hope, the bear's grease. But after a week, he began to lose hope. He said that the grease was fermenting in his stomach, and that a lump was growing on his side near the last rib. At the end of ten days Macko was worse, and the lump grew larger and became inflamed. The sick man again had fever and began to make preparations for death.

But one night he awakened Zbyszko, and said:

"Light a piece of resinous wood; there is something the matter with me, but I do not know what."

Zbyszko jumped up and lighted a piece of pine wood.

"What is it?"

"What is it! Something has pierced the lump on my side. It must be the head of the spear! I had hold of it, but I cannot pull it out."

"It must be the spearhead! Nothing else. Grasp it well and pull."

Macko began to turn and to twist with pain; but he pushed his fingers deeper and deeper, until he seized a hard substance which finally he pulled out.

"O, Jesus!"

"Have you pulled it out?" asked Zbyszko.

"Yes. I am in a cold perspiration all over; but I have it; look!"

Having said this, he showed to Zbyszko a long splinter, which had separated from the spear and remained in his body for several months.

"Glory be to God and to Queen Jadwiga! Now you will get well."

"Perhaps; I am better, but it pains me greatly," said Macko, pressing the wound from which blood and pus began to flow. "Jagienka said that now I ought to dress the wound with the grease of a beaver."

"We will go to-morrow and get a beaver."

Macko felt considerably better the next day. He slept till morning, and when he awoke, immediately asked for something to eat. He would not even look at the bear's grease; but they cooked twenty eggs for him. He ate them voraciously, also a big loaf of bread, and drank about four quarts of beer; then he demanded that they call Zych, because he felt jovial.

Zbyszko sent one of the Turks, given to him by Zawisza, after Zych who mounted a horse and came in the afternoon when the young people were ready to go to the Odstajny lake to catch a beaver. At first there was plenty of laughter and singing, while they drank mead; but afterward the old *wlodykas* began to talk about the children, each praising his own.

"What a man Zbyszko is!" said Macko; "there is no other like him in the world. He is brave and as agile as a wild-cat. Do you know that when they conducted him to the scaffold in Krakow, all the girls standing at the windows were crying,

and such girls ;—daughters of knights and of castellans, and also the beautiful townswomen.”

“They may be beautiful and the daughters of castellans, but they are not better than my Jagienka!” answered Zych of Zgorzelice.

“Did I say they were better? It will be difficult to find a better girl than Jagienka.”

“I do not say anything against Zbyszko either; he can stretch a crossbow without a crank.”

“He can underprop a bear also. Did you see how he cut the bear? He cut the head and one paw off.”

“He cut the head off, but he did not underprop it alone. Jagienka helped him.”

“Did she? He did not tell me about that.”

“Because he promised her not to tell anyone. The girl was ashamed because she went into the forest alone at night. She told me all about it; she never hides the truth. Frankly speaking, I was not pleased because who knows what might have happened. I wanted to scold her, but she said, ‘If I be not able to preserve my wreath myself, how can you preserve it, you *tatulu*; but do not fear, Zbyszko knows what knightly honor is.’”

“That is true. They have gone alone to-day also.”

“They will be back in the evening. But during the night, the devil is worse and the girl does not feel ashamed because of the darkness.”

Macko thought for a while; then he said as if to himself:

“But they are fond of each other.”

“Bah! it is a pity he made a vow to another!”

“That is, as you know, a knightly custom. They consider the one who has no lady, a churl.

He also made a vow to capture some peacocks' tufts, and those he must get because he swore by his knightly honor; he must also challenge Lichtenstein; but from the other vows, the abbot can release him."

"The abbot is coming soon."

"Do you expect him?" asked Macko; then he said again: "And what does such a vow amount to; Jurand told him positively that he could not give the girl to him! I do not know whether he had promised her to some one else, or whether he had destined her for God."

"Have I told you that the abbot loves Jagienka as much as if she were his own? The last time I saw him he said: 'I have no relations except those from my mother's side; and they will receive nothing from me.'"

Here Macko looked at Zych suspiciously and after awhile he answered:

"Would you wrong us?"

"Jagienka will get Moczydoly," said Zych evasively.

"Immediately?"

"Immediately. I would not give it to another; but I will do it for her."

"Half of Bogdaniec belongs to Zbyszko, and if God restore my health, I will improve the estate. Do you love Zbyszko?"

Zych began to wink and said:

"When anybody mentions Zbyszko's name in the presence of Jagienka, she immediately turns away."

"And when you mention another?"

"When I mention another, she only laughs and says: 'What then?'"

"Well, do you not see. God will help us and Zbyszko will forget about the other girl. I am old and I will forget also. Will you have some more mead?"

"Yes, I will."

"Well, the abbot is a wise man! You know that some of the abbots are laymen; but this abbot, although he does not sit among the friars, is a priest just the same; and a priest can always give better advice than an ordinary man, because he knows how to read, and he communes with the Holy Ghost. I am glad that Jagienka is going to have the estate of Moczydoly. As for me, as soon as the Lord Jesus restores my health, I will try to induce some of the peasants living on the estate of Wilk of Brzozowa, to settle on my land. I will offer them more land, I have plenty of it in Bogdaniec. They can come if they wish to, for they are free. In time, I will build a *grodek* in Bogdaniec, a worthy castle of oaks with a ditch around it. Let Zbyszko and Jagienka hunt together. I think we shall soon have snow. They will become accustomed to each other, and the boy will forget that other girl. Let them be together. Speak frankly; would you give Jagienka to him or not?"

"I would. Did we not decide a long time ago that they should marry, and that Moczydoly and Bogdaniec would be our grandchildren's?"

"*Grady!*" exclaimed Macko, joyfully. "God will bless us and their children will be as numerous as hail. The abbot shall baptize them."

"If he will only be quick enough!" exclaimed Zych. "I have not seen you so jolly as you are to-day for a long time."

"Because I am glad in my heart. Do not fear

about Zbyszko. Yesterday when Jagienka mounted her horse, the wind blew. I asked Zbyszko then: 'Did you see?' and his eyes shone. I have also noticed that although at first they did not speak much to each other, now when they go together, they are continually turning their heads toward each other, and they talk—talk! Have some more mead?"

"Yes, I will."

"To Zbyszko and Jagienka's health!"

CHAPTER VII.

THE old *wlodyka* was not mistaken when he said that Zbyszko and Jagienka were fond of each other, and even that they longed for each other. Jagienka pretending that she wanted to visit the sick Macko, went very often to Bogdaniec, either alone or with her father. Zbyszko also went often to Zgorzelice. In that way, after a few days a familiarity and friendship originated between them. They grew fond of each other and talked about everything that interested them. There was much mutual admiration in that friendship also. The young and handsome Zbyszko, who had already distinguished himself in the war, had participated in tournaments and had been in the presence of kings, was considered by the girl, when she compared him with Cztan of Rogow or Wilk of Brzozowa, a true courtly knight and almost a prince; as for him, he was astonished at the great beauty of the girl. He was loyal to Danusia; but very often when he looked suddenly at Jagienka, either in the forest or at home, he said involuntarily to himself: "Hej! what a girl!" When, helping her to mount her horse, he felt her elastic flesh under his hands, disquietude filled him and he shivered, and a torpor began to steal over him.

Jagienka, although naturally proud, inclined to raillery, and even aggressive, grew more and more gentle with him, often looking in his eyes to discover how she could please him; he understood her

affection; he was grateful for it and he liked to be with her more and more. Finally, especially after Macko began to drink the bear's grease, they saw each other almost every day; when the splinter came out of the wound, they went together to get some fresh beaver's grease, necessary for the healing of the wound.

They took their crossbows, mounted their horses and went first to Moczydoly, destined for Jagienka's dowry, then to the edge of the forest, where they entrusted the horses to a servant and went on foot, because it was impossible to pass through the thicket on horseback. While walking, Jagienka pointed to the large meadow covered with reeds and to the blue ribbon of forest and said:

"Those woods belong to Cztan of Rogow."

"The same man who would like to take you?"

She began to laugh:

"He would if he could!"

"You can defend yourself very easily, having for your defence the Wilk¹ who, as I understand, gnashes his teeth at Cztan. I wonder that they have not challenged each other to fight until death."

"They have not because *tatulo* before he went to the war said to them: 'If you fight about Jagienka I do not want to see you any more.' How could they fight then? When they are in Zgorzelice they scowl at each other; but afterward they drink together in an inn in Krzesnia until they are drunk."

"Stupid boys!"

"Why?"

"Because while Zych was away one of them

¹ Wolf,

should have taken you by force. What could Zych do, if when he returned he had found you with a baby on your lap?"

At this Jagienka's blue eyes flashed immediately.

"Do you think I would let them take me? Have we not people in Zgorzelice, and do I not know how to manage a crossbow or a boar-spear? Let them try! I would chase them back home and even attack them in Rogow or Brzozowa. Father knew very well that he could go to the war and leave me home alone."

Speaking thus, she frowned, and shook the crossbow threateningly, so that Zbyszko began to laugh, and said:

"You ought to have been a knight and not a girl."

She becoming calmer, answered:

"Cztan guarded me from Wilk and Wilk from Cztan. Then I was also under the abbot's tutelage, and it is well for everyone to let the abbot alone."

"Owa!" answered Zbyszko. "They are all afraid of the abbot! But I, may Saint George help me to speak the truth to you, I would neither be afraid of the abbot, nor of your peasants, nor of yourself; I would take you!"

At this Jagienka stopped on the spot, and fixing her eyes on Zbyszko, asked in a strange, soft, low voice:

"You would take me?"

Then her lips parted and blushing like the dawn, she waited for his answer.

But he evidently was only thinking what he would do, were he in Cztan or Wilk's position; because after a while, he shook his golden hair and said further:

"A girl must marry and not fight with the boys. Unless you have a third one, you must choose one of these two."

"You must not tell me that," answered the girl, sadly.

"Why not? I have been away from home for a long time, therefore I do not know whether there is somebody around Zgorzelice, of whom you are fond or not."

"Hej!" answered Jagienka. "Let it be!"

They walked along silently, trying to make their way through the thicket which was now much denser because the bushes and the trees were covered with wild hop vines. Zbyszko walked first, tearing down the green vines, and breaking the branches here and there; Jagienka followed him with a crossbow on her shoulder, looking like a hunting goddess.

"Beyond that thicket," said she, "there is a deep brook; but I know where the ford is."

"I have long boots on, reaching above my knees; we can cross it," answered Zbyszko.

Shortly afterward, they reached the brook. Jagienka being familiar with the Moczydlowski forests, very easily found the ford; but the water was deeper than usual, the little brook being swollen by the rains. Then Zbyszko without asking her permission, seized the girl in his arms.

"I can cross by myself," said Jagienka.

"Put your arms around my neck!" answered Zbyszko.

He walked slowly through the water, while the girl nestled to him. Finally when they were near the other shore, she said;

"Zbyszkul"

"What?"

"I care neither for Cztan, nor for Wilk."

As he placed her on the shore, he answered excitedly :

"May God give you the best ! He will not be wronged."

The Odstajny lake was not far away now. Jagienka walking in front, turned from time to time, and putting a finger on her lips, ordered Zbyszko to be silent. They were walking amidst the osiers and gray willows, on low, damp ground. From the left side, were heard the voices of birds, and Zbyszko was surprised at that, because it was time for the birds to migrate.

"We are near a morass which is never frozen," whispered Jagienka ; "the ducks pass the winter there ; even in the lake the water freezes only near the shores. See how it is steaming."

Zbyszko looked through the willows and noticed in front of him, something like a bank of fog ; it was the Odstajny lake.

Jagienka again put a finger to her lips, and after a while they reached the lake. The girl climbed on an old willow and bent over the water. Zbyszko followed her example ; and for a long time they remained quiet, seeing nothing in front of them, on account of the fog ; hearing nothing but the mournful puling of lapwings. Finally the wind blew, rustled the osiers and the yellow leaves of the willows, and disclosed the waters of the lake which were slightly ruffled by the wind.

"Do you see anything ?" whispered Zbyszko.

"No. Keep quiet !"

After a while, the wind ceased and complete si-

lence followed. Then on the surface of the lake appeared one head, then another; finally near them a big beaver entered the water from the shore, carrying in his mouth a newly cut branch, and began to swim amidst the duck-weed and marigold, holding his mouth out of the water and pushing the branch before him. Zbyszko lying on the trunk beneath Jagienka, noticed that her elbow moved quietly and that her head was bent forward; evidently she had aimed at the animal which, not suspecting any danger, was swimming close by, toward the clear water.

Finally the string of the crossbow twanged and at the same moment Jagienka cried:

“ I hit him ! I hit him ! ”

Zbyszko instantly climbed higher and looked through the thicket toward the water; the beaver plunged into the water, then reappeared on the surface, turning somersets.

“ I hit him hard ! He will soon be quiet ! ” said Jagienka.

The movements of the animal grew slower, and then before one had time sufficient to recite one “ *Ave Maria*, ” he was floating on his back on the surface of the water.

“ I will go and get him, ” said Zbyszko.

“ No, do not go. Here, near the shore, there is deep slime. Anyone who does not know how to manage, will surely drown. ”

“ Then how will we get him ? ”

“ He will be in Bogdaniec this evening, do not worry about that ; now we must go home. ”

“ You hit him hard ! ”

“ Bah ! It is not the first one ! ”

“ Other girls are afraid to even look at a cross-

bow ; but with you, one can go to the forest all his life."

Jagienka smiled at such praise, but she did not answer ; they returned the same way they came. Zbyszko asked her about the beavers and she told him how many of them there were in Moczydoly, and how many in Zgorzelice.

Suddenly she struck her hip with her hand and exclaimed :

" Well, I left my arrows on the willow. Wait ! "

Before he could say that he would return for them, she jumped back like a roe and disappeared. Zbyszko waited and waited ; at last he began to wonder what detained her so long.

" She must have lost the arrows and is searching for them," he said to himself ; " but I will go and see whether anything has happened to her."

He had hardly started to return before the girl appeared with her bow in her hand, her face smiling and blushing, and with the beaver on her shoulders.

" For God's sake ! " cried Zbyszko, " how did you get him ? "

" How ? I went into the water, that is all ! It is nothing new for me ; but I did not want you to go, because the mud drags anyone down who does not know how to swim in it."

" And I waited here like a fool ! You are a sly girl."

" Well, could I undress before you ? "

" Bah ! If I had followed you, then I would have seen a wonder ! "

" Be silent ! "

" I was just starting, so help me God ! "

" Be silent ! "

After a while, wishing to turn the conversation, she said :

“ Wring my tress ; it makes my back wet.”

Zbyszko caught the tress in one hand and began to wring with the other, saying :

“ The best way will be to unbraid it, then the wind will soon dry it.”

But she did not wish to do that on account of the thicket through which they were obliged to make their way. Zbyszko now put the beaver on his shoulders. Jagienka walking in front of him, said :

“ Now Macko will soon be well, because there is no better medicine for a wound than the grease of a bear inside, and the grease of a beaver outside. In about two weeks, he will be able to ride a horse.”

“ May God grant that !” answered Zbyszko. “ I am waiting for it as for salvation, because I cannot leave the sick man, and it is hard for me to stay here.”

“ Why is it hard for you to stay here ?” she asked him.

“ Has Zych told you nothing about Danusia ?”

“ He did tell me something. I know that she covered you with her veil. I know that ! He told me also that every knight makes some vow, to serve his lady. But he said that such a vow did not amount to anything ; that some of the knights were married, but they served their ladies just the same. But Danusia, Zbyszko ; tell me about her !”

Having come very close to him, she began to look at his face with great anxiety ; he did not pay any attention to her frightened voice and looks, but said :

"She is my lady, and at the same time she is my sweetest love. I have not spoken about her to anybody ; but I am going to tell you, because we have been acquainted since we were children. I will follow her beyond the tenth river and beyond the tenth sea, to the Germans and to the Tartars, because there is no other girl like her. Let my uncle remain in Bogdaniec, and I will go to her. What do I care about Bogdaniec, the household, the herds, or the abbot's wealth, without her ! I will mount my horse and I will go, so help me God ; I will fulfill that which I promised her, or I will die."

"I did not know," answered Jagienka, in a hollow voice.

Zbyszko began to tell her about all that had happened ; how he had met Danusia in Tyniec ; how he had made a vow to her ; about everything that happened afterward ; about his imprisonment, and how Danusia rescued him ; about Jurand's refusal, their farewell and his loneliness ; finally about his joy, because as soon as Macko became well, he would go to his beloved girl. His story was interrupted at last by the sight of the servant with the horses, waiting on the edge of the forest.

Jagienka immediately mounted her horse and began to bid Zbyszko good-bye.

"Let the servant follow you with the beaver ; I am going to Zgorzelice."

"Then you will not go to Bogdaniec ? Zych is there."

"No. *Tatulo* said he would return and told me to go home."

"Well, may God reward you for the beaver."

"With God."

Then Jagienka was alone. Going home through the heaths, she looked back for a while after Zbyszko; when he disappeared beyond the trees, she covered her eyes with her hands as if sheltering them from the sunlight. But soon large tears began to flow down her cheeks and drop one after another on the horse's mane.

CHAPTER VIII.

AFTER the conversation with Zbyszko, Jagienka did not appear in Bogdaniec for three days ; but on the third day she hurried in with the news that the abbot had arrived at Zgorzelice. Macko received the news with emotion. It is true he had money enough to pay the amount for which the estate was pledged, and he calculated that he would have enough to induce settlers to come, to buy herds and to make other improvements ; but in the whole transaction, much depended on the disposition of the rich relation, who, for instance, could take or leave the peasants settled by him on the land, and in that way increase or diminish the value of the estate.

Therefore Macko asked Jagienka about the abbot ; how he was ; if he was in a good humor or gloomy ; what he had said about them ; when he was coming to Bogdaniec ? She gave him sensible answers, trying to encourage and tranquillize him in every respect.

She said that the abbot was in good health and gay ; that he was accompanied by a considerable retinue in which, besides the armed servants, there were several seminarists and *ryballs* ; that he sang with Zych and that he listened gladly not only to the spiritual but to the worldly songs also. She had noticed also that he asked carefully about Macko, and that he listened eagerly to Zych's narration of Zbyszko's adventure in Krakow.

" You know best what you ought to do," finally the clever girl said ; " but I think that Zbyszko

ought to go immediately and greet his elder relative, and not wait until the abbot comes to Bogdaniec."

Macko liked the advice; therefore he called Zbyszko and said to him:

"Dress yourself beautifully; then go and bow to the abbot, and pay him respect; perhaps he will take a fancy to you."

Then he turned to Jagienka:

"I would not be surprised if you were stupid, because you are a woman; but I am astonished to find that you have such good sense. Tell me then, the best way to receive the abbot when he comes here."

"As for food, he will tell you himself what he wishes to have; he likes to feast well, but if there be a great deal of saffron in the food, he will eat anything."

Macko hearing this, said:

"How can I get saffron for him!"

"I brought some," said Jagienka.

"Give us more such girls!" exclaimed the overjoyed Macko. "She is pretty, a good housekeeper, intelligent and good-hearted! Hej! if I were only younger I would take her immediately!"

Here Jagienka glanced at Zbyszko, and having sighed slightly, she said further:

"I brought also the dice, the goblet and the cloth, because after his meal, the abbot likes to play dice."

"He had the same habit formerly, and he used to get very angry."

"He gets angry sometimes now; then he throws the goblet on the ground and rushes from the room into the fields. Then he comes back smiling, and

laughs at his anger. You know him ! If one does not contradict him, you cannot find a better man in the world."

"And who would contradict him ; is he not wiser and mightier than others ?"

Thus they talked while Zbyszko was dressing in the alcove. Finally he came out, looking so beautiful that he dazzled Jagienka, as much as he did the first time he went to Zgorzelice in his white *jaka*. She regretted that this handsome knight was not hers, and that he was in love with another girl.

Macko was pleased because he thought that the abbot could not help liking Zbyszko and would be more lenient during their business transaction. He was so much pleased with this idea, that he determined to go also.

"Order the servants to prepare a wagon," said he to Zbyszko. "If I could travel from Krakow to Bogdaniec with an iron in my side, surely I can go now to Zgorzelice."

"If you only will not faint," said Jagienka.

"Ej ! I will be all right, because I feel stronger already. And even if I faint, the abbot will see that I hastened to meet him, and will be more generous."

"I prefer your health to his generosity !" said Zbyszko.

But Macko was persistent and started for Zgorzelice. On the road he moaned a little, but he continued to give Zbyszko advice ; he told him how to act in Zgorzelice, and especially recommended him to be obedient and humble in the presence of their mighty relative, who never would suffer the slightest opposition.

When they came to Zgorzelice, they found Zych and the abbot sitting in front of the house, looking at the beautiful country, and drinking wine. Behind them, near the wall, sat six men of the abbot's retinue; two of them were *rybalts*; one was a pilgrim, who could easily be distinguished by his curved stick and dark mantle; the others looked like seminarists because their heads were shaved, but they wore lay clothing, girdles of ox leather, and swords.

When Zych perceived Macko coming in the wagon, he rushed toward him; but the abbot, evidently remembering his spiritual dignity, remained seated, and began to say something to his seminarists. Zbyszko and Zych conducted the sick Macko toward the house.

"I am not well yet," said Macko, kissing the abbot's hand, "but I came to bow to you, my benefactor; to thank you for your care of Bogdaniec, and to beg you for a benediction, which is most necessary for a sinful man."

"I heard you were better," said the abbot, placing his hand on Macko's head; "and that you had promised to go to the grave of our late queen."

"Not knowing which saint's protection to ask for, I made a vow to her."

"You did well!" said the abbot, enthusiastically; "she is better than all the others, if one only dare beseech her!"

In a moment his face became flushed with anger, his cheeks filled with blood, his eyes began to sparkle.

They were so used to his impetuosity, that Zych began to laugh and exclaimed:

"Strike, who believes in God!"

As for the abbot, he puffed loudly, and looked at those present ; then laughed suddenly, and having looked at Zbyszko, he asked :

“ Is that your nephew and my relation ? ”

Zbyszko bent and kissed his hand.

“ I saw him when he was a small boy ; I did not recognize him,” said the abbot. “ Show yourself ! ” And he began to look at him from head to foot, and finally said :

“ He is too handsome ! It is a girl, not a knight ! ”

To this Macko replied :

“ That girl used to go to dancing parties with the Germans ; but those who took her, fell down and did not rise again.”

“ And he can stretch a crossbow without a crank ! ” exclaimed Jagienka.

The abbot turned toward her :

“ Ah ! Are you here ? ”

She blushed so much that her neck and ears became red, and answered :

“ I saw him do it.”

“ Look out then, that he does not shoot you, because you will be obliged to nurse yourself for a long time.”

At this the *rybals*, the pilgrim and the seminarists broke out with great laughter, which confused Jagienka still more ; the abbot took pity on her, and having raised his arm, he showed her his enormous sleeve, and said :

“ Hide here, my dear girl ! ”

Meanwhile Zych assisted Macko to the bench and ordered some wine for him. Jagienka went to get it. The abbot turned to Zbyszko and began to talk thus :

“ Enough of joking ! I compared you to a girl,

not to humiliate you, but to praise your beauty, of which many girls would be proud. But I know that you are a man! I have heard about your deeds at Wilno, about the Fryzes, and about Krakow. Zych has told me all about it, understand!"

Here he began to look intently into Zbyszko's eyes, and after a while he said:

"If you have promised three peacocks' tufts, then search for them! It is praiseworthy and pleasing to God to persecute the foes of our nation. But, if you have promised something else, I will release you from the vow."

"Hej!" said Zbyszko; "when a man promises something in his soul to the Lord Jesus, who has the power to release him?"

Macko looked with fear at the abbot; but evidently he was in an excellent humor, because instead of becoming angry, he threatened Zbyszko with his finger and said:

"How clever you are! But you must be careful that you do not meet the same fate that the German, Beyhard, did."

"What happened to him?" asked Zych.

"They burned him on a pile."

"What for?"

"Because he used to say that a layman could understand God's secrets as well as the clergy."

"They punished him severely!"

"But righteously!" shouted the abbot, "because he had blasphemed against the Holy Ghost. What do you think? Is a layman able to interpret any of God's secrets?"

"He cannot by any means!" exclaimed the wandering seminarists, together.

"Keep quiet, you *shpilmen*!" said the abbot;

"you are not ecclesiastics, although your heads are shaved."

"We are not '*shpilmen*,' but courtiers of Your Grace," answered one of them, looking toward a large bucket from which the smell of hops and malt was filling the air.

"Look! He is talking from a barrel!" exclaimed the abbot. "Hej, you shaggy one! Why do you look at the bucket? You will not find any Latin at the bottom of that."

"I am not looking for Latin, but for beer; but I cannot find any."

The abbot turned toward Zbyszko, who was looking with astonishment at such courtiers as these, and said:

"They are *clerici scholares*;¹ but every one of them prefers to throw his books aside, and taking his lute, wander through the world. I shelter and nourish them; what else can I do? They are good for nothing, but they know how to sing and they are familiar with God's service; therefore I have some benefit out of them in my church, and in case of need, they will defend me, because some of them are fierce fellows! This pilgrim says that he was in the Holy Land; but I have asked him in vain about some of the seas and countries; he does not know even the name of the Greek emperor nor in what city he lives."

"I did know," said the pilgrim, in a hoarse voice; "but the fever I caught at the Danube, shook everything out of me."

"What surprises me most is, that they wear swords, being wandering seminarists," said Zbyszko.

"They are allowed to wear them," said the

¹Seminarists students.

abbot, "because they have not received orders yet; and there is no occasion for anyone to wonder because I wear a sword even though I am an abbot. A year ago I challenged Wilk of Brzozowa to fight for the forests which you passed; but he did not appear."

"How could he fight with one of the clergy?" interrupted Zych.

At this the abbot became angry, struck the table with his fist, and exclaimed:

"When I wear armor, then I am not a priest, but a nobleman! He did not come because he preferred to have his servants attack me in Tulcza. That is why I wear a sword: *Omnes leges, omniaque iura vim vi repellere cunctisque sese defensare permittunt!* That is why I gave them their swords."

Hearing the Latin, Zych, Macko and Zbyszko became silent and bent their heads before the abbot's wisdom, because they did not understand a word of it; as for the abbot, he looked very angry for a while, and then he said:

"Who knows but what he will attack me even here?"

"Owa! Let him come!" exclaimed the wandering seminarists, seizing the hilts of their swords.

"I would like to have him attack me! I am longing for a fight."

"He will not do that," said Zych. "It is more likely that he will come to bow to you. He gave up the forests, and now he is anxious about his son. You know! But he can wait a long time!"

Meanwhile the abbot became quieted and said:

"I saw young Wilk drinking with Cztan of Rogow in an inn in Krzesnia. They did not recog-

nize us at once, because it was dark ; they were talking about Jagienka."

Here he turned to Zbyszko :

" And about you, too."

" What do they want from me ? "

" They do not want anything from you ; but they do not like it that there is a third young man near Zgorzelice. Cztan said to Wilk : ' After I tan his skin, he will not be so smooth.' And Wilk said : ' Perhaps he will be afraid of us ; if not, I will break his bones ! ' Then they assured each other that you would be afraid of them."

Hearing this Macko looked at Zych, and Zych looked at him ; their faces expressed great cunning and joy. Neither of them was sure whether the abbot had really heard such a conversation, or whether he was only saying this to excite Zbyszko ; but they both knew, and Macko especially, that there was no better way to incite Zbyszko to try to win Jagienka.

The abbot added deliberately :

" It is true, they are fierce fellows ! "

Zbyszko did not show any excitement ; but he asked in a strange tone that did not sound like his voice :

" To-morrow is Sunday ? "

" Yes, Sunday. "

" You will go to church ? "

" Yes ! "

" Where ? to Krzesnia ? "

" That is the nearest ! "

" Well, all right then ! "

CHAPTER IX.

ZYBSZKO, having joined Zych and Jagienka, who were accompanying the abbot and his retinue to Krzesnia, rode with them, because he wanted to show the abbot that he was afraid neither of Wilk of Brzozowa, nor of Cztan of Rogow. He was again surprised at Jagienka's beauty. He had often seen her in Zgorzelice and Bogdaniec, dressed beautifully; but never had she looked as she did now when going to church. Her cloak was made of red broadcloth, lined with ermine; she wore red gloves, and on her head was a little hood embroidered with gold, from beneath which two braids fell down on her shoulders. She was not sitting on the horse astride, but on a high saddle which had an arm and a little bench for her feet, which scarcely showed from beneath her long skirt. Zych permitted the girl to dress in a sheepskin overcoat and high-legged boots when at home, but required that for church she should be dressed not like the daughter of a poor *wlodyczka*,¹ but like the *panna* of a mighty nobleman. Two boys, dressed like pages, conducted her horse. Four servants were riding behind with the abbot's seminarists, who were armed with swords and carried their lutes. Zbyszko admired all the retinue, but especially Jagienka, who looked like a picture. The abbot, who was dressed in a red cloak, having enormous sleeves, resembled a traveling prince. The most modest dress was worn by Zych, who requiring

¹ Diminutive of *wlodyka*.

magnificent display for the others, for himself cared only for singing and joy.

Zych, Zbyszko, Jagienka and the abbot rode together. At first the abbot ordered his *shpilmen* to sing some church songs; afterward, when he was tired of their songs, he began to talk with Zbyszko, who smiled at his enormous sword, which was as large as a two-handed German sword.

"I see," said he gravely, "that you wonder at my sword; the synod permits a clergyman to wear a sword during a journey, and I am traveling. When the holy father forbade the ecclesiastics to wear swords and red dresses, most assuredly he meant the men of low birth, because God intended that noblemen should wear arms; and he who would dare to take this right from a nobleman, would oppose His eternal will."

"I saw the Mazovian Prince Henryk, when he fought in the lists," said Zbyszko.

"We do not censure him, because he fought," answered the abbot, raising his finger, "but because he married and married unhappily; *fornicarium* and *bibulam* had taken *mulierem*, whom *Bachum* since she was young *adorabat*, and besides that she was *adultera*, from whom no one could expect any good." He stopped his horse and began to expound with still greater gravity:

"Whoever wishes to marry, or to choose *uxorem*, must ascertain if she is pious, moral, a good house-keeper and cleanly. This is recommended not only by the fathers of the church, but also by a certain pagan sage, called Seneca. And how can you know whether you have chosen well, if you do not know the nest from which you take your life companion? Because another sage has said: *Pomus*

nam cadit absque arbore. As is the ox, so is the skin; as is the mother, so is the girl. From which you, a sinner, must draw this moral,—that you must look for your wife not far away, but near; because if you get a bad one, you will cry as did the philosopher, when his quarrelsome wife poured *aquam sordidam* on his head.”

“*In sæcula sæculorum*, amen!” exclaimed in unison the wandering seminarists, who when responding to the abbot, did not always answer properly.

They were all listening very attentively to the abbot's words, admiring his eloquence and his knowledge of the Scriptures; he apparently did not speak directly to Zbyszko; but on the contrary, he turned more toward Zych and Jagienka, as if he wished to edify them. But evidently Jagienka understood what he was trying to do, because from beneath her long eyelashes, she looked at Zbyszko, who frowned and dropped his head as if he were seriously thinking about what the abbot had said.

After this the retinue moved on silently; but when they came near Krzesnia, the abbot touched his girdle and then turned it so that he could seize the hilt of his sword more easily, and said:

“I am sure that old Wilk of Brzozowa will come with a good retinue.”

“Perhaps,” replied Zych, “but I heard that he was not well.”

“One of my seminarists heard that he intends to attack us in front of the inn after the service is over.”

“He will not do that without a challenge, and especially after holy mass.”

“May God bring him to reason. I do not seek

a quarrel with anybody and I bear my wrongs patiently."

Here he looked at the *shpilmen*, and said :

"Do not draw your swords, and remember that you are spiritual servants; but if they attack us first, then strike them!"

Zbyszko, while riding beside Jagienka, said to her :

"I am sure that in Krzesnia we will meet young Wilk and Cztan. Show me them from afar, so that I may know them."

"Very well, Zbyszku," answered Jagienka.

"Do they not meet you before the service and after the service? What do they do then?"

"They serve me."

"They will not serve you now, understand?" And she answered again, almost with humility :

"Very well, Zbyszku."

Further conversation was interrupted by the sound of the wooden knockers, there being no bells in Krzesnia. After a few moments they arrived at the church. From the crowd in front, waiting for mass, young Wilk and Cztan of Rogow came forward immediately; but Zbyszko jumped from his horse, and before they could reach her, seized Jagienka and lifted her down from her horse; then he took her by the hand, and looking at them threateningly, conducted her to the church.

In the vestibule of the church, they were again disappointed. Both rushed to the font of holy water, plunged their hands in, and then stretched them toward the girl. But Zbyszko did the same, and she touched his fingers; then having made the sign of the cross, she entered the church with him. Then not only young Wilk, but Cztan of Rogow

also, notwithstanding his stupidity, understood that this had been done purposely, and both were very angry. Wilk rushed out of the vestibule and ran like a madman, not knowing where he was going. Cztan rushed after him, although not knowing why.

They stopped at the corner of the inclosure where there were some large stones ready for the foundation of the tower which was to be built in Krzesnia. Then, Wilk wishing to assuage the wrath which raged in his breast, seized one of these stones, and began to shake it; Cztan seeing him do this, seized it also, and both began to roll it toward the church gate.

The people looked at them with amazement, thinking that they had made some vow, and that in this way they wished to contribute to the building of the tower. This effort gave them relief and they came to their senses; then they stood, pale from their exertion, puffing and looking at each other.

Cztan of Rogow was the first to break the silence.

"What now?" asked he.

"What?" answered Wilk.

"Shall we attack him immediately?"

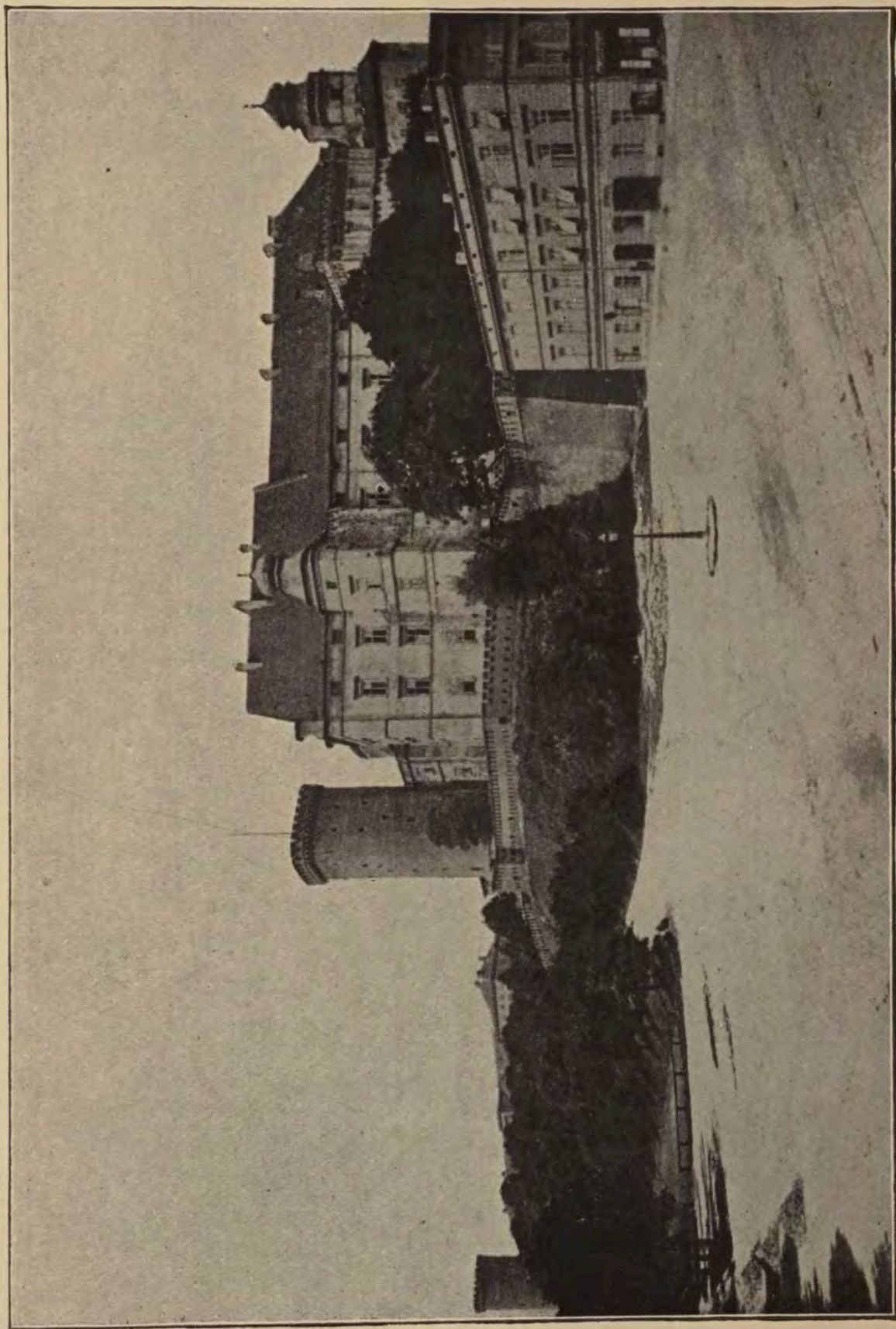
"How can we do that in the church?"

"Not in the church, but after mass."

"He is with Zych and the abbot. And have you forgotten that Zych said that if there were a fight, he would refuse to let either of us visit at Zgorzelice. But for that, I would have broken your ribs long ago."

"Or I, yours!" answered Cztan, clinching his powerful fists.

And their eyes began to sparkle threateningly;



THE WEST SIDE OF THE CASTLE ON THE WAWEL

but soon they both realized that now, more than ever, they needed to have a good understanding. They often fought together; but after each fight, they always became reconciled, because although they were divided by their love for Jagienka, they could not live without each other. Now they had a common foe and they understood that the enemy was a dangerous one.

After a while Cztan asked :

“What shall we do? Shall we send him a challenge?”

Wilk, although he was wiser, did not know what to do. Fortunately the knockers resounded to notify the people that mass would begin. When he heard them he said :

“What shall we do? Go to church now and after that, we will do whatever pleases God.”

Cztan of Rogow was pleased with this answer.

“Perhaps the Lord Jesus will send us an inspiration,” said he.

“And will bless us,” added Wilk.

“According to justice.”

They went to church, and having listened devoutly to the mass, they grew more hopeful. They did not lose their temper after mass, when Jagienka again accepted holy water from Zbyszko. In the church-yard they bowed to Zych, to Jagienka and even to the abbot, although he was an enemy of Wilk of Brzozowa. They scowled at Zbyszko, but did not attempt to touch him, although their hearts were throbbing with grief, anger and jealousy; never before had Jagienka seemed to them to be as beautiful as she was then. When the brilliant retinue moved on and when from afar they heard the merry song of the ambulant semi-

narists, Cztan began to wipe the perspiration from his hairy cheeks and to snort like a horse; as for Wilk, he said, gnashing his teeth:

"To the inn! To the inn! Woe to me!" Afterward remembering what had relieved them before, they again seized the stone and rolled it back to its former place.

Zbyszko rode beside Jagienka, listening to the abbot's *shpilmen* singing merry songs; but when they had traveled five or six furlongs, he suddenly reined in his horse, and said:

"Oh! I intended to pay for a mass to be said for uncle's health and I forgot it; I must return."

"Do not go back!" exclaimed Jagienka; "we will send from Zgorzelice."

"No, I will return, and you must not wait for me. With God!"

"With God," said the abbot. "Go!" And his face brightened; when Zbyszko disappeared, he touched Zych with his elbow and said:

"Do you understand?"

"What?"

"He will surely fight in Krzesnia with Wilk and Cztan; but I wished for it and I am glad."

"They are dreadful boys! If they wound him, then what of it?"

"What of it? If he fight for Jagienka, then how can he afterward think about that other girl, Jurandowna? From this time, Jagienka will be his lady, not the other girl; and I wish it because he is my relative and I like him."

"Bah! What about his vow?"

"I will give him absolution in the twinkling of an eye! Have you not heard that I promised to absolve him?"

"Your head is wise about everything," answered Zych.

The abbot was pleased with this praise; then he approached nearer Jagienka and asked:

"Why are you so sad?"

She leaned on the saddle, seized the abbot's hand and lifted it to her mouth:

"Godfather, could you not send your *shpilmen* to Krzesnia?"

"What for? They will get drunk in the inn—that's all."

"But they may prevent a quarrel."

The abbot looked into her eyes and then said sharply:

"Let them even kill him."

"Then they must kill me also!" exclaimed Jagienka.

The bitterness which had accumulated in her bosom since that conversation about Danusia with Zbyszko, mingled with grief, now gushed forth in a stream of tears. Seeing this, the abbot encircled her with his arm, almost covering her with his enormous sleeve, and began to talk:

"Do not be afraid, my dear little girl. They may quarrel, but the other boys are noblemen; they will attack him only in a chivalrous manner; they will call him up on the field, and then he can manage for himself, even if he be obliged to fight with both of them at once. As for Jurandowna, about whom you have heard, I will tell you this: there is no wood growing for a bed for the other girl."

"If he prefers the other girl, then I do not care about him," answered Jagienka, through her tears.

"Then why do you weep?"

"Because I am afraid for him."

"Woman's sense!" said the abbot, laughing.

Then having bent toward Jagienka's ear, he said:

"You must remember, dear girl, that even if he take you, he will be obliged to fight just the same; a nobleman must be a knight." Here he bent still closer and added:

"And he will take you, and before long, as God is in heaven!"

"I do not know about that!" answered Jagienka.

But she began to smile through her tears, and to look at the abbot as if she wished to ask him how he knew it.

Meanwhile, Zbyszko having returned to Krzesnia, went directly to the priest, because he really wished to have a mass read for Macko's health; after having settled about that, he went to the inn, where he expected to find young Wilk of Brzozowa, and Cztan of Rogow.

He found both of them there, and also many other people, noblemen, farmers and a few "mad-cap fellows" showing different German tricks. At first he could not recognize anybody, because the windows of the inn being made of ox bladders, did not let in a good light; but when the servant put some resinous wood on the fire, he noticed in the corner behind the beer buckets, Cztan's hairy cheeks, and Wilk's furious face.

Then he walked slowly toward them, pushing aside the people; when he reached them, he struck the table so heavily with his fist that the noise resounded throughout the whole inn.

They arose immediately and began to turn their girdles; but before they could grasp the hilts of their swords, Zbyszko threw down a glove, and

speaking through his nose, as the knights used to speak while challenging, he said these words which were unexpected by everybody :

“ If either of you, or any other knightly person here present, deny that the most beautiful and most virtuous girl in the world is *Panna* Danuta Juran-downa of Spychow, that one I will challenge to combat, on horseback or on foot, until the first kneeling, or until the last breath.”

Wilk and Cztan were astonished as much as the abbot would have been, had he heard Zbyszko's words ; and for a while they could not say a word. Who was this *panna* ? They cared about Jagienka and not about her ; and if this youth did not care for Jagienka, then what did he wish ? Why had he made them angry in the church-yard ? What did he return for, and why did he wish to quarrel with them ? These questions produced such confusion in their minds, that they opened their mouths widely and stared at Zbyszko as if he were not a man, but some German wonder.

But the more intelligent Wilk, who was a little familiar with chivalrous customs and knew that often a knight served one lady, but married another, thought that this must be a similar case, and that he must seize the opportunity to defend Jagienka.

Therefore he came out from behind the table, and coming close to Zbyszko, asked threateningly :

“ Then, you dog-brother, you mean to say that Jagienka Zychowna is not the most beautiful girl in the world ? ”

Cztan followed him ; and the people surrounded them, because they understood that it would not end in words,

CHAPTER X.

WHEN Jagienka reached home, she immediately sent a servant to Krzesnia to learn whether there had been a fight in the inn, or whether there had been a challenge. But the servant having received a *skojec*,¹ began to drink with the priest's servants, and did not hasten. Another servant who had been sent to Bogdaniec to inform Macko that the abbot was going to pay him a visit, returned, having fulfilled the commission and reported that he had seen Zbyszko playing dice with the old man. This partly soothed Jagienka, because knowing by experience how dexterous Zbyszko was, she was not so much afraid about a regular duel, as she was about some unexpected accident in the inn. She wanted to accompany the abbot to Bogdaniec, but he was not willing. He wished to talk with Macko about the pledge and about some other important business ; and then he wanted to go there toward night. Having learned that Zbyszko had returned home safe, he became very jovial and ordered his wandering seminarists to sing and shout. They obeyed him so well that the forest resounded with the noise, and in Bogdaniec, the farmers came out from their houses, and looked to see whether there was a fire or an invasion of the enemy. The pilgrim riding ahead, quieted them by telling them that a high ecclesiastical dignitary

¹ Piece of money ; it is twenty-fourth part of *grzywna* or mark, which was worth half pound of silver ; one *skojec* was worth about one-third of an ounce.

was coming; therefore when they saw the abbot, they bowed to him, and some of them even made the sign of the cross on their chests; he seeing how they respected him, rode along with joyful pride, pleased with the world and full of kindness toward the people.

Macko and Zbyszko having heard the singing, came to the gate to meet him. Some of the seminarists had been in Bogdaniec before with the abbot; but others of them having joined the retinue lately, had never seen it until now. They were disappointed when they saw the miserable house which could not be compared with the large mansion in Zgorzelice. But they were reassured when they saw the smoke coming out from the thatched roof of the house; and they were greatly pleased when upon entering the room, they smelt saffron and different kinds of meats, and noticed two tables full of tin dishes, empty as yet, but enormous. On the smaller table which was prepared for the abbot, shone a silver dish and also a beautifully engraved silver cup, both taken with the other treasures from the Fryzes.

Macko and Zbyszko invited them to the table immediately; but the abbot who had eaten plentifully in Zgorzelice, refused because he had something else on his mind. Since his arrival he had looked at Zbyszko attentively and uneasily, as if he desired to see on him some traces of the fight; but seeing the quiet face of the youth, he began to be impatient; finally he was unable to restrain his curiosity any longer.

"Let us go into the chamber," said he, "to speak about the pledge. Do not refuse me; that will make me angry!"

Here he turned to the seminarists and shouted :

“ You keep quiet and do not listen at the door ! ”

Having said this, he opened the door to the chamber and entered, followed by Zbyszko and Macko. As soon as they were seated on the chests, the abbot turned toward the young knight :

“ Did you go back to Krzesnia ? ” asked he.

“ Yes, I was there. ”

“ And what ? ”

“ Well, I paid for a mass for my uncle’s health, that’s all. ”

The abbot moved on the chest impatiently.

“ Ha ! ” thought he, “ he did not meet Cztan and Wilk ; perhaps they were not there, and perhaps he did not look for them. I was mistaken. ”

But he was angry because he was mistaken, and because his plans had not been realized ; therefore immediately his face grew red and he began to breathe loudly.

“ Let us speak about the pledge ! ” said he. “ Have you the money ? If not, then the estate is mine ! ”

Macko, who knew how to act with him, rose silently, opened the chest on which he was sitting, and took out of it a bag of *grzywien*, evidently prepared for this occasion, and said :

“ We are poor people, but we have the money ; we will pay what is right, as it is written in the ‘ letter ’ which I signed with the mark of the holy cross. If you want to be paid for the improvements, we will not quarrel about that either ; we will pay the amount you say, and we will bow to you, our benefactor. ”

Having said this, he kneeled at the abbot’s knee

and Zbyszko did the same. The abbot, who expected some quarrels and arguing, was very much surprised at such a proceeding, and not very much pleased with it; he wanted to dictate some conditions and he saw that he would have no opportunity to do so.

Therefore returning the "letter" or rather the mortgage which Macko had signed with a cross, he said:

"Why are you talking to me about an additional payment?"

"Because we do not want to receive any presents," answered Macko cunningly, knowing well that the more he quarreled in that matter the more he would get.

At this the abbot reddened with anger:

"Did you ever see such people? They do not wish to accept anything from a relative! You have too much bread! I did not take waste land and I do not return it waste; and if I want to give you this bag, I will do it!"

"You would not do that!" exclaimed Macko.

"I will not do it! Here is your pledge! Here is your money! I give it because I want to, and had I even thrown it into the road, it would be none of your affairs. You shall see if I will not do as I wish!"

Having said this, he seized the bag and threw it on the floor so hard that it burst, and the money was scattered.

"May God reward you! May God reward you, father and benefactor!" exclaimed Macko, who had been waiting for this; "I would not accept it from anyone else, but from a relation and a spiritual father, I will accept it,"

The abbot looked threateningly at both of them, and finally he said:

"Although I am angry, I know what I am doing; therefore hold what you have, because I assure you that you shall not have one *skojec* more."

"We did not expect even this."

"You know that Jagienka will inherit everything I have."

"The land also?" asked Macko, simply.

"The land also!" shouted the abbot.

At this Macko's face grew long, but he recovered himself and said:

"Ej, why should you think about death! May the Lord Jesus grant you a hundred years or more of life, and an important bishopric soon."

"Certainly! Am I worse than others?" said the abbot.

"Not worse, but better!"

These words appeased the abbot, for his anger never lasted long.

"Well," said he, "you are my relations, and she is only my goddaughter; but I love her, and Zych also. There is no better man in the world than Zych and no better girl than Jagienka, also! Who can say anything against them?"

He began to look angry, but Macko did not contradict; he quickly affirmed that there was no worthier neighbor in the whole kingdom.

"And as for the girl," said he, "I could not love my own daughter any more than I love her. With her help, I recovered my health and I shall never forget it until my death."

"You will both be punished if you forget it," said the abbot, "and I will curse you. But I do

not wish to wrong you, therefore I have found a way by which, what I will leave after my death, can belong to you and to Jagienka ; do you understand ? ”

“ May God help us to realize that ! ” answered Macko. “ Sweet Jesus ! I would go on foot to the grave of the queen in Krakow or to Lysa Gora¹ to bow to the Holy Cross.”

The abbot was very much pleased with such sincerity ; he smiled and said :

“ The girl is perfectly right to be particular in her choice, because she is pretty, rich and of good family ! Of what account are Cztan or Wilk, when the son of a *wojewoda* would not be too good for her ! But if somebody, as myself for instance, spoke in favor of any particular one, then she would marry him, because she loves me and knows that I will advise her well.”

“ The one whom you advise her to marry, will be very lucky,” said Macko.

But the abbot turned to Zbyszko :

“ What do you say to this ? ”

“ Well, I think the same as my uncle does.”

The face of the abbot became still more serene ; he struck Zbyszko’s shoulder with his hand so hard that the blow resounded in the chamber, and asked :

“ Why did you not let Cztan or Wilk approach Jagienka at church ? ”

“ Because I did not want them to think that I was afraid of them, and I did not want you to think so.”

¹ “ Bold Mountain ”—a place in Poland, where one of the first three Benedictine monasteries was built by the king, Boleslaw Chrobry (the Valiant) 1125. In this monastery is a part of our Saviour’s cross—hence pilgrimages to that place.

"But you gave the holy water to her."

"Yes, I did."

The abbot gave him another blow.

"Then, take her!"

"Take her!" exclaimed Macko, like an echo.

At this Zbyszko gathered up his hair, put it in the net, and answered quietly:

"How can I take her, when before the altar in Tyniec, I made a vow to Danusia Jurandowna?"

"You made a vow about the peacock's tufts, and you must get them, but take Jagienka immediately."

"No," answered Zbyszko; "afterward when Danusia covered me with her veil, I promised that I would marry her."

The blood began to rush to the abbot's face; his ears turned blue, and his eyes bulged; he approached Zbyszko and said, in a voice muffled with anger:

"Your vows are the chaff and I am the wind; understand! Ot!"

And he blew on Zbyszko's head so powerfully, that the net fell off and the hair was scattered on his shoulders. Then Zbyszko frowned, and looking into the abbot's eyes, he said:

"In my vows is my honor, and over my honor, I alone am the guardian!"

At this, the abbot not being accustomed to opposition, lost his breath to such a degree, that for a time he could not speak. There was an ill-omened silence, which finally was broken by Macko:

"Zbyszku!" exclaimed he, "come to your wits again! What is the matter with you?"

Meanwhile the abbot raised his hand and pointing toward the youth, began to shout:

"What is the matter with him? I know what

is the matter; he has not the heart of a nobleman, nor of a knight, but of a hare! That is the matter with him; he is afraid of Cztan and Wilk!"

But Zbyszko, who had remained cool and calm, carelessly shrugged his shoulders and answered:

"Owa! I broke their heads when I was in Krzesnia."

"For heaven's sake!" exclaimed Macko.

The abbot stared for a while at Zbyszko. Anger was struggling with admiration in him, and his reason told him that from that fight, he might derive some benefit for his plans.

Therefore having become cooler, he shouted to Zbyszko:

"Why didn't you tell us that before?"

"Because I was ashamed. I thought they would challenge me, as it is customary for knights to do, to fight on horseback or on foot; but they are bandits, not knights. Wilk first took a board from the table, Cztan seized another and they both rushed against me! What could I do? I seized a bench; well—you know!"

"Are they still alive?" asked Macko.

"Yes, they are alive, but they were hurt. They breathed when I left."

The abbot, rubbing his forehead, listened; then he suddenly jumped from the chest, on which he had seated himself to be more comfortable and to think the matter over, and exclaimed:

"Wait! I want to tell you something!"

"What?" asked Zbyszko.

"If you fought for Jagienka and injured them for her sake, then you are really her knight, not Danusia's; and you must take Jagienka."

Having said this, he put his hands on his hips

and looked at Zbyszko triumphantly ; but Zbyszko smiled and said :

“ Hej ! I knew very well why you wanted me to fight with them ; but you have not succeeded in your plans.”

“ Why ? Speak ! ”

“ Because I challenged them to deny that Danusia Jurandowna is the prettiest and the most virtuous girl in the world ; they took Jagienka’s part, and that is why there was a fight.”

Having heard this, the abbot stood amazed, and only the frequent movement of his eyes indicated that he was still alive. Finally he turned, opened the door with his foot, and rushed into the other room ; there he seized the curved stick from the pilgrim’s hands and began to strike the *shpilmen* with it, roaring like a wounded urus.

“ To horse, you rascals ! To horse, you dog-faiths ! I will not put my foot in this house again ! To horse, he who believes in God, to horse ! ”

Then he opened the outer door and went into the court-yard, followed by the frightened seminarists. They rushed to the stable and began to saddle the horses. In vain Macko followed the abbot, and entreated him to remain ; swore that it was not his fault. The abbot cursed the house, the people and the fields ; when they brought him a horse, he jumped in the saddle without touching the stirrups and galloped away looking, with his large sleeves filled by the wind, like an enormous red bird. The seminarists rushed after him, like a herd following its leader.

Macko stood looking after them for some time ; but when they disappeared in the forest, he re-

turned slowly to the room and said to Zbyszko, shaking his head sadly :

“ See what you have done ? ”

“ It would not have happened if I had gone away ; and it is your fault that I did not.”

“ Why ? ”

“ Because I did not wish to leave you when you were sick.”

“ And what will you do now ? ”

“ Now I shall go.”

“ Where ? ”

“ To Mazowsze to see Danusia ; and after that to search for peacock’s tufts among the Germans.”

Macko was silent for a moment, then he said :

“ He returned the ‘ letter,’ but the mortgage is recorded in the mortgage-book at the court. Now the abbot will not give us even a *skojec*.”

“ I do not care. You have money, and I do not need anything for my journey. I will be received everywhere and my horses will be fed ; if I only had a suit of armor on my back and a sword in my hand, I would need nothing else.”

Macko began to think about everything that had happened. All his plans and wishes had been frustrated. He had wished with his whole heart that Zbyszko would marry Jagienka ; but he now realized that this wish would never be fulfilled ; and considering the abbot’s anger, the behavior of Zbyszko toward Jagienka and finally the fight with Cztan and Wilk, he concluded it would be better to allow Zbyszko to go.

“ Ha ! ” said he, finally, “ if you must seek for the peacock’s feathers on the heads of the Knights of the Cross, go then. Let the Lord Jesus’ will be accomplished. But I must go immediately to

Zgorzelice ; perhaps I will succeed in appeasing their wrath if I implore pardon of the abbot and of Zych ; I care especially for the friendship of Zych."

Here he looked into Zbyszko's eyes and asked :

"Do you not regret Jagienka ?"

"May God give her health and the best of everything !" answered Zbyszko.

END OF PART SECOND.

PART THIRD.

CHAPTER I.

MACKO waited patiently for several days, hoping to receive some news from Zgorzelice, or to hear that the abbot's anger had been appeased; finally he became impatient and determined to go personally to see Zych. Everything had happened contrary to his wishes, and now he was anxious to know whether Zych was angry with him. He was afraid that the abbot would never be reconciled with Zbyszko and him. He wanted, however, to do everything he could, to soften that anger; therefore while riding, he was thinking what he would say in Zgorzelice, to palliate the offence and preserve the old friendship with his neighbor. His thoughts, however, were not clear, therefore he was glad to find Jagienka alone; the girl received him as usual with a bow and kissed his hand,—in a word, she was friendly, but a little sad.

“Is your father home?” asked he.

“He went out hunting with the abbot. They may be back at any moment.”

Having said this, she conducted him into the house, where they both sat in silence for a long time; the girl spoke first, and said:

“Are you lonely now in Bogdaniec?”

“Very lonely,” answered Macko. “Then you knew that Zbyszko had gone away?”

Jagienka sighed softly:

“Yes, I knew it the very same day; I thought he would come here to bid me good-bye, but he did not.”

"How could he come!" said Macko. "The abbot would have torn him to pieces; neither would your father have welcomed him."

She shook her head and said:

"Ej! I would not allow anybody to injure him."

Upon this Macko hugged the girl and said:

"God be with you, girl! You are sad, but I also am sad. Let me tell you that neither the abbot nor your own father loves you more than I do. I wish that Zbyszko had chosen you, and not another."

There came upon Jagienka such a moment of grief and longing, that she could not conceal her feelings, but said:

"I shall never see him again, or if I see him, it will be with Jurandowna, and then I will cry my eyes out."

She raised her apron and covered her eyes, which were filled with tears.

Macko said:

"Stop crying! He has gone, but with God's grace, he will not come back with Jurandowna."

"Why not?" said Jagienka, from behind her apron.

"Because Jurand does not want to give him the girl."

Then Jagienka suddenly uncovered her face, and having turned toward Macko, said to him:

"Zbyszko told me that; but is it true?"

"As true as that God is in heaven."

"But why?"

"Who knows why. Some vow, or something like that, and there is no remission for vows! He liked Zbyszko, because the boy promised to help him in his vengeance; but even that was useless.

Jurand would listen neither to persuasion, nor to command, nor to prayers. He said he could not. Well, there must be some reason why he could not do it, and he will not change his mind, because he is stern and unyielding. Don't lose hope but cheer up. Rightly speaking, the boy was obliged to go, because he had sworn in the church to secure three peacocks' crests. Then, also, the girl covered him with her veil, which was a sign that she would take him for her husband; otherwise they would have beheaded him; for that, he must be grateful to her—one cannot deny it. With God's help, she will not be his; but according to the law, he is hers. Zych is angry with him; the abbot has sent a plague upon him, so that his skin shivers; I am angry also, but if one thinks carefully, what else could he do? Since he belonged to the other girl, he was obliged to go. He is a nobleman. But I tell you this; if the Germans do not kill him, then he will come back; and he will come back not only to me an old man, not only to Bogdaniec, but to you, because he was very fond of you."

"I don't believe he was!" said Jagienka.

But she drew near Macko, and having touched him with her elbow, she asked:

"How do you know it? I am sure that is not true."

"How do I know?" answered Macko. "I saw how difficult it was for him to go away. When it was decided that he must go, I asked him: 'Do you not regret Jagienka?' and he said: 'May God give her health and the best of everything.' Then immediately he began to sigh."

"I am sure that it is not true!" said Jagienka, softly; "but tell me again."

"As God is dear to me, it is true! After seeing you, he will not care for the other girl, because you know yourself that there is no girl more beautiful than you in the whole world. He has felt God's will toward you—do not fear—perhaps even more than you have felt it toward him."

"Not at all!" exclaimed Jagienka. Then she again covered her face, which was as rosy as an apple, with her sleeve; Macko smiled, passed his hand over his moustache and said:

"Hej! if I were only younger; but you must comfort yourself, because I see how it will be. He will get his spurs at the Mazowiecki court, because that is near the boundary and it is not difficult to kill a Krzyzak there. I know that there are good knights among the Germans; but I think that it will take a very good one to defeat Zbyszko. See how he routed Cztan of Rogow and Wilk of Brzozowa, although they are said to be dreadful boys and as strong as bears. He will bring his crests, but he will not bring Jurandowna."

"But when will he return?"

"Bah! if you are not willing to wait, then you will not be wronged. Repeat what I have told you to the abbot and to Zych; perhaps they will not be so angry with Zbyszko."

"How can I tell them anything? *Tatus* is more sorrowful than angry; but it is dangerous even to mention Zbyszko's name to the abbot. He scolded me because I sent Zbyszko a servant."

"What servant?"

"We had a Czech, whom *tatus* captured at Boleslawiec, a good, faithful boy. His name was Hlawka. *Tatus* gave him to my service, because he was a *włodyka*; I gave him a worthy armor and sent him

to Zbyszko, to serve and protect him. I also gave him a bag of money for the journey. He promised me that he would serve Zbyszko faithfully until death."

"My dear girl! may God reward you! Was Zych opposed to your doing it?"

"Yes, at first *tatus* did not want to let me do it; but when I began to coax him, then he consented. When the abbot heard about it from his seminarists, he immediately rushed out of the room swearing; there was such a disturbance, that *tatus* escaped to the barn. Toward evening, the abbot took pity on my tears and even made me a present of some beads."

"As God is dear to me, I do not know whether I love Zbyszko any better than I love you; but he had a worthy retinue. I also gave him money, although he did not want to take it. Well, the Mazurs are not beyond the seas."

The conversation was interrupted by the barking of dogs, by shouting and by the sounds of brass trumpets in front of the house. Having heard this, Jagienka said:

"*Tatus* and the abbot have returned from hunting. Let us go outside; it will be better for the abbot to see you there, and not to meet you unexpectedly in the house."

Having said this, she conducted Macko out-of-doors; in the court-yard, on the snow they perceived a throng of men, horses and dogs, also elks and wolves pierced with spears or shot with cross-bows. The abbot saw Macko before he dismounted, and hurled a spear toward him, not to strike him, but to show in that way, his great anger against the inhabitants of Bogdaniec. But Macko uncov-

ered and bowed to him as if he noticed nothing unusual ; Jagienka, however, had not noticed the abbot's action, because she was very much surprised to see her two wooers in the retinue.

"Cztan and Wilk are here!" she exclaimed; "I presume they met *tatus* in the forest."

Immediately the thought ran through Macko's mind, that perhaps one of them would get Jagienka, and with her Moczydoly, the abbot's lands, forests and money. Then grief and anger filled his heart, especially when he perceived what occurred. Behold, Wilk of Brzozowa, although only a short time before the abbot wanted to fight with his father, sprang to the abbot's stirrups, and helped him to dismount; and the abbot leaned in a friendly manner on the young nobleman's shoulder.

"In that way, the abbot will become reconciled with old Wilk," thought Macko, "and he will give the forests and the lands with the girl."

His sad thoughts were interrupted by Jagienka who said :

"They are soon cured after Zbyszko's beating; but even if they come here every day, it will not benefit them!"

Macko looked and saw that the girl's face was red with anger, and that her blue eyes sparkled with indignation, although she knew very well that Cztan and Wilk had taken her part in the inn, and had been beaten on her account.

Therefore Macko said :

"Bah! you will do as the abbot commands."

She immediately retorted :

"The abbot will do what I wish."

"Gracious Lord!" thought Macko, "and that stupid Zbyszko left such a girl!"

CHAPTER II.

ZBYSZKO had left Bogdaniec with a sad heart indeed. In the first place he felt strange without his uncle, from whom he had never been separated before, and to whom he was so accustomed, that he did not know how he would get along without him during the journey, as well as in the war. Then he regretted Jagienka. Although he was going to Danusia whom he loved dearly, still he had been so comfortable and happy with Jagienka, that now he felt sad without her. He was surprised himself at his grief, and even somewhat alarmed about it. He would not have minded if he longed for Jagienka only as a brother longs for a sister; but he noticed that he longed to embrace her, to put her on horseback, to carry her over the brooks, to wring the water from her tress, to wander with her in the forest, to gaze at her, and to converse with her. He was so accustomed to doing all this and it was so pleasant, that when he began to think about it, he forgot that he was going on a long journey to Mazury; instead of that, he remembered the moment when Jagienka helped him in the forest, when he was struggling with the bear. It seemed to him as though it happened only yesterday; also as though it were only yesterday when they went to the Odstajny lake for beavers. Then he recalled how beautifully she was dressed when going to church in Krzesnia, and how surprised he was that such a simple girl should appear like the daughter of a mighty lord. All these

thoughts filled his heart with uneasiness, sweetness, and sadness.

"Had I only bid her good-bye," he said to himself, "perhaps I would feel easier now."

Finally he became afraid of these reminiscences, and he shook them from his mind like dry snow from his mantle.

"I am going to Danusia, to my dearest," he said to himself.

He noticed that this was a more holy love. Gradually his feet grew colder in the stirrups, and the cold wind cooled his blood. All his thoughts now turned to Danusia Jurandowna. He belonged to her without any doubt; but for her, he would have been beheaded on the Krakowski square. When she said in the presence of the knights and burghers: "He is mine!" she rescued him from the hands of the executioners; from that time, he belonged to her, as a slave to his master. Jurand's opposition was useless. She alone could drive him away; and even then he would not go far, because he was bound by his vow. He imagined, however, that she would not drive him away; but rather that she would follow him from the Mazowiecki court, even to the end of the world. Then he began to praise her to himself to Jagienka's disadvantage, as if it were her fault, that temptations assailed him and his heart was divided. Now he forgot that Jagienka cured old Macko; he forgot that without her help, the bear would have torn him to pieces; and he became enraged with her, hoping in this way to please Danusia and to justify himself in his own eyes.

At this moment the Czech, Hlawa, sent by Jagienka, arrived, leading a horse,

"Be blessed!" said he, with a low bow.

Zbyszko had seen him once or twice in Zgorzelice, but he did not recognize him; therefore he said:

"Be blessed for ages and ages! Who are you?"

"Your servant, famous lord."

"What do you mean? These are my servants," said Zbyszko, pointing to the two Turks, given to him by Sulimeczyk Zawisza, and to two sturdy men who sitting on horseback, were leading the knight's stallions; "these are mine; who sent you?"

"*Panna Jagienka Zychowna* of Zgorzelice."

"*Panna Jagienka*?"

Awhile ago, Zbyszko had been angry with her and his heart was still full of wrath; therefore he said:

"Return home and thank the *panna* for the favor; I do not want you."

But the Czech shook his head.

"I cannot return. They have given me to you; besides that, I have sworn to serve you until death."

"If they gave you to me, then you are my servant."

"Yours, sir."

"Then I command you to return."

"I have sworn; although I am a prisoner from Boleslawiec and a poor boy, still I am a *wlodyczka*."¹

Zbyszko became angry:

"Go away! What; are you going to serve me against my will? Go away, before I order my servants to bend their crossbows."

But the Czech quietly untied a broadcloth mantle, lined with wolf-skins, handed it to Zbyszko and said:

¹ Diminutive of *wlodyka*.

"*Panna Jagienka* sent you this, also, sir."

"Do you wish me to break your bones?" asked Zbyszko, taking a spear from an attendant.

"Here is also a bag of money for your disposal," answered the Czech.

Zbyszko was ready to strike him with the lance, but he recollected that the boy, although a prisoner, was by birth a *wlodyka*, who had remained with Zych only because he did not have money to pay his ransom; consequently Zbyszko dropped the spear.

Then the Czech bent to his stirrups and said:

"Be not angry, sir. If you do not wish me to accompany you, I will follow you at a distance of one or two furlongs; but I must go, because I have sworn to do so upon the salvation of my soul."

"If I order my servants to kill you or to bind you?"

"If you order them to kill me, that will not be my sin; and if you order them to bind me, then I will remain until some good people untie me, or until the wolves devour me."

Zbyszko did not reply; he urged his horse forward and his attendants followed him. The Czech with a crossbow and an axe on his shoulder, followed them, shielding himself with a shaggy bison skin, because a sharp wind carrying flakes of snow, began to blow. The storm grew worse and worse. The Turks, although dressed in sheepskin coats, were chilled with cold; Zbyszko himself, not being dressed very warmly, glanced several times at the mantle lined with wolf-fur, which Hlawa had brought him; after a while, he told one of the Turks to give it to him.

Having wrapped himself with it carefully, he felt

a warmth spreading all over his body. He covered his eyes and the greater part of his face with the hood of the mantle, so that the wind did not annoy him any more. Then, involuntarily, he thought how good Jagienka had been to him. He reined in his horse, called the Czech, and asked him about her, and about everything that had happened in Zgorzelice.

"Does Zych know that the *panna* sent you to me?" he said.

"He knows it," answered Hlawka.

"Was he not opposed to it?"

"He was."

"Tell me then all about it."

"The *pan* was walking in the room and the *panna* followed him. He shouted, but the *panienka* said nothing; but when he turned toward her, she kneeled but did not utter one word. Finally the *panisko*² said: 'Have you become deaf, that you do not answer my questions? Speak then; perhaps I will consent.' Then the *panna* understood that she could do as she wished and began to thank him. The *pan* reproached her, because she had persuaded him, and complained that he must always do as she wished; finally he said: 'Promise me that you will not go secretly to bid him good-bye; then I will consent, but not otherwise.' Then the *panienka* became very sorrowful, but she promised; the *pan* was satisfied, because the abbot and he were both afraid that she would see you. Well, that was not the end of it; afterward the *panna* wanted to send two horses, but the *pan* would not consent; the *panna* wanted to send a

² Another form of *pan*—lord; when one speaks in commiseration or in sympathy, any noun can take this form,

wolf-skin and a bag of money, but the *pan* refused. His refusal did not amount to anything, however! If she wanted to set the house on fire, the *panisko* would finally consent. Therefore I brought two horses, a wolf-skin and a bag of money."

"Good girl!" thought Zbyszko. After a while he asked:

"Was there no trouble with the abbot?" The Czech, an intelligent attendant, who understood what happened around him, smiled and answered:

"They were both careful to keep everything secret from the abbot; I do not know what happened when he learned about it, after I left Zgorzelice. Sometimes he shouts at the *panienka*; but afterward he watches her to see if he did not wrong her. I saw him myself one time after he had scolded her, go to his chest and bring out such a beautiful chain that one could not get a better one even in Krakow, and give it to her. She will manage the abbot also, because her own father does not love her any more than he does."

"That is certainly true."

"As God is in heaven!"

Then they became silent and rode along amidst wind and snow. Suddenly Zbyszko reined in his horse; from the forest beside the road, there was heard a plaintive voice, half stifled by the roar of the wind:

"Christians, help God's servant in his misfortune!"

Thereupon a man who was dressed partly in clerical clothing, rushed to the road and began to cry to Zbyszko:

"Whoever you are, sir, help a fellow-creature who has met with a dreadful accident!"

"What has happened to you, and who are you?" asked the young knight.

"I am God's servant, although not yet ordained; this morning the horse which was carrying my chests containing holy things, ran away. I remained alone, without weapons; evening is approaching, and soon the wild beasts will begin to roar in the forest. I shall perish, unless you succor me."

"If I let you perish," answered Zbyszko, "I will be accountable for your sins; but how can I believe that you are speaking the truth. You may be a highway robber, like many others wandering on the roads!"

"You may believe me, sir, for I will show you the chests. Many a man would give a purse full of gold for what is in them; but I will give you some of it for nothing, if you take me and the chests with you."

"You told me that you were God's servant, and yet you do not know that one must give help, not for earthly recompense, but for spiritual reward. But how is it that you have the chests now if the horse carried them away?"

"The wolves devoured the horse in the forest, but the chests remained; I brought them to the road, and then waited for mercy and help."

Wishing to prove that he was speaking the truth, he pointed to two chests made of leather, lying under a pine tree. Zbyszko still looked at him suspiciously, because the man did not look honest, and his speech indicated that he came from a distant part of the country. He did not refuse to help him, however, but permitted him to ride the horse led by the Czech and take the chests, which proved to be very light.

"May God multiply your victories, valiant knight!" said the stranger.

Then, seeing Zbyszko's youthful face, he added softly :

"And the hairs of your beard, also."

He rode beside the Czech. For a time they could not talk, because a strong wind was blowing, and roaring in the forest; but when it decreased, Zbyszko heard the following conversation behind him.

"I don't deny that you were in Rome; but you look like a beer drunkard," said the Czech.

"Look out for eternal damnation," answered the stranger; "you are talking to a man who last Easter ate hard boiled eggs with the holy father. Don't speak to me in such cold weather about beer; but if you have a flask of wine with you, then give me two or three swallows of it, and I will pardon you a month of purgatory."

"You have not been ordained; I heard you say you had not. How then can you grant me pardon for a month of purgatory?"

"I have not received ordination, but I have my head shaved, because I received permission for that; beside, I am carrying indulgences and relics."

"In the chests?" asked the Czech.

"Yes, in the chests. If you saw all I have there, you would fall on your face, not only you, but all the pines in the forest and all the wild beasts."

But the Czech, being an intelligent and experienced attendant, looked suspiciously at this peddler of indulgences, and said :

"The wolves devoured your horse?"

"Yes, they devoured him, because they are the devil's relatives. If you have any wine, give me some; although the wind has ceased, yet I am frozen, having sat by the road so long."

The Czech would not give him any wine; and they rode along silently, until the stranger began to ask:

"Where are you going?"

"Far. At first to Sieradz. Are you going with us?"

"I must. I will sleep in the stable, and perhaps to-morrow this pious knight will give me a present of a horse; then I will go further."

"Where are you from?"

"From under Prussian lords, not far from Marienburg."

Having heard this, Zbyszko turned and motioned to the stranger to come nearer to him.

"Did you come from Marienburg?" said he.

"Yes, sir."

"But are you a German? You speak our language very well. What is your name?"

"I am a German, and they call me Sanderus; I speak your language well, because I was born in Torun, where everybody speaks that language; then I lived in Marienburg, and there it is the same. Bah! even the brothers of the Order understand your language."

"How long since you left Marienburg?"

"I was in the Holy Land, then in Constantinople, and in Rome; thence through France I came to Marienburg and from there I was going to Mazowsze, carrying the holy relics which pious Christians buy willingly, for the salvation of their souls."

"Have you been in Plock or in Warszawa?"

"I was in both cities. May God give good health to both of the princesses! Princess Alexandra is greatly esteemed even by the Prussian lords, because she is a pious lady; the princess Anna Januszowna is also pious."

"Did you see the court in Warszawa?"

"I did not see it in Warszawa but in Ciechanow, where both the princesses received me hospitably, and gave me munificent presents, as God's servant deserves to receive. I left them relics, which will bring them God's blessing."

Zbyszko wanted to ask about Danusia; but he understood that it would be unwise to make a confidant of this stranger, a man of low origin. Therefore, after a short silence, he asked:

"What kind of relics are you carrying?"

"I carry indulgences and relics; the indulgences are different kinds; there are total indulgences, some for five hundred years, some for three hundred, some for two hundred and some for less time, which are cheaper, so that even poor people can buy them and shorten the torments of purgatory. I have indulgences for future and for past sins; but don't think, sir, that I keep the money I receive for them. I am satisfied with a piece of black bread and a glass of water—that is all for me; the rest I carry to Rome, to accumulate enough for a new crusade. It is true, there are many swindlers who carry false indulgences, false relics, false seals and false testimonials; and they are righteously pursued by the holy father's letters; but I was wronged by the prior of Sieradz, because my seals are authentic. Look, sir, at the wax and tell me what you think of them."

"What about the prior of Sieradz?"

"Ah, sir! I fear that he is infected with Wiclef's heresy. If, as your shield-bearer told me, you are going to Sieradz, it will be better for me not to show myself to him, because I do not want to lead him into the sin of blasphemy against holy things."

"This means, speaking frankly, that he thinks that you are a swindler."

"If the question were about myself, I would pardon him for the sake of brotherly love; but he has blasphemed against my holy wares, for which, I am very much afraid, he will be eternally damned."

"What kind of holy wares have you?"

"It is not right to talk about them with covered head; but this time, having many indulgences ready, I give you, sir, permission to keep your cowl on, because the wind is blowing again. For that you will buy an indulgence and the sin will not be counted against you. What have I not? I have a hoof of the ass on which the Holy Family rode during the flight into Egypt; it was found near the pyramids. The king of Aragon offered me fifty ducats for it. I have a feather from the wings of the archangel Gabriel, which he dropped during the annunciation; I have the heads of two quails, sent to the Israelites in the desert; I have the oil in which the heathen wanted to fry St. John; a step of the ladder about which Jacob dreamed; the tears of St. Mary of Egypt and some rust of St. Peter's keys. But I cannot mention any more. I am very cold and your shield-bearer would not give me any wine."

"Those are great relics, if they are authentic!" said Zbyszko.

"If they are authentic? Take the spear from your attendant and aim it, because the devil is

near and brings such thoughts to you. Hold him, sir, at the length of the spear. If you do not wish to bring some misfortune on yourself, then buy an indulgence from me; otherwise within three weeks somebody whom you love, will die."

Zbyszko was frightened at this threat, because he thought about Danusia, and said:

"It is not I, but the prior of the Dominicans in Sieradz who does not believe."

"Look, sir, for yourself, at the wax on the seals; as for the prior, I do not know whether he is still living, because God's justice is quick."

But when they came to Sieradz they found the prior alive. Zbyszko went to see him, and purchased two masses; one of which was to be read to insure success for Macko's vow, and the other to insure success for his vow to obtain three peacocks' crests. The prior was a foreigner, having been born in Cylia; but during his forty years' residence in Sieradz, he had learned the Polish language very well, and was a great enemy of the Knights of the Cross. Therefore, having learned about Zbyszko's enterprise, he said:

"A still greater punishment will fall upon them; but I shall not dissuade you, because you promised it upon your knightly honor; neither can there be punishment enough administered by Polish hands for the wrongs they have perpetrated in this land."

"What have they done?" asked Zbyszko, who was anxious to hear about the iniquities of the Knights of the Cross.

CHAPTER III.

THE old prior crossed his hands and began to recite aloud "The eternal rest ;"¹ then he sat down on a bench and kept his eyes closed for a while as if to collect his thoughts; finally he began to talk :

"Wincenty of Szamotul brought them here. I was twenty years old then, and I had just come from Cylia with my uncle Petzoldt. The Krzyzaks attacked the town and set it on fire. We could see from the walls, how in the market square they cut men and women's heads off, and how they threw little children into the fire. They even killed the priests, because in their fury they spared nobody. The prior Mikolaj, having been born in Elblong, was acquainted with *Comthur* Herman, the chief of their army. Therefore he went accompanied by the senior brothers, to that dreadful knight, and having kneeled before him, entreated him in German, to have pity on Christian blood. *Comthur* Herman replied: "I do not understand," and ordered his soldiers to continue killing the people. They slaughtered the monks also, among them my uncle Petzoldt; the prior Mikolaj was tied to a horse's tail. The next morning there was no man alive in this town except the Krzyzaks and myself. I hid on a beam in the belfry. God punished them at Plowce;² but they still want to destroy this Christian king-

¹ A short prayer for the dead.

² The famous victory over the Knights of the Cross by the king Wladyslaw Lokietek.

dom, and nothing will deter them unless God's arm crush them."

"At Plowce," said Zbyszko, "almost all the men of my family perished; but I do not regret it, for God granted a great victory to the king Lokietek,¹ and twenty thousand Germans were destroyed.

"You will see a still greater war and a greater victory," said the prior.

"Amen!" answered Zbyszko.

Then they began to talk about other matters. The young knight asked about the peddler of relics whom he met on the road. He learned that many similar swindlers were wandering on the roads, cheating credulous people. The prior also told him that there were papal bulls ordering the bishops to examine such peddlers and immediately punish those who did not have authentic letters and seals. The testimonials of the stranger seemed spurious to the prior; therefore he wanted to deliver him to the bishop's jurisdiction. If he proved that he was sent by the pope, then no harm would be done him. He escaped, however. Perhaps he was afraid of the delay in his journey; but on account of this flight, he had drawn on himself still greater suspicion.

The prior invited Zbyszko to remain and pass the night in the monastery; but he would not, because he wanted to hang in front of the inn an inscription challenging all knights who denied that *Panna Danuta Jurandowna* was the most beautiful and the most virtuous girl in the kingdom, to a combat on horseback or on foot. It was not proper

¹ Lokiec means an ell in Polish. King Wladyslaw was of the family Piasts, but he was called Lokietek on account of his short stature.

to hang such a challenge over the gate of the monastery. When he arrived at the inn, he asked for Sanderus.

"The prior thinks you are a scoundrel," said Zbyszko, "because he said: 'Why should he be afraid of the bishop's judgment, if he had good testimonials?'"

"I am not afraid of the bishop," answered Sanderus; "I am afraid of the monks, who do not know anything about seals. I wanted to go to Krakow, but I have no horse; therefore I must wait until somebody makes me a present of one. Meanwhile, I will send a letter, and I will put my own seal on it."

"If you show that you know how to write, that will prove that you are not a churl; but how will you send the letter?"

"By some pilgrim, or wandering monk. There are many people going on a pilgrimage to the queen's tomb."

"Can you write a card for me?"

"I will write, sir, even on a board, anything you wish."

"I think it will be better on a board," said Zbyszko, "because it will not tear and I can use it again later on."

In fact, after awhile the attendants brought a new board and Sanderus wrote on it. Zbyszko could not read what was written on the board; but he ordered it fastened with nails on the door of the inn, under it to be hung a shield, which was watched by the Turks alternately. Whoever struck the shield would declare that he wished to fight. But neither that day nor the following day, did the shield resound from a blow; and in the afternoon

the sorrowful knight was ready to pursue his journey.

Before that, however, Sanderus came to Zbyszko and said to him :

“ Sir, if you hang your shield in the land of the Prussian lords, I am sure your shield-bearer will buckle your armor.”

“ What do you mean ! Don’t you know that a Krzyzak, being a monk, cannot have a lady nor be in love with one, because it is forbidden him.”

“ I do not know whether it is forbidden them or not ; but I know that they have them. It is true that a Krzyzak cannot fight a duel without bringing reproach on himself, because he swore that he would fight only for the faith ; but besides the monks, there are many secular knights from distant countries, who came to help the Prussian lords. They are looking for some one to fight with, and especially the French knights.”

“ *Owa !* I saw them at Wilno, and with God’s permission I shall see them in Marienburg. I need the peacocks’ crests from their helmets, because I made a vow—do you understand ? ”

“ Sir, I will sell you two or three drops of the perspiration, which St. George shed while fighting with the dragon. There is no relic, which could be more useful to a knight. Give me the horse for it, on which you permitted me to ride ; then I will also give you an indulgence for the Christian blood which you will shed in the fight.”

“ Let me be, or I shall become angry. I shall not buy your wares until I know they are genuine.”

“ You are going, sir, so you have said, to the Mazowiecki court. Ask there how many relics they bought from me, the princess herself, the

knights and the girls for their weddings, at which I was present."

"For what weddings?" asked Zbyszko.

"As is customary before advent, the knights were marrying as soon as they could, because the people are expecting that there will be a war between the Polish king and the Prussian lords about the province of Dobrzyn. Therefore some of them say: 'God knows whether I shall return.'"

Zbyszko was very anxious to hear about the war, but still more anxious to hear about the weddings, of which Sanderus was talking; therefore he asked:

"Which girls were married there?"

"The princess' ladies-in-waiting. I do not know whether even one remained, because I heard the princess say that she would be obliged to look for other attendants."

Having heard this, Zbyszko was silent for awhile; then he asked in an altered voice:

"Was *Panna* Danuta Jurandówna, whose name is on the board, married also?"

Sanderus hesitated before he answered. He did not know anything correctly himself; then he thought that if he kept the knight anxious and perplexed, he would have more influence over him. He wanted to retain his power over this knight who had a goodly retinue, and was well provided with everything.

Zbyszko's youth led him to suppose that he would be a generous lord, without forethought and careless of money. He had noticed already the costly armor made in Milan, and the enormous stallions, which everybody could not possess; then he assured himself that if he traveled with such a

knight, he would receive hospitality in noblemen's houses, and a good opportunity to sell his indulgences; he would be safe during the journey, and have abundance of food and drink, about which he cared greatly.

Therefore having heard Zbyszko's question, he frowned, lifted his eyes as if he were trying to recollect, and answered:

"*Panna Danuta Jurandowna?* Where is she from?"

"*Jurandowna Danuta of Spychow.*"

"I saw all of them, but I cannot remember their names."

"She is very young; she plays the lute, and amuses the princess with her singing."

"Aha—young—plays the lute—there were some young ones married also. Is she dark like an agate?"

Zbyszko breathed more freely.

"No, that was not she! Danusia is as white as snow, but has pink cheeks."

To this Sanderus replied:

"One of them, dark as an agate, remained with the princess; the others were almost all married."

"You say 'almost all,' therefore not all. For God's sake, if you wish to get anything from me, then try to recollect."

"In two or three days I could recollect; the best way will be to give me a horse, on which I can carry my holy wares."

"You will get it if you only tell me the truth."

At that moment the Czech, who was listening to the conversation, smiled and said:

"The truth will be known at the Mazowiecki court."

Sanderus looked at him for a while; then he said :

“Do you think that I am afraid of the Mazowiecki court?”

“I do not say you are afraid of the Mazowiecki court; but neither now, nor after three days will you go away with the horse. If it prove that you were lying, then you will not be able to go on your feet either, because my lord will order me to break them.”

“Be sure of that!” answered Zbyszko.

Sanderus now thought that it would be wiser to be more careful, and said :

“If I wanted to lie, I would have said immediately whether she was married or not; but I said: ‘I don’t remember.’ If you had common sense, you would recognize my virtue by that answer.”

“My common sense is not a brother of your virtue, because that is the sister of a dog.”

“My virtue does not bark, as your common sense does; and the one who barks when alive, may howl after death.”

“That is sure! Your virtue will not howl after your death; it will gnash its teeth, provided it does not lose its teeth in the service of the devil while living.” Thus they quarreled; the Czech’s tongue was ready, and for every word of the German, he answered two. Zbyszko having asked about the road to Lenczyca, ordered the retinue to move forward. Beyond Sieradz, they entered thick forests which covered the greater part of the country; but the highways through these forests, had been paved with logs and ditches dug along the sides, by the order of King Kazimierz. It is true that after his death, during the disturbances of the

war aroused by Nalenczs and Grzymalits, the roads were neglected; but during Jadwiga's reign, when peace was restored to the kingdom, shovels were again busy in the marshes, and axes in the forests; soon everywhere between the important cities, merchants could conduct their loaded wagons in safety. The only danger was from wild beasts and robbers; but against the beasts, they had lanterns for night, and crossbows for defence during the day; then there were fewer highway robbers than in other countries, and one who traveled with an armed retinue, need fear nothing.

Zbyszko was not afraid of robbers nor of armed knights; he did not even think about them. But he was filled with great anxiety, and longed with his whole soul to be at the Mazowiecki court. Would he find Danusia still a lady-in-waiting of the princess, or the wife of some Mazowiecki knight? Sometimes it seemed to him impossible that she should forget him; then sometimes he thought that perhaps Jurand went to the court from Spychow and married the girl to some neighbor or friend. Jurand had told him in Krakow, that he could not give Danusia to him; therefore it was evident that he had promised her to somebody else; evidently he was bound by an oath, and now he had fulfilled his promise. Zbyszko called Sanderus and questioned him again; but the German prevaricated more and more.

Therefore, Zbyszko was riding along, sad and unhappy. He did not think about Bogdaniec, nor about Zgorzelice, but only how he should act. First, it was necessary to ascertain the truth at the Mazowiecki court; therefore, he rode hastily, only stopping for a short time at the houses of noblemen, in

the inns and in the cities to rest the horses. He had never ceased to love Danusia; but while in Bogdaniec and Zgorzelice, chatting almost every day with Jagienka and admiring her beauty, he had not thought about Danusia often. Now she was constantly in his thoughts, day and night. Even in his sleep, he saw her standing before him, with a lute in her hands and a garland on her head. She stretched her hands toward him, and Jurand drew her away. In the morning, when the dreams disappeared, a greater longing came, and he loved this girl more than ever now, when he was uncertain whether they had taken her from him or not.

Sometimes he feared that they had married her against her will; therefore, he was not angry with her, as she was only a child and could not have her own will. But he was angry with Jurand and with Princess Januszowna. He determined that he would not cease to serve her; even if he found her somebody else's wife, he would deposit the peacocks' crests at her feet.

Sometimes he was consoled by the thought of a great war. He felt that during the war, he would forget about everything and that he would escape all sorrows and griefs. The great war seemed suspended in the air. It was not known whence the news came, because there was peace between the king and the Order; nevertheless, wherever Zbyszko went, nothing else was talked about. The people had a presentiment that it would come, and some of them said openly: "Why were we united with Litwa, if not against those wolves, the Knights of the Cross? Therefore we must finish with them once for all, or they will destroy us." Others said: "Crazy monks! They are not satisfied with

Plowce! Death is over them, and still they have taken the land of Dobrzyn."

In all parts of the kingdom, they were making preparations, gravely, without boasting, as was customary for a fight for life or death; but with the silent, deadly grudge of a mighty nation, which had suffered wrongs for a long time, and finally was ready to administer a terrible punishment. In all the houses of the nobility, Zbyszko met people who were convinced that at any moment one might be obliged to mount his horse. Zbyszko was pleased to see these hasty preparations which he met at every step. Everywhere other cares gave way to thoughts about horses and armor. Everywhere the people were gravely inspecting spears, swords, axes, helmets and javelins. The blacksmiths were busy day and night, hammering iron sheets and making heavy armor, which could hardly be lifted by the refined western knights, but which the strong noblemen of Wielko and Malopolska could wear very easily. The old people were pulling out musty bags full of *grzywns*¹ from their chests, for the war expedition of their children. Once Zbyszko passed the night in the house of a wealthy nobleman, Bartosz of Bielaw, who having twenty-two sturdy sons, pledged his numerous estates to the monastery in Lowicz, to purchase twenty-two suits of armor, the same number of helmets and weapons of war. Zbyszko now realized that it would be necessary to go to Prussia, and he thanked God that he was so well provided.

Many thought that he was the son of a *wojewoda*; and when he told the people that he was a simple nobleman, and that armor such as he wore,

¹ Marks.

could be bought from the Germans by paying for it with a good blow of an axe, their hearts were filled with enthusiasm for war. Many a knight seeing that armor, and desiring to possess it, followed Zbyszko, and said: "Will you not fight for it?"

In Mazowsze, the people did not talk so much about the war. They also believed that it would come, but they did not know when. In Warszawa there was peace. The court was in Ciechanow, which Prince Janusz rebuilt after the Lithuanian invasion; nothing of the old town remained, only the castle.

In the city of Warszawa, Zbyszko was received by Jasko Socha, the *starosta*¹ of the castle, and the son of the *wojewoda* Abraham, who was killed at Worskla. Jasko knew Zbyszko, because he was with the princess in Krakow; therefore he received him hospitably and with joy; but the young man, before he began to eat or drink, asked Jasko about Danusia. But he did not know anything about her, because the prince and the princess had been in Ciechanow since fall. In Warszawa there were only a few archers and himself, to guard the castle. He had heard that there had been feasts and weddings in Ciechanow; but he did not know which girls were married.

"But I think," said he, "that Jurandowna is not married; it could not be done without Jurand, and I have not heard of his arrival. There are two brothers of the Order, *comthurs*, with the prince; one from Jansbork and the other from Szczytno, and also some foreign guests; on such occasions, Jurand never goes to the court, because the sight of a white mantle enrages him. If Ju-

¹ Here it means a commandant,

rand were not there, there would be no wedding ! If you wish, I will send a messenger to ascertain and tell him to return immediately ; but I firmly believe that you will find Jurandowna still a girl."

" I am going there to-morrow myself ; but may God reward you for your kindness. As soon as the horses are rested, I will go, because I shall have no peace, until I know the truth."

But Socha was not satisfied with that, and inquired among the nobles and the soldiers if they had heard about Jurandowna's wedding. But nobody had heard anything, although there were several among them who had been in Ciechanow.

Meanwhile Zbyszko retired greatly relieved. While lying in bed he decided to get rid of Sanderus ; but afterward he thought that the scoundrel might be useful to him because he could speak German. Sanderus had not told him a falsehood ; and although he was a costly acquisition, because he ate and drank as much as four men would in the inns, still he was serviceable, and showed some attachment for the young knight. Then he possessed the art of writing, and that gave him a superiority over the shield-bearer, the Czech, and even over Zbyszko himself. Consequently Zbyszko permitted him to accompany his retinue to Ciechanow. Sanderus was glad of this, because he noticed that being in respectable company, he won confidence and found purchasers for his wares more easily. After stopping one night in Nasielsk, riding neither too swiftly nor too slowly, they perceived next day toward evening, the walls of the castle of Ciechanow. Zbyszko stopped in an inn to don his armor, so as to enter the castle according to knightly custom, with his helmet on his head and his spear in his

hand ; then he mounted his enormous stallion, and having made the sign of the cross in the air, he rushed forward. He had gone only a short distance, when the Czech who was riding behind him, drew near and said :

“ Your Grace, some knights are coming behind us ; they must be Krzyzaks.”

Zbyszko turned and saw about half a furlong behind him, a splendid retinue at the head of which there were riding two knights on fine Pomeranian horses, both in full armor, each of them wearing a white mantle with a black cross, and a helmet having a high crest of peacock’s feathers.

“ For God’s sake, Krzyzacy ! ” said Zbyszko.

Involuntarily he leaned forward in his saddle and aimed his spear ; seeing this the Czech seized his axe. The other attendants being experienced in war, were also ready, not for a fight, because the servants did not participate in single combat, but to measure the space for the fight on horseback, or to level the ground for the fight on foot. The Czech alone, being a nobleman, was ready to fight ; but he expected that Zbyszko would challenge before he attacked, and he was surprised to see the young knight aim his spear before the challenge.

But Zbyszko came to his senses in time. He remembered how he attacked Lichtenstein near Krakow, and all the misfortunes which followed ; therefore he raised the spear and handed it to the Czech. Without drawing his sword, he galloped toward the Krzyzaks. When he came near them, he noticed that there was a third knight, also with a peacock’s crest on his helmet, and a fourth, without armor, but having long hair, who seemed to be a Mazur. Seeing them, he concluded that they

must be some envoys to the prince of Mazowiecki ; therefore he said aloud :

“ May Jesus Christ be praised ! ”

“ For ages and ages ! ” answered the long-haired knight.

“ May God speed you ! ”

“ And you also, sir ! ”

“ Glory be to St. George ! ”

“ He is our patron. You are welcome, sir. ”

Then they began to bow ; Zbyszko told his name, who he was, what his coat of arms was, what his war-cry was and whence he was going to the Mazowiecki court. The long-haired knight said that his name was Jendrek of Kropiwnica and that he was conducting some guests to the prince ; Brother Godfried, Brother Rotgier, also Sir Fulko de Lorche of Lotaringen, who being with the Knights of the Cross, wished to see the prince and especially the princess, the daughter of the famous “ Kiejstut. ”

While they were conversing, the foreign knights sat erect on their horses, occasionally bending their heads which were covered with iron helmets ornamented with peacocks' tufts. Judging from Zbyszko's splendid armor, they thought that the prince had sent some important personage, perhaps his own son, to meet them. Jendrek of Kropiwnica said further :

“ The *comthur*, or as we would say the *starosta* from Jansbork is at our prince's castle ; he told the prince about these knights ; that they desired to visit him, but that they did not dare, especially this knight from Lotaringen, who being from a far country, thought that the Saracens lived right beyond the frontier of the Knights of the Cross, and

that there was continual war with them. The prince immediately sent me to the boundary, to conduct them safely to his castle."

"Could they not come without your help!"

"Our nation is very angry with the Krzyzaks, because of their great treacherousness; a Krzyzak will hug and kiss you, but he is ready in the same moment to stab you with a knife from behind; and such conduct is odious to us Mazurs. Nevertheless anyone will receive even a German in his house, and will not wrong his guest; but he would stop him on the road. There are many who do this for vengeance, or for glory."

"Who among you is the most famous?"

"There is one whom all Germans fear to meet; his name is Jurand of Spychow."

The heart of the young knight throbbed when he heard that name; immediately he determined to question Jendrek of Kropiwnica.

"I know!" said he; "I heard about him; his daughter Danuta was girl-in-waiting with the princess; afterward she was married."

Having said this, he looked sharply into the eyes of the Mazowiecki knight, who answered with great astonishment:

"Who told you that? She is very young yet. It is true that it sometimes happens that very young girls are married, but Jurandowna is not married. I left Ciechanow six days ago and I saw her then with the princess. How could she marry during advent?"

Zbyszko having heard this, wanted to seize the knight by the neck and shout: "May God reward you for the news!" but he controlled himself, and said:

"I heard that Jurand gave her to some one."

"It was the princess who wished to give her, but she could not do it against Jurand's will. She wanted to give her to a knight in Krakow, who made a vow to the girl, and whom she loves."

"Does she love him?" exclaimed Zbyszko.

At this Jendrek looked sharply at him, smiled and said :

"Do you know, you are too inquisitive about that girl."

"I am asking about my friend to whom I am going."

One could hardly see Zbyszko's face under the helmet ; but his nose and cheeks were so red that the Mazur, who was fond of joking, said :

"I am afraid that the cold makes your face red !"

Then the young man grew still more confused, and answered :

"It must be that."

They moved forward and rode silently for some time ; but after a while Jendrek of Kropiwnica asked :

"What do they call you? I did not hear distinctly?"

"Zbyszko of Bogdaniec."

"For heaven's sake! The knight who made a vow to Jurandowna, had the same name."

"Do you think that I shall deny that I am he?" answered Zbyszko, proudly.

"There is no reason for doing so. Gracious Lord, then you are that Zbyszko whom the girl covered with her veil! After the retinue returned from Krakow, the women of the court talked about nothing else, and many of them cried while listen-

ing to the story. Then you are he! Hej! how happy they will be to see you at the court; even the princess is very fond of you."

"May the Lord bless her, and you also for the good news. I suffered greatly when I heard that Danusia was married."

"She is not married! Although she will inherit Spychow, and there are many handsome youths at the court, yet not one of them looks into her eyes, because all respect your vow; then the princess would not permit it. Hej! there will be great joy. Sometimes they teased the girl! Some one would tell her: 'Your knight will not come back!' Then she would reply: 'He will be back! He will be back!' Sometimes they told her that you had married another; then she cried."

These words made Zbyszko feel very tender; he also felt angry because Danusia had been vexed; therefore he said:

"I shall challenge those who said such things about me!"

Jendrek of Kropiwnica began to laugh and said:

"The women teased her! Will you challenge a woman? You cannot do anything with a sword against a distaff."

Zbyszko was pleased that he had met such a cheerful companion; he began to ask Jendrek about Danusia. He also inquired about the customs of the Mazowiecki court, about Prince Janusz, and about the princess. Finally he told what he had heard about the war during his journey, and how the people were making preparations for it, and were expecting it every day. He asked whether the people in the principalities of Mazowsze, thought it would soon come.

The heir of Kropiwnica did not think that the war was near. The people said that it could not be avoided; but he had heard the prince himself say to Mikolaj of Dlugolas, that the Knights of the Cross were very peaceable now, and if the king only insisted, they would restore the province of Dobrzyn to Poland; or they would try to delay the whole affair, until they were well prepared.

"The prince went to Malborg a short time ago," said he, "where during the absence of the grand master, the grand marshal received him and entertained him with great hospitality; now there are some *comthurs* here, and other guests are coming."

Here he stopped for a while, and then added:

"The people say that the Krzyzaks have a purpose in coming here and in going to Plock to the court of Prince Ziemowit. They would like to have the princes pledge themselves not to help the king but to aid them; or if they do not agree to help the Krzyzaks, that at least they will remain neutral; but the princes will not do that."

"God will not permit it. Would you stay home? Your princes belong to the kingdom of Poland!"

"No, we would not stay home," answered Jendrek of Kropiwnica.

Zbyszko again glanced at the foreign knights, and at their peacocks' tufts, and asked:

"Are these knights going for that purpose?"

"They are brothers of the Order and perhaps that is their motive. Who understands them?"

"And that third one?"

"He is going because he is inquisitive."

"He must be some famous knight."

"Bah! three heavily laden wagons follow him,

and he has nine men in his escort. I would like to fight with such a man!"

"Can you not do it?"

"Of course not! The prince commanded me to guard them. Not one hair shall fall from their heads until they reach Ciechanow."

"Suppose I challenge them? Perhaps they would desire to fight with me?"

"Then you would be obliged to fight with me first, because I will not permit you to fight with them while I live."

Zbyszko looked at the young nobleman in a friendly way, and said:

"You understand what knightly honor is. I shall not fight with you, because I am your friend; but in Ciechanow, God will help me to find some pretext for a challenge to the Germans."

"In Ciechanow you can do what you please. I am sure there will be tournaments; then you can fight, if the prince and the *comthurs* give permission."

"I have a board on which is written a challenge for anyone who will not affirm that *Panna Danuta Jurandowna* is the most virtuous and the most beautiful girl in the world; but everywhere the people shrugged their shoulders and laughed."

"Because it is a foreign custom; and speaking frankly, a stupid one which is not known in our country, except near the boundaries. That Lotaringer tried to pick a quarrel with some noblemen, asking them to praise some lady of his; but nobody could understand him, and I would not let them fight."

"What? He wanted to praise his lady? For God's sake!"

He looked closely at the foreign knight, and saw that his young face was full of sadness; he also perceived with astonishment that the knight had a rope made of hairs round his neck.

"Why does he wear that rope?" asked Zbyszko.

"I could not find out, because they do not understand our language; Brother Rotgier can say a few words, but not very well either. But I think that this young knight has made a vow to wear that rope until he has accomplished some knightly deed. During the day, he wears it outside of his armor, but during the night, on the bare flesh."

"Sanderus!" called Zbyszko, suddenly.

"At your service," answered the German, approaching.

"Ask this knight, who is the most virtuous and the most beautiful girl in the world."

Sanderus repeated the question in German.

"Ulryka von Elner!" answered Fulko de Lorche.

Then he raised his eyes and began to sigh. Zbyszko hearing this answer, was indignant, and reined in his stallion; but before he could reply, Jendrek of Kropiwnica, pushed his horse between him and the foreigner, and said:

"You shall not quarrel here!"

Zbyszko turned to Sanderus and said:

"Tell him that I say that he is in love with an owl."

"Noble knight, my master says that you are in love with an owl!" repeated Sanderus, like an echo.

At this Sir de Lorche dropped his reins, drew the iron gauntlet from his right hand and threw it in the snow in front of Zbyszko, who motioned to the Czech to lift it with the point of his spear.

Jendrek of Kropiwnica, turned toward Zbyszko with a threatening face, and said :

“ You shall not fight ; I shall permit neither of you.”

“ I did not challenge him ; he challenged me.”

“ But you called his lady an owl. Enough of this ! I also know how to use a sword.”

“ But I do not wish to fight with you.”

“ You will be obliged to, because I have sworn to defend the other knight.”

“ Then what shall I do ? ” asked Zbyszko.

“ Wait ; we are near Ciechanow.”

“ But what will the German think ? ”

“ Your servant must explain to him that he cannot fight here ; that first you must receive the prince’s permission, and he, the *comthur*’s.”

“ Bah ! suppose they will not give permission.”

“ Then you will find each other. Enough of this talk.”

Zbyszko, seeing that he could not do otherwise, because Jendrek of Kropiwnica would not permit them to fight, called Sanderus, and told him to explain to the Lotaringer knight, that they could fight only in Ciechanow. De Lorche having listened, nodded to signify that he understood ; then having stretched his hand toward Zbyszko, he pressed the palm three times, which according to the knightly custom, meant that they must fight, no matter when or where. Then in an apparent good understanding, they moved on toward the castle of Ciechanow, whose towers one could see reflected on the pink sky.

It was daylight when they arrived ; but after they announced themselves at the gate, it was dark before the bridge was lowered. They were

received by Zbyszko's former acquaintance, Mikolaj of Dlugolas, who commanded the garrison consisting of a few knights and three hundred of the famous archers of Kurpie.¹ To his great sorrow, Zbyszko learned that the court was absent. The prince wishing to honor the *comthurs* of Szczytno and Jansbork, arranged for them a great hunting party in the Krupiecka wilderness; the princess, with her ladies-in-waiting went also, to give more importance to the occasion. Ofka, the widow of Krzych² of Jarzombkow, was key-keeper, and the only woman in the castle whom Zbyszko knew. She was very glad to see him. Since her return from Krakow, she had told everybody about his love for Danusia, and the incident about Lichtenstein. These stories made her very popular among the younger ladies and girls of the court; therefore she was fond of Zbyszko. She now tried to console the young man in his sorrow, caused by Danusia's absence.

"You will not recognize her," she said. "She is growing older, and is a little girl no longer; she loves you differently, also. You say your uncle is well? Why did he not come with you?"

"I will let my horses rest for a while and then I will go to Danusia. I will go during the night," answered Zbyszko.

"Do so, but take a guide from the castle, or you will be lost in the wilderness."

In fact after supper, which Mikolaj of Dlugolas ordered to be served to the guests, Zbyszko ex-

¹ A part of Poland. The people were called Kurpie, on account of their shoes made of the bark of trees. They were all famous marksmen,

² Krystyn,

pressed his desire to go after the prince, and he asked for a guide. The brothers of the Order, wearied by the journey, approached the enormous fireplaces in which were burning the entire trunks of pine trees, and said that they would go the next day. But de Lorche expressed his desire to go with Zbyszko, saying that otherwise he might miss the hunting party, and he wished to see them very much. Then he approached Zbyszko, and having extended his hand, he again pressed his fingers three times.

CHAPTER IV.

MIKOLAJ of Dlugolas having learned from Jendrek of Kropiwnica about the challenge, required both Zbyszko and the other knight to give him their knightly word that they would not fight without the prince and the *comthur's* permission; if they refused, he said he would shut the gates and not permit them to leave the castle. Zbyszko wished to see Danusia as soon as possible, consequently he did not resist; de Lorche, although willing to fight when necessary, was not a blood-thirsty man, therefore he swore upon his knightly honor, to wait for the prince's consent. He did it willingly, because having heard so many songs about tournaments and being fond of pompous feasts, he preferred to fight in the presence of the court, the dignitaries and the ladies; he believed that such a victory would bring greater renown, and he would win the golden spurs more easily. Then he was also anxious to become acquainted with the country and the people, therefore he preferred a delay. Mikolaj of Dlugolas, who had been in captivity among the Germans a long time, and could speak the language easily, began to tell him marvelous tales about the prince's hunting parties for different kinds of beasts not known in the western countries. Therefore Zbyszko and he left the castle about midnight, and went toward Przasnysz, having with them their armed retinues, and men with lanterns to protect them against the wolves, which gathering during the winter in innumerable

packs, it was dangerous even for several well armed cavaliers to meet. On this side of Ciechanow there were deep forests, which a short distance beyond Przasnysz were merged into the enormous Kurpiecka wilderness, which on the west joined the impassable forest of Podlasie, and further on Lithuania. Through these forests the Lithuanian barbarians came to Mazowsze, and in 1337 reached Ciechanow, which they burned. De Lorche listened with the greatest interest to the stories, told him by the old guide, Macko of Turoboje. He desired to fight with the Lithuanians, whom as many other western knights did, he had thought were Saracens. In fact he had come on a crusade, wishing to gain fame and salvation. He thought that a war with the Mazurs, half heathenish people, would secure for him entire pardon. Therefore he could scarcely believe his own eyes, when having reached Mazowsze, he saw churches in the towns, crosses on the towers, priests, knights with holy signs on their armor and the people, very daring indeed, and ready for a fight, but Christian and not more rapacious than the Germans, among whom the young knight had traveled. Therefore, when he was told that these people had confessed Christ for centuries, he did not know what to think about the Knights of the Cross; and when he learned that Lithuania was baptized by the command of the late queen, his surprise and sorrow were boundless.

He began to inquire from Macko of Turoboje, if in the forest toward which they were riding, there were any dragons to whom the people were obliged to sacrifice young girls, and with whom one could fight. But Macko's answer greatly disappointed him.

"In the forest, there are many beasts, wolves, bisons and bears with which there is plenty of work," answered the Mazur. "Perhaps in the swamps there are some unclean spirits; but I never heard about dragons, and even if they were there, we would not give them girls, but we would destroy them. Bah! had there been any, the Kurpie would have worn belts of their skins long ago."

"What kind of people are they; is it possible to fight with them?" asked de Lorche.

"One can fight with them, but it is not desirable," answered Macko; "and then it is not proper for a knight, because they are peasants."

"The Swiss are peasants also. Do they confess Christ?"

"There are no such people in Mazowsze. They are our people. Did you see the archers in the castles? They are all the Kurpie, because there are no better archers than they are."

"They cannot be better than the Englishmen and the Scotch, whom I saw at the Burgundian court."

"I have seen them also in Malborg," interrupted the Mazur. "They are strong, but they cannot compare with the Kurpie, among whom a boy seven years old, will not be allowed to eat, until he has knocked the food with an arrow from the summit of a pine."

"About what are you talking?" suddenly asked Zbyszko, who had heard the word "Kurpie" several times.

"About the English and the Kurpiecki archers. This knight says that the English and the Scotch are the best."

"I saw them at Wilno. Owa! I heard their darts passing my ears. There were knights there

from all countries, and they announced that they would eat us up without salt; but after they tried once or twice, they lost their appetite."

Macko laughed and repeated Zbyszko's words to Sir de Lorche.

"I have heard about that at different courts," answered the Lotaringer; "they praised your knights' bravery, but they blamed them because they helped the heathen against the Knights of the Cross."

"We defended the nation which wished to be baptized, against invasion and wrong. The Germans wished to keep them in idolatry, so as to have a pretext for war."

"God shall judge them," answered de Lorche.

"Perhaps He will judge them soon," answered Macko of Turoboje.

But the Lotaringer having heard that Zbyszko had been at Wilno, began to question Macko, because the fame of the knightly combats fought there, had spread widely throughout the world. That duel, fought by four Polish and four French knights, especially excited the imagination of western warriors. The consequence was that de Lorche began to look at Zbyszko with more respect, as upon a man who had participated in such a famous battle; he also rejoiced that he was going to fight with such a knight.

Therefore they rode along apparently good friends, rendering each other small services during the time for refreshment on the journey and treating each other with wine. But when it appeared from the conversation between de Lorche and Macko of Turoboje, that Ulryka von Elner was not a young girl, but a married woman forty years old and having

six children, Zbyszko became indignant, because this foreigner dared not only to compare an old woman with Danusia, but even asked him to acknowledge her to be the first among women.

"Do you not think," said he to Macko, "that an evil spirit has turned his brain? Perhaps the devil is sitting in his head like a worm in a nut and is ready to jump on one of us during the night. We must be on our guard."

Macko of Turoboje began to look at the Lotaringer with a certain uneasiness and finally said:

"Sometimes it happens that there are hundreds of devils in a possessed man, and if they are crowded, they are glad to go in other people. The worst devil is the one sent by a woman."

Then he turned suddenly to the knight:

"May Jesus Christ be praised!"

"I praise him also," answered de Lorche, with some astonishment.

Macko was completely reassured.

"No, don't you see," said he, "if the devil were dwelling in him, he would have foamed immediately, or he would have been thrown to the earth, because I asked him suddenly. We can go."

In fact, they proceeded quietly. The distance between Ciechanow and Przasnysz is not great, and during the summer a cavalier riding a good horse can travel from one city to the other in two hours; but they were riding very slowly on account of the darkness and the drifts of snow. They started after midnight and did not arrive at the prince's hunting house, situated near the woods, beyond Przasnysz, until daybreak. The wooden mansion was large and the panes of the windows were made of glass balls. In front of the house were

the well-sweeps and two barns for horses, and round the mansion were many tents made of skins and booths hastily built of the branches of pine trees. The fires shone brightly in front of the tents, and round them were standing the huntsmen who were dressed in coats made of sheepskins, foxskins, wolfskins and bearskins, and having the hair turned outside. It seemed to Sir de Lorche that he saw some wild beasts standing on two legs, because the majority of these men had caps made of the heads of animals. Some of them were standing, leaning on their spears or crossbows; others were busy winding enormous nets made of ropes; others were turning large pieces of urus and elk meat which was hanging over the fire, evidently preparing for breakfast. Behind them were the trunks of enormous pines and more people; the great number of people astonished the Lotaringer who was not accustomed to see such large hunting parties.

"Your princes," said he, "go to a hunt as if to a war."

"To be sure," answered Macko of Turoboje; "they lack neither hunting implements nor people."

"What are we going to do?" interrupted Zbyszko; "they are still asleep in the mansion."

"Well, we must wait until they get up," answered Macko; "we cannot knock at the door and awaken the prince, our lord."

Having said this, he conducted them to a fire, near which the Kurpie threw some wolfskins and urusskins, and then offered them some roasted meat. Hearing a foreign speech, the people began to gather round to see the German. Soon the news was spread by Zbyszko's attendants that there was

a knight "from beyond the seas," and the crowd became so great that the lord of Turoboje was obliged to use his authority to shield the foreigner from their curiosity. De Lorche noticed some women in the crowd also dressed in skins, but very beautiful; he inquired whether they also participated in the hunt.

Macko explained to him that they did not take part in the hunting, but only came to satisfy their womanly curiosity, or to purchase the products of the towns and to sell the riches of the forest. The court of the prince was like a fireplace, round which were concentrated two elements—rural and civic. The Kurpie disliked to leave their wilderness, because they felt uneasy without the rustling of the trees above their heads; therefore the inhabitants of Przasnysz brought their famous beer, their flour ground in wind mills or water mills built on the river Wengierka, salt which was very rare in the wilderness, iron, leather and other fruits of human industry, taking in exchange skins, costly furs, dried mushrooms, nuts, herbs, good in case of sickness, or clods of amber which were plentiful among the Kurpie. Therefore round the prince's court there was the noise of a continual market, increased during the hunting parties, because duty and curiosity attracted the inhabitants from the depths of the forests.

De Lorche listened to Macko, looking with curiosity at the people, who, living in the healthy resinous air and eating much meat as was the custom with the majority of the peasants in those days, astonished the foreign travelers by their strength and size. Zbyszko was continually looking at the doors and windows of the mansion,

hardly able to remain quiet. There was light in one window only, evidently in the kitchen, because steam was coming out through the gaps between the panes.

In the small doors, situated in the side of the house, servants in the prince's livery appeared from time to time, hurrying to the wells for water. These men being asked if everybody was still sleeping, answered that the court, wearied by the previous day's hunting, was still resting, but that breakfast was being prepared. In fact through the window of the kitchen, there now issued the smell of roasted meat and saffron, spreading far among the fires. Finally the principal door was opened, showing the interior of a brightly lighted hall, and on the piazza appeared a man whom Zbyszko immediately recognized as one of the *rybalts*, whom he had seen with the princess in Krakow. Having perceived him, and waiting neither for Macko of Turoboje, nor for de Lorche, Zbyszko rushed with such an impetus toward the mansion, that the astonished Lotaringer asked :

"What is the matter with the young knight?"

"There is nothing the matter with him," answered Macko of Turoboje; "he is in love with a girl of the princess' court and he wants to see her as soon as possible."

"Ah!" answered de Lorche, putting both of his hands on his heart. He began to sigh so deeply that Macko shrugged his shoulders and said to himself:

"Is it possible that he is sighing for that old woman? It may be that his senses are impaired!"

In the meanwhile he conducted de Lorche into the large hall of the mansion which was orna-

mented with the horns of bisons, elks and deer, and was lighted by the large logs burning in the fireplace. In the middle of the hall stood a table covered with *kilimek*¹ and dishes for breakfast; there were only a few courtiers present, with whom Zbyszko was talking. Macko of Turoboje introduced Sir de Lorche to them. More courtiers were coming at every moment; the majority of them were fine looking men, with broad shoulders and fallow hair; all were dressed for hunting. Those who were acquainted with Zbyszko and were familiar with his adventure in Krakow, greeted him as an old friend—it was evident that they liked him. One of them said to him:

“The princess is here and Jurandowna also; you will see her soon, my dear boy; then you will go with us to the hunting party.”

At this moment the two guests of the prince, the Knights of the Cross, entered: brother Hugo von Danveld, *starosta* of Ortelsburg,² and Zygfried von Löve, bailiff of Jansbork. The first was quite a young man, but stout, having a face like a beer drunkard, with thick, moist lips; the other was tall with stern but noble features. It seemed to Zbyszko that he had seen Danveld before at the court of Prince Witold and that Henryk, bishop of Plock, had thrown him from his horse during the combat in the lists. These reminiscences were disturbed by the entrance of Prince Janusz, whom the Knights of the Cross and the courtiers saluted. De Lorche, the *comthurs* and Zbyszko also ap-

¹ A woolen material, made by Polish peasants. In some provinces *kilimeks* are very artistic on account of the odd designs and the harmony of the colors.

² Szczytno in Polish.

proached him, and he welcomed them cordially but with dignity. Immediately the trumpets resounded, announcing that the prince was going to breakfast; they resounded three times; and the third time, a large door to the right was opened and Princess Anna appeared, accompanied by the beautiful blonde girl who had a lute hanging on her shoulder.

Zbyszko immediately stepped forward and kneeled on both knees in a position full of worship and admiration. Seeing this, those present began to whisper, because Zbyszko's action surprised the Mazurs and some of them were even scandalized. Some of the older ones said: "Surely he learned such customs from some knights living beyond the sea, or perhaps even from the heathen themselves, because there is no custom like it even among the Germans." But the younger ones said: "No wonder, she saved his life." But the princess and Jurandowna did not recognize Zbyszko at once, because he kneeled with his back toward the fire and his face was in the shadow. The princess thought that it was some courtier, who, having been guilty of some offence, besought her intervention with the prince; but Danusia having keener sight, advanced one step, and having bent her fair head, cried suddenly:

"Zbyszko!"

Then forgetting that the whole court and the foreign guests were looking at her, she sprang like a roe toward the young knight and encircling his neck with her arms, began to kiss his mouth and his cheeks, nestling to him and caressing him so long that the Mazurs laughed and the princess drew her back,

Then Zbyszko embraced the feet of the princess ; she welcomed him, and asked about Macko, whether he was alive or not, and if alive whether he had accompanied Zbyszko. Finally when the servants brought in warm dishes, she said to Zbyszko :

“ Serve us, dear little knight, and perhaps not only now at the table, but forever.”

Danusia was blushing and confused, but was so beautiful, that not only Zbyszko but all the knights present were filled with pleasure ; the *starosta* of Szczytno, put the palm of his hands to his thick, moist lips ; de Lorche was amazed, and asked :

“ By Saint Jacob of Compostella, who is that girl ? ”

To this the *starosta* of Szczytno, who was short, stood on his toes and whispered in the ear of the Lotaringer :

“ The devil’s daughter.”

De Lorche looked at him ; then he frowned and began to say through his nose :

“ A knight who talks against beauty is not gallant.”

“ I wear golden spurs, and I am a monk,” answered Hugo von Danveld, proudly.

The Lotaringer dropped his head ; but after awhile he said :

“ I am a relative of the princess of Brabant.”

“ *Pax ! Pax !* ” answered the Knight of the Cross. “ Honor to the mighty knights and friends of the Order from whom, sir, you shall soon receive your golden spurs. I do not disparage the beauty of that girl ; but listen, I will tell you who is her father,”

But he did not have time to tell him, because at that moment, Prince Janusz seated himself at the table; and having learned before from the bailiff of Jansbork about the mighty relatives of Sir de Lorche, he invited him to sit beside him. The princess and Danusia were seated opposite. Zbyszko stood as he did in Krakow, behind their chairs, to serve them. Danusia held her head as low as possible over the plate, because she was ashamed. Zbyszko looked with ecstasy at her little head and pink cheeks; and he felt his love, like a river, overflowing his whole breast. He could also feel her sweet kisses on his face, his eyes and his mouth. Formerly she used to kiss him as a sister kisses a brother, and he received the kisses as from a child. Now Danusia seemed to him older and more mature—in fact she had grown and blossomed. Love was so much talked about in her presence, that as a flower bud warmed by the sun, takes color and expands, so her eyes were opened to love; consequently there was a certain charm in her now, which formerly she lacked, and a strong intoxicating attraction beamed from her like the warm beams from the sun, or the fragrance from the rose.

Zbyszko felt it, but he could not explain it to himself. He even forgot that at the table one must serve. He did not see that the courtiers were laughing at him and Danusia. Neither did he notice Sir de Lorche's face, which expressed great astonishment, nor the covetous eyes of the *starosta* from Szczytno, who was gazing constantly at Danusia. He awakened only when the trumpets again sounded giving notice that it was time to go into

the wilderness, and when the princess Anna Danuta, turning toward him said :

“ You will accompany us ; you will then have an opportunity to speak to Danusia about your love.”

Having said this, she went out with Danusia to dress for the ride on horseback. Zbyszko rushed to the court-yard, where the horses covered with frost were standing. There was no longer a great crowd, because the men whose duty it was to hem in the beasts, had already gone forward into the wilderness with the nets. The fires were quenched ; the day was bright but cold. Soon the prince appeared and mounted his horse ; behind him was an attendant with a crossbow and a spear so long and heavy, that very few could handle it ; but the prince used it very easily, because like the other Mazovian Piasts, he was very strong. There were even women in that family so strong that they could roll iron axes,¹ between their fingers. The prince was also attended by two men, who were prepared to help him in any emergency ; they had been chosen from among the landowners of the provinces of Warszawa and Ciechanow ; they had shoulders like the trunks of oak trees. Sir de Lorche gazed at them with amazement.

In the meanwhile, the princess and Danusia came out ; both wore hoods made of the skins of white weasels. This worthy daughter of Kiejstut could *stitch* with a bow better than with a needle ; therefore her attendants carried a crossbow behind her. Zbyszko having kneeled on the snow, extended the palm of his hand, on which the princess rested her foot while mounting her horse ; then he

¹ Cymbaska who married Ernest Iron Habsburg.

lifted Danusia into her saddle and they all started. The retinue stretched in a long column, turned to the right from the mansion, and then began slowly to enter the forest.

Then the princess turned to Zbyszko and said :

“ Why don't you talk ? - Speak to her.”

Zbyszko, although thus encouraged, was still silent for a moment ; but, after quite a long silence, he said :

“ Danuska ! ”

“ What, Zbyszku ? ”

“ I love you ! ”

Here he again stopped, searching for words which he could not find ; although he kneeled before the girl like a foreign knight, and showed her his respect in every way, still he could not express his love in words. Therefore he said :

“ My love for you is so great that it stops my breathing.”

“ I also love you, Zbyszku ! ” said she, hastily.

“ Hej, my dearest ! - hej, my sweet girl ! ” exclaimed Zbyszko. “ Hej ! ” Then he was silent, full of blissful emotion ; but the good-hearted and curious princess helped them again.

“ Tell her,” said she, “ how lonesome you were without her, and when we come to a thicket, you may kiss her ; that will be the best proof of your love.”

Therefore he began to tell how lonesome he was without her in Bogdaniec, while taking care of Macko and visiting among the neighbors. But the cunning fellow did not say a word about Jagienka. When the first thicket separated them from the courtiers and the guests, he bent toward her and kissed her.

During the winter there are no leaves on the hazel bushes, therefore Hugo von Danveld and Sir de Lorche saw him kiss the girl; some of the courtiers also saw him and they began to say among themselves:

"He kissed her in the presence of the princess! The lady will surely prepare the wedding for them soon."

"He is a daring boy, but Jurand's blood is warm also!"

"They are flint-stone and fire-steel, although the girl looks so quiet. Do not be afraid, there will be some sparks from them!"

Thus they talked and laughed; but the *starosta* of Szczytno turned his evil face toward Sir de Lorche and asked:

"Sir, would you like some Merlin to change you by his magic power into that knight?"¹

"Would you, sir?" asked de Lorche.

To this the Knight of the Cross, who evidently was filled with jealousy, drew the reins of his horse impatiently, and exclaimed:

"Upon my soul!"

But at that moment he recovered his composure, and having bent his head, he said:

"I am a monk and have made a vow of chastity."

He glanced quickly at the Lotaringer, fearing he would perceive a smile on his face, because in that respect the Order had a bad reputation among the people; and of all among the monks, Hugo von Danveld had the worst. A few years previous he had been vice-bailiff of Sambia. There were so

¹The knight Uter, being in love with the virtuous Igerna, wife of Prince Gorlas, with Merlin's help assumed the form of Gorlas, and with Igerna begot the king Arthur,

many complaints against him there that, notwithstanding the tolerance with which the Order looked upon similar cases in Marienburg, the grand master was obliged to remove him and appoint him *starosta* of the garrison in Szczytno. Afterward he was sent to the prince's court on some secret mission, and having perceived the beautiful Jurandowna, he conceived a violent passion for her, to which even Danusia's extreme youth was no check. But Danveld also knew to what family the girl belonged, and Jurand's name was united in his memory with a painful reminiscence.

De Lorche began to question him :

"Sir, you called that beautiful girl the devil's daughter; why did you call her that?"

Danveld began to relate the story of Zlotorja: how during the restoration of the castle, they captured the prince with the court, and how during that fight Jurandowna's mother died; how since that time Jurand avenged himself on all the Knights of the Cross. Danveld's hatred was apparent during the narration, because he also had some personal reasons for hating Jurand. Two years before, during an encounter, he met Jurand; but the mere sight of that dreadful "Boar of Spychow" so terrified him for the first time in his life that he deserted two of his relatives and his retinue, and fled to Szczytno. For this cowardly act the grand marshal of the Order brought a knightly suit against him; he swore that his horse had become unmanageable and had carried him away from the battlefield; but that incident shut his way to all higher positions in the Order. Of course Danveld did not say anything to Sir de Lorche about that occurrence, but instead he complained so bitterly about Jurand's

atrocities and the audacity of the whole Polish nation, that the Lotaringer could not comprehend all he was saying, and said :

“ But we are in the country of the Mazurs and not of the Polaks.”

“ It is an independent principality but the same nation,” answered the *starosta* ; “ they feel the same hatred against the Order. May God permit the German swords to exterminate all this race ! ”

“ You are right, sir ; I never heard even among the heathen of such an unlawful deed, as the building of a castle on somebody else’s land, as this prince tried to do,” said de Lorche.

“ He built the castle against us, but Zlotorja is situated on his land, not on ours.”

“ Then glory be to Christ that he granted you the victory ! What was the result of the war ? ”

“ There was no war then ? ”

“ What was the meaning of your victory at Zlotorja ? ”

“ God favored us ; the prince had no army with him, only his court and the women.”

Here de Lorche looked at the Knight of the Cross with amazement.

“ What ? During the time of peace you attacked the women and the prince, who was building a castle on his own land ? ”

“ For the glory of the Order and of Christendom.”

“ And that dreadful knight is seeking vengeance only for the death of his young wife, killed by you during the time of peace ? ”

“ Whosoever raises his hand against a Knight of the Cross, is a son of darkness.”

Hearing this, Sir de Lorche became thoughtful ;

but he did not have time to answer Danveld, because they arrived at a large, snow-covered glade in the woods, on which the prince and his courtiers dismounted.

CHAPTER V

THE foresters under the direction of the head huntsman, placed the hunters in a long row at the edge of the forest, in such a way that being hidden themselves, they faced the glade. Nets were fastened along two sides of the glade, and behind these were the men whose duty it was to turn the beasts toward the hunters, or to kill them with spears if they became entangled in the nets. Many of the Kurpie were sent to drive every living thing from the depths of the forest into the glade. Behind the hunters there was another net stretched; if an animal passed the row of hunters, he would be entangled in it and easily killed.

The prince was standing in the middle in a small ravine, which extended through the entire width of the glade. The head huntsman, Mrokota of Mocarzew, had chosen that position for the prince because he knew that the largest beasts would pass through this ravine. The prince had a crossbow, and leaning on a tree beside him was a heavy spear; a little behind him stood two gigantic "defenders" with axes on their shoulders, and holding crossbows ready to be handed to the prince. The princess and Jurandowna did not dismount, because the prince would not allow them to do so, on account of the peril from urus and bisons; it was easier to escape the fury of these fierce beasts on horseback than on foot. De Lorche, although invited by the prince to take a position at his right hand, asked permission to remain with the ladies

for their defence. Zbyszko drove his spear into the snow, put his crossbow on his back and stood by Danusia's horse, whispering to her and sometimes kissing her. He became quiet only when Mrokota of Mocarzew, who in the forest scolded even the prince himself, ordered him to be silent.

In the meanwhile, far in the depths of the wilderness, the horns of the Kurpie were heard, and the noisy sound of a *krzywula*¹ answered from the glade; then perfect silence followed. From time to time the chatter of the squirrels was heard in the tops of the pines. The hunters looked at the snow-covered glade, where only the wind moved the bushes, and asked themselves what kind of animals would first appear. They expected abundant game, because the wilderness was swarming with urus, bison and boars. The Kurpie had smoked out a few bears which were wandering in the thickets, angry, hungry and watchful.

But the hunters were obliged to wait a long time, because the men who were driving the animals toward the glade, had taken a very large space of the forest, and therefore they were so far away that the hunters did not even hear the baying of the dogs, that had been freed from the leashes immediately after the horns resounded.

After a while some wolves appeared on the edge of the forest, but having noticed the people, they again plunged into the forest, evidently searching for another pass. Then some boars having emerged from the wilderness, began to run in a long black line through the snowy space, looking from afar like domestic swine. They stopped and listened—turned and listened again: turned toward the nets,

¹ Kind of horn.

but having smelt the men, went in the direction of the hunters, snorting and approaching more and more carefully; finally there resounded the clatter of the iron cranks of the crossbows, the snarl of the bolts and then the first blood spotted the white snow.

Then a dreadful squealing resounded and the whole pack dispersed as if struck by a thunderbolt; some of them rushed blindly straight ahead, others ran toward the nets, while still others ran among the other animals, with which the glade was soon covered. The sounds of the horns were heard distinctly, mingled with the howling of the dogs and the bustle of the people coming from the depths of the forest. The wild beasts of the forest driven by the huntsmen soon filled the glade. It was impossible to see anything like it in foreign countries or even in the other Polish provinces; nowhere else was there such a wilderness as there was in Mazowsze. The Knights of the Cross, although they had visited Lithuania, where bisons attacked¹ and brought confusion to the army, were very much astonished at the great number of beasts, and Sir de Lorche was more astonished than they. He beheld in front of him herds of yellow deer and elks with heavy antlers, mingled together and running on the glade, blinded by fear and searching in vain for a safe passage. The princess, in whom Kiejstut's blood began to play, seeing this, shot arrow after arrow, shouting with joy when a deer or an elk which was struck, reared and then fell heavily plowing the snow with his feet. Some of the ladies-in-waiting were also shooting, because all were filled with enthusiasm for the sport. Zbyszko alone did not think about hunting; but having

¹ Wigand of Marburg mentions such cases,

leaned his elbows on Danusia's knees and his head on the palms of his hands, he looked into her eyes, and she smiling and blushing, tried to close his eyelids with her fingers, as if she could not stand such looks.

Sir de Lorche's attention was attracted by an enormous bear, gray on the back and shoulders, which jumped out unexpectedly from the thicket near the huntsmen. The prince shot at it with his crossbow, and then rushed forward with his boarspear; when the animal roaring frightfully, reared, he pierced it with his spear in the presence of the whole court so deftly and so quickly, that neither of the "defenders" needed to use his axe. The young Lotaringer doubted that few of the other lords, at whose courts he had visited during his travels, would dare to amuse themselves in such a way, and believed that the Order would have hard work to conquer such princes and such people. Later on he saw the other hunters pierce in the same way, many boars much larger and fiercer than any that could be found in the forest of Lower Lotaringen or in the German wilderness. Such expert hunters and those so sure of their strength, Sir de Lorche had never before seen; he concluded, being a man of some experience, that these people living in the boundless forests, had been accustomed from childhood to use the crossbow and the spear; consequently they were very dexterous in using them.

The glade of the wood was finally covered with the dead bodies of many different kinds of animals; but the hunt was not finished. In fact, the most interesting and also the most perilous moment was coming, because the huntsmen had met a herd

of urus and bisons. The bearded bulls marching in advance of the herd, holding their heads near the ground, often stopped, as if calculating where to attack. From their enormous lungs came a muffled bellowing, similar to the rolling of thunder, and perspiration steamed from their nostrils; while pawing the snow with their forefeet, they seemed to watch the enemy with their bloody eyes hidden beneath their manes. Then the huntsmen shouted, and their cries were followed by similar shoutings from all sides; the horns and fifes resounded; the wilderness reverberated from its remotest parts; meantime the dogs of the Kurpie rushed to the glade with tremendous noise. The appearance of the dogs enraged the females of the herd who were accompanied by their young. The herd which had been walking up to this moment, now scattered in a mad rush all over the glade. One of the bisons, an enormous old yellow bull, rushed toward the huntsmen standing at one side, then seeing horses in the bushes, stopped, and bellowing, began to plow the earth with his horns, as if inciting himself to fight.

Seeing this, the men began to shout still more, but among the hunters there were heard frightened voices exclaiming: "The princess! The princess! Save the princess!" Zbyszko seized his spear which had been driven into the ground behind him and rushed to the edge of the forest; he was followed by a few Litwines who were ready to die in defence of Kiejstut's daughter; but all at once the crossbow creaked in the hands of the lady, the bolt whistled and, having passed over the animal's head, struck him in his neck.

"He is hit!" exclaimed the princess; "he will not escape."

But suddenly, with such a dreadful bellowing that the frightened horses reared, the bison rushed directly toward the lady; at the same moment with no less impetus, Sir de Lorche rushed from beneath the trees and leaning on his horse, with his spear extended as in a knightly tournament, attacked the animal.

Those near by perceived during one moment, the spear plunged into the animal's neck, immediately bend like a bow, and break into small pieces; then the enormous horned head disappeared entirely under the belly of Sir de Lorche's horse, and the charger and his rider were tossed into the air.

From the forest the huntsmen rushed to help the foreign knight. Zbyszko who cared most about the princess and Danusia's safety, arrived first and drove his spear under the bison's shoulder blade. He gave the blow with such force, that the spear by a sudden turn of the bison, broke in his hands, and he himself fell with his face on the ground. "He is dead! He is dead!" cried the Mazurs who were rushing to help him. The bull's head covered Zbyszko and pressed him to the ground. The two powerful "defenders" of the prince arrived; but they were too late; fortunately the Czech Hlawa, given to Zbyszko by Jagienka, outstripped them, and having seized his broad-axe with both hands he cut the bison's bent neck, near the horns.

The blow was so powerful that the animal fell, as though struck by a thunderbolt, with his head almost severed from his neck; this enormous body fell on top of Zbyszko. Both "defenders" pulled

it away quickly. The princess and Danusia having dismounted, arrived at the side of the wounded youth.

Zbyszko, pale and covered with his own and the animal's blood, tried to rise; but he staggered, fell on his knees and leaning on his hands, could only pronounce one word:

"Danuska."

Then the blood gushed from his mouth. Danusia grasped him by his shoulders, but being unable to hold him, began to cry for help. The huntsmen rubbed him with snow and poured wine in his mouth; finally the head huntsman, Mrokota of Mocarzew ordered them to put him on a mantle and to stop the blood with soft spunk from the trees.

"He will live if his ribs and his backbone are not broken," said he, turning toward the princess. In the meanwhile some ladies of the court with the help of other huntsmen, were attending to Sir de Lorche. They turned him over, searching in his armor for holes or dents made by the horns of the bull; but besides traces of the snow, which had entered between the joints of the iron plates, they could find nothing. The urus had avenged himself especially on the horse, which was lying dead beside the knight; as for Sir de Lorche, he was not seriously injured. He had fainted and his right hand was sprained. When they took off his helmet and poured some wine in his mouth, he opened his eyes, and seeing the sorrowful faces of two pretty young ladies bent over him, said in German:

"I am sure I am in paradise already and the angels are over me."

The ladies did not understand what he said; but

being glad to see him open his eyes and speak, they smiled, and with the huntsmen's help raised him from the ground; feeling the pain in his right hand, he moaned and leaned with the left on the shoulder of one of the "angels"; for a while he stood motionless, fearing to make a step, because he felt weak. Then he glanced around and perceived the yellow body of the urus; he also saw Danusia wringing her hands and Zbyszko lying on a mantle.

"Is that the knight who rushed to help me?" he asked. "Is he alive?"

"He is very severely injured," answered a courtier who could speak German.

"From this time, I am going to fight not with him, but for him!" said the Lotaringer.

At this time, the prince who was near Zbyszko, approached Sir de Lorche and began to praise him because he had defended the princess and the other ladies, and perhaps saved their lives by his bold deed; for which, besides the knightly reward, he would be renowned not only then but in all future generations.

"In these effeminate times," said he, "there are few true knights traveling through the world; therefore pray be my guest as long as possible or if you can, remain forever in Mazowsze, where you have already won my favor, and by honest deeds will easily win the love of the people."

Sir de Lorche's heart was filled with joy when he heard the prince's words and realized that he had accomplished such a famous knightly deed and deserved such praise in these remote Polish lands, about which so many strange things were told in the East. He knew that a knight who could tell at the

Burgundian court or at the court of Brabant, that when on a hunting party, he had saved the life of the Mazowiecka princess, would be forever famous.

Zbyszko became conscious and smiled at Danusia; then he fainted again. The huntsmen seeing how his hands closed and his mouth remained open, said to one another that he would not live; but the more experienced Kurpie, among whom many an one had on him the traces of a bear's paws, a boar's tusks or an urus' horns, affirmed that the urus' horn had slipped between the knight's ribs, that perhaps one or two of his ribs were broken, but that the backbone was not, because if it were, he could not rise. They pointed out also, that Zbyszko had fallen in a snow-drift and that had saved him, because on account of the softness the animal when pressing him with his horns, could not entirely crush his chest, nor his backbone.

Unfortunately the prince's physician, the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek of Dziewanna, was not with the hunting party, being busy in the chateau making wafers.¹ The Czech rushed to bring him immediately, and meanwhile the Kurpie carried Zbyszko to the prince's mansion. The Knight of the Cross, Hugo von Danveld, helped Danusia mount her horse and then, riding beside her and closely following the men who were carrying Zbyszko, said in Polish in a muffled voice, so that she alone could hear him :

¹ There is a custom in Poland, Hungary, Bohemia and some other countries, to break wafers at receptions and parties, on Christmas eve and the following two days, expressing in the meantime good wishes for all manner of prosperity and happiness. The wafers are distributed by the parish, that is to say by the priest or sexton. The author refers to that custom.

"In Szczytno I have a marvelous balm, which I received from a hermit living in the Hercynski forest; I can bring it for you in three days."

"God will reward you," answered Danusia.

"God records every charitable deed; but will you reward me also?"

"What reward can I give you?"

The Krzyzak approached and evidently wished to say something else but hesitated; after a while he said:

"In the Order, besides the brothers there are also sisters. One of them will bring the healing balm, and then I will speak about the reward."

CHAPTER VI

THE *ksiondz* Wyszoniek dressed Zbyszko's wounds and he stated that only one rib was broken; but the first day he could not affirm that the sick man would live, because he could not ascertain whether the heart had been injured or not. Sir de Lorche was so ill toward morning that he was obliged to go to bed, and on the following day he could not move his hand nor his foot, without great pain in all the bones. The princess, Danusia and some other ladies of the court nursed the sick men and prepared for them, according to the prescriptions of the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek, different ointments and potions. But Zbyszko was very severely injured, and from time to time blood gushed from his mouth, and this alarmed the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek very much. He was conscious however, and on the second day, although very weak, having learned from Danusia to whom he owed his life, called Hlawa to thank and reward him. He remembered that he had received the Czech from Jagienka and that had it not been for her kind heart, he would have perished. He feared that he never would be able to repay the good-hearted girl for her kindness, but that he would only be the cause of her sorrow.

"I swore to my *panienka*," said Hlawa, "on my honor of a *wlodyka*, that I would protect you; therefore I will do it without any reward. You are indebted to her for your life."

Zbyszko did not answer, but began to breathe

heavily ; the Czech was silent for a while, then he said :

“ If you wish me to hasten to Bogdaniec, I will go. Perhaps you will be glad to see the old lord, because God only knows whether you will recover.”

“ What does the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek say ? ” asked Zbyszko.

“ The *ksiondz* Wyszoniek says that he will know when the new moon comes. There are four days before the new moon.”

“ Hej ! then you need not go to Bogdaniec, because I will either die, or I will be well before my uncle could come.”

“ Could you not send a letter to Bogdaniec ? Sanderus will write one. Then they will know about you, and will engage a mass for you.”

“ Let me rest now, because I am very ill. If I die, you will return to Zgorzelice and tell how everything happened ; then they can engage a mass. I suppose they will bury me here or in Ciechanow.”

“ I think they will bury you in Ciechanow or in Przasnysz, because only the Kurpie are buried in the forest, and the wolves howl over their graves. I heard that the prince intends to return with the court to Ciechanow in two days’ time, and then to Warszawa.”

“ They would not leave me here alone,” answered Zbyszko.

He guessed correctly, because that same day the princess asked the prince’s permission to remain in the house in the wilderness, with Danusia and the ladies-in-waiting, and also with the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek, who was opposed to carrying Zbyszko to Przasnysz. Sir de Lorche at the end of two days

felt better, and he was able to leave his bed; but having learned that the ladies intended to remain, he stayed also, in order to accompany them on their journey and defend them in case the "Saracens" attacked them. Whence the "Saracens" could come, the Lotaringer did not know. It is true that the people in the East used thus to call the Litwins; but from them no danger could threaten Kiejstut's daughter, Witold's sister and the first cousin of the mighty "Krakowski king," Jagiello. But Sir de Lorche had been among the Knights of the Cross for so long a time, that notwithstanding all he had heard in Mazowsze about the baptism of the Litwa, and about the union of the two crowns on the head of one ruler, he could not believe that any one could expect any good from the Litwins. Thus the Knights of the Cross had made him believe, and he had not yet entirely lost all faith in their words.

In the meantime an incident occurred which cast a shadow between Prince Janusz and his guests. One day, before the departure of the court, Brother Godfried and Brother Rotgier, who had remained in Ciechanow, came accompanied by Sir de Fourcy, who was a messenger of bad news to the Knights of the Cross. There were some foreign guests at the court of the Krzyzacki *starosta* in Lubowa; they were Sir de Fourcy and also Herr von Bergow and Herr Meiniger, both belonging to families which had rendered great services to the Order. They having heard many stories about Jurand of Spychow, determined to draw the famous warrior into an open field, and ascertain for themselves whether he really was as dreadful as represented. The *starosta* opposed the plan, giving as a rea-

son that there was peace between the Order and the Mazowiecki princes; but finally, perhaps hoping thus to get rid of his terrible neighbor, not only connived at the expedition but even furnished the armed *knechts*. The knights sent a challenge to Jurand, who immediately accepted it under the condition that they would send away the soldiers and that three of them would fight with him and two of his companions on the boundaries of Szlonsk and Spychow. But when they refused to send away the *knechts* or to retire from the land belonging to Spychow, he suddenly fell upon them, exterminated the *knechts*, pierced Herr Meineger dreadfully with a spear, took Herr von Bergow into captivity and put him into the Spychowski dungeon. De Fourcy alone escaped and after three days' wandering in the Mazowiecki forests, having learned from some pitch-burners that there were some brothers of the Order in Ciechanow, he succeeded in reaching them. He and the brothers of the Order made a complaint to the prince, and asked for the punishment of Jurand, and for an order for the deliverance of Herr von Bergow.

This news disturbed the good understanding between the prince and his guests, because not only the two newly arrived brothers but also Hugo von Danveld and Zygfried von Löve, began to beseech the prince to render justice to the Order, to free the boundaries from the plunderer and to punish him once for all his offences. Hugo von Danveld, having his own grievance against Jurand, the remembrance of which burned him with shame and grief, asked for vengeance almost threateningly.

"The complaint will go to the grand master," he said; "and if we be not able to get justice from

Your Grace, he will obtain it himself, even if the whole Mazowsze help that robber."

But the prince, although naturally good-tempered, became angry and said :

"What kind of justice do you ask for? If Jurand had attacked you first, then I would surely punish him. But your people were the first to commence hostilities. Your *starosta* gave the *knechts* permission to go on that expedition. Jurand only accepted the challenge and asked that the soldiers be sent away. Shall I punish him for that? You attacked that dreadful man, of whom everybody is afraid, and voluntarily brought calamity upon yourselves—what do you want then? Shall I order him not to defend himself, when it pleases you to attack him?"

"It was not the Order that attacked him, but its guests, foreign knights," answered Hugo.

"The Order is responsible for its guests, and then the *knechts* from the Lubowski garrison were there."

"Could the *starosta* allow his guests to be slaughtered?"

Here the prince turned to Zygfried and said :

"You must take heed lest your wiles offend God."

But the stern Zygfried answered :

"Herr von Bergow must be released from captivity, because the men of his family were high dignitaries in the Order and they rendered important services to the Cross."

"And Meineger's death must be avenged," added Hugo von Danveld.

Thereupon the prince arose and walked threateningly toward the Germans; but after a while,

evidently having remembered that they were his guests, he restrained his anger, put his hand on Zygfried's shoulder, and said :

"Listen : you wear a cross on your mantle, therefore answer according to your conscience—upon that cross ! Was Jurand right or was he not ? "

"Herr von Bergow must be released from prison," answered Zygfried von Löve.

There was a moment of silence ; then the prince said :

"God grant me patience ! "

Zygfried continued sharply, his words cutting like a sword :

"The wrong which was done to us in the persons of our guests, is only one more occasion for complaint. From the time the Order was founded, neither in Palestine, nor in Siedmiogrod,¹ nor among the heathenish Litwa, has any man wronged us so much as that robber from Spychow. Your Highness ! we ask for justice and vengeance not for one wrong, but for thousands ; not for the blood shed once, but for years of such deeds, for which fire from heaven ought to burn that nest of wickedness and cruelty. Whose moanings entreat God for vengeance ? Ours ! Whose tears ? Ours ! We have complained in vain. Justice has never been given us ! "

Having heard this, Prince Janusz began to nod his head and said :

"Hej ! formerly the Krzyzaks were received hospitably in Spychow, and Jurand was not your

¹Siebenkirchen in German, a province which now belongs to Hungary ; it was then an independent principality.

foe, until after his dear wife died on your rope; and how many times have you attacked him first, wishing to kill him, as in this last case, because he challenged and defeated your knights? How many times have you sent assassins after him, or shot at him with a crossbow from the forest? He attacked you, it is true, because vengeance burns within him; but have you not attacked peaceful people in Mazowsze? Have you not taken their herds, burned their houses and murdered the men, women and children? And when I complained to the grand master, he sent me this reply from Marienburg: 'Customary frolic of the boundaries.' Let me be in peace! Was it not you who captured me when I was without arms, during the time of peace, on my own land? Had it not been for your fear of the mighty Krakowski king, probably I would have had to moan until now in captivity. Who ought to complain? With such gratitude you repaid me, who belonged to the family of your benefactors. Let me be in peace; it is not you who have the right to talk about justice!"

Having heard this, the Knights of the Cross looked at each other impatiently, angry because the prince mentioned the occurrence at Zlotorja, in the presence of Sir de Fourcy; therefore Hugo von Danveld, wishing to finish the conversation about it, said:

"That was a mistake, Your Highness, and we made amends for it, not on account of fear of the Krakowski king, but for the sake of justice; and with regard to the frolics on the boundaries, the grand master cannot be held responsible, because on every frontier there are some restless spirits."

"Then you say this yourself, and still you ask

for the punishment of Jurand. What do you wish then?"

"Justice and punishment!"

The prince clenched his bony fists and repeated:

"God grant me patience!"

"Your Princely Majesty must also remember," said Danveld, further, "that our wantons only wrong lay people who do not belong to the German race, but your men raise their hand against the German Order, and for this reason they offend our Saviour Himself."

"Listen!" said the prince. "Do not talk about God; you cannot deceive Him!"

Then having placed his hands on the Krzyzak's shoulders, he shook him so strongly, that he frightened him. He relented immediately and said, mildly:

"If it be true that our guests attacked Jurand first and did not send away the soldiers, I will not blame him; but had Jurand really accepted the challenge?"

Having said this, he looked at Sir de Fourcy, winking at him, to deny it; but the latter, not wishing to lie, answered:

"He asked us to send our soldiers away, and to fight three against three."

"Are you sure of that?"

"Upon my honor! Herr von Bergow and I agreed, but Meineger did not consent."

Here the prince interrupted:

"*Starosta* from Szczytno! you know better than anybody else that Jurand would not miss a challenge."

Then he turned to all present and said:

"If one of you will challenge Jurand to a fight on horseback or on foot, I give my permission. If he be taken prisoner or killed, then Herr von Bergow will be released without paying any ransom. Do not ask me for anything else, because I will not grant it."

After these words, there was a profound silence. Hugo von Danveld, Zygfried von Löve, Brother Rotgier and Brother Godfried, although brave, knew the dreadful lord of Spychow too well to dare to challenge him for life or death. Only a foreigner from a far distant country, like de Lorche or de Fourcy, would do it; but de Lorche was not present during the conversation, and Sir de Fourcy was still too frightened.

"I have seen him once," he muttered, "and I do not wish to see him any more."

Zygfried von Löve said:

"It is forbidden the monks to fight in single combat, except by special permission from the grand master and the grand marshal; but I do not ask for permission for a combat, but for the release of von Bergow and the punishment by death of Jurand."

"You do not make the laws in this country."

"Our grand master will know how to administer justice."

"Your grand master has nothing to do with Mazowsze!"

"The emperor and the whole German nation will help him."

"The king of Poland will help me, and he is more powerful than the German emperor."

"Does Your Highness wish for a war with the Order?"

"If I wanted a war, I would not wait for you to

come to Mazowsze, but would go toward you ; you need not threaten me, because I am not afraid of you."

"What shall I say to the grand master?"

"He has not asked you anything. Tell him what you please."

"Then we will avenge ourselves."

Thereupon the prince stretched forth his arm and began to shake his finger close to the Krzyzak's face.

"Keep quiet!" said he, angrily; "keep quiet! I gave you permission to challenge Jurand; but if you dare to invade this country with the army of the Order, then I will attack you, and you will stay here not as a guest but as a prisoner."

Evidently his patience was entirely exhausted, because he threw a cap violently on the table and left the room, slamming the door. The Knights of the Cross became pale and Sir de Fourcy looked at them askance.

"What will happen now?" asked Brother Rotgier, who was the first to break the silence.

Hugo von Danveld turned to Sir de Fourcy and menacing him with his fists, said:

"Why did you tell him that you attacked Jurand?"

"Because it is true!"

"You should have lied."

"I came here to fight and not to lie."

"Well, you fought well, indeed!"

"And you! did you not run away from Jurand of Spychow?"

"*Pax!*" said von Löve. "This knight is a guest of the Order."

"It is immaterial what he said," added Brother

Godfried. "They would not punish Jurand without a trial, and in the court, the truth would come out."

"What will be done now?" repeated Brother Rotgier.

There was a moment of silence; then the sturdy and virulent Zygfried von Löve spoke:

"We must finish once for all with that bloody dog!" said he. "Herr von Bergow must be released from his fetters. We will gather the garrisons from Szczytno, Insburk and Lubowa; we will summon the Chelminsk nobility and attack Jurand. It is time to settle with him!"

"We cannot do it without permission from the grand master."

"If we succeed, the grandmaster will be pleased!" said Brother Godfried.

"But if we do not succeed? If the prince go against us?"

"He will not do that if there is peace between him and the Order."

"There is peace, but we are going to violate it. Our garrisons will not be sufficient to fight against the Mazurs."

"Then the grand master will help us and there will be a war."

Danveld frowned again and became thoughtful.

"No! no!" said he after a while. "If we be successful, the grand master will be pleased. Envoys will be sent to the prince, there will be negotiations and we will go scot-free. But in case of defeat, the Order will not intercede for us and will not declare war. Another grand master is necessary for that. The Polski king is behind the

prince, and the grand master will not quarrel with him."

"But we have taken the Dobrzynska province; it is evident that we are not afraid of Krakow."

"There was some pretext—Opolczyk. We took it apparently in pledge, and then——" Here he looked around and said quietly:

"I heard in Marienburg, that if they threaten us with war, we will return the province."

"Ah!" said Brother Rotgier, "if we had Markward Salzbach with us, or Shomberg who killed Witold's whelps, he would find some remedy against Jurand. Witold was the king's viceroy and a grand duke! Notwithstanding that, Shomberg was not punished. He killed Witold's children, and went scot-free! Verily, there is great lack among us of people who can find a remedy for everything."

Having heard this, Hugo von Danveld put his elbows on the table, leaned his head on his hands and plunged into deep thought. Then his eyes became bright, he wiped, according to his custom, his moist, thick lips with the upper part of his hand and said:

"May the moment in which you mentioned, pious brother, the name of the valiant Shomberg be blessed."

"Why? Have you found a remedy?" asked Zygfried von Löve.

"Speak quickly!" exclaimed Brother Godfried.

"Listen," said Hugo. "Jurand has a daughter here, his only child, whom he loves dearly."

"Yes, so he has. We know her. The princess Anna Danuta loves her also."

"Yes. Listen then: if you capture this girl,

Jurand will give as a ransom for her, not only Bergow, but all his prisoners, himself and Spychow ! ”

“ By Saint Bonifacius’ blood shed in Duchum ! ” exclaimed Brother Godfried ; “ it would be as you say ! ”

Then they were silent, as if frightened by the boldness and the difficulties of the enterprise. But after a while Brother Rotgier turned toward Zygfried von Löve, and said :

“ Your judgment and experience are equal to your bravery : what do you think about this plan ? ”

“ I think that the matter is worthy of consideration.”

“ Because,” said Rotgier further, “ the girl is a lady-in-waiting with the princess—the princess loves her as if she were her own daughter. Think, pious brother, what an uproar will arise.”

But Hugo von Danveld began to laugh :

“ You said yourself, that Shomberg poisoned or strangled Witold’s whelps, and what happened to him ? They will raise an uproar about anything we do ; but if we sent Jurand in chains to the grand master, then it is certain that we could expect reward rather than punishment.”

“ Yes,” said von Löve, “ there is a good opportunity for an attack. The prince is going away and Anna Danuta will remain here alone with her court. However it is a serious matter to invade the prince’s house during the time of peace. The prince’s house is not Spychow. It will be the same thing that happened in Zlotorja ! Again complaints against the Order will go to all kings and to the pope ; again that cursed Jagiello will

threaten us, and the grand master; you know him: he is glad to take hold of anything he can, but he does not wish for war with Jagiello. Yes! there will be a great uproar in all the provinces of Mazowsze and of Polska."

"In the meanwhile Jurand's bones will whiten on a hook," answered Brother Hugo. "Then we do not need to take his daughter from the prince's mansion."

"But we cannot do it from Ciechanow either, because there, besides the noblemen, there are three hundred archers."

"No. But Jurand can become ill and send for his daughter. Then the princess would not prevent her going, and if the girl be lost on the road, who will accuse you or me and say to us: 'You captured her!'"

"Bah!" answered von Löve, impatiently. "You must first make Jurand sick and then make him summon the girl."

At this Hugo smiled triumphantly and answered:

"I have a goldsmith, who having been driven from Marienburg for theft, settled in Szczytno and who is able to make a seal; I also have people, who although our bondmen, came from the Mazurski country. Do you understand me yet?"

"I understand," shouted Brother Godfried.

And Rotgier raised his hands and said:

"May God bless you, pious brother, because neither Markward Salzbach, nor Shomberg could find better means."

Then he half closed his eyes, as if he saw something afar.

"I see Jurand," said he, "with a rope around his

neck, standing at the Gdansk gate in Marienburg and our *knechts* are kicking him."

"And the girl will become a servant of the Order," said Hugo.

Having heard this, von Löve turned his severe eyes on Danveld; but the latter again rubbed his lips with the upper part of his hand and said :

"And now to Szczytno as soon as we can !"

Before starting on the journey to Szczytno, the four brothers of the Order and de Fourcy went to bid the prince and the princess adieu. It was not a very friendly farewell; but the prince, not wishing to act contrary to the old Polish custom which did not permit the guests to depart with empty hands, made each brother a present of some beautiful marten-fur and of one *grzywna* of silver; they received the presents with great pleasure, assuring the prince that being brothers of an order, and having made a solemn promise to live in poverty, they would not retain the money for themselves, but would distribute it among the poor, whom they would recommend to pray for the prince's health, fame and future salvation.

The Mazurs laughed in their sleeves at such an assurance, because they knew very well how rapacious the Order was, and still better what liars the Knights of the Cross were.

It was a popular saying in Mazowsze: "As the skunk smells, so the Krzyzak lies." The prince waved his hand to such thanks, and after they went out he said that by the intervention of the Knights of the Cross, one would go to heaven as swiftly as the craw-fish walks.

But before that, while taking leave of the princess, at the moment that Zygfried von Löve kissed

her hand, Hugo von Danveld approached Danusia, put his hand on her head and caressing her, said :

“ Our commandment is to return good for evil, and even to love our enemy ; therefore I will send a sister of the Order here, and she will bring you the healing balm.”

“ How can I thank you for it ? ” answered Danusia.

“ Be a friend of the Order and of the monks.”

De Fourcy noticed this conversation, and in the meantime he was struck by the beauty of the young girl ; therefore as they traveled toward Szczytno, he asked :

“ Who is that beautiful lady of the court with whom you were talking while taking leave of the princess ? ”

“ Jurand’s daughter ! ” answered the Krzyzak.

Sir de Fourcy was surprised.

“ The same whom you propose to capture ? ”

“ Yes. And when we capture her, Jurand is ours.”

“ Evidently everything is not bad that comes from Jurand. It will be worth while to guard such a prisoner.”

“ Do you think it will be easier to fight with her than with Jurand ? ”

“ I mean that I think the same as you do. The father is a foe of the Order ; but you spoke words as sweet as honey to the daughter, and besides you promised to send her the balm.”

Evidently Hugo von Danveld felt the need of justification before Zygfried von Löve who, although not better than the others, observed the austere laws of the Order, and very often scolded the other brothers.

"I promised her the balm," said Hugo, "for that young knight, who was injured by the bison and to whom she is betrothed. If they make an outcry when the girl is captured, then we will tell them that we did not wish to harm her any, and the best proof of it will be that on account of Christian mercy we sent her some medicine."

"Very well," said von Löve. "Only we must send somebody whom we can trust."

"I will send a pious woman, entirely faithful to the Order. I will command her to look and to listen. When our people, apparently sent by Jurand, arrive, they will find the road already prepared."

"It will be difficult to get such people."

"No! In our province the people speak the same language. There are in our city, bah! even among the *knechts* of the garrison, some men who left Mazowsze because they were pursued by the law; it is true they are thieves and robbers; but they do not fear anybody and they are ready to do anything. To those men, I will promise, in case they succeed, a large reward; if they fail, a rope."

"Bah! Suppose they betray us?"

"They will not betray us, because in Mazowsze every one of them deserves to be hanged. Only we must give them decent clothes so that they will be taken for Jurand's servants; and we must get the principal thing: a letter with Jurand's seal."

"We must foresee everything," said Brother Rotgier. "It is probable that Jurand will go to see the prince, and justify himself on account of the last war. If he is in Ciechanow, he will go to see his daughter. It may happen that our men when they go to capture Jurandowna, will come in contact with Jurand himself."

"The men whom I am going to choose are sharp. They will know that they will be hanged if they come in contact with Jurand. It will be to their own interest not to meet him."

"But they may be captured."

"Then we will deny them and the letter. Who can prove that we sent them? And then if there be no outrage, there will be no outcry, and it will not harm the Order, if Mazury cut several scoundrels into pieces."

Brother Godfried, the youngest of the monks, said:

"I do not understand your policy, nor your fear that it may be known that the girl was carried off by our command. Because if we have her in our possession, we will be obliged to send some one to Jurand to tell him: 'Your daughter is with us; if you wish her to be set at liberty, give von Bergow and yourself in exchange for her.' You cannot do otherwise, and then it will be known that we ordered the girl to be carried off."

"That is true!" said Sir de Fourcy, who did not like the whole affair. "Why should we hide that which must come out?"

But Hugo von Danveld began to laugh, and turning to Brother Godfried, asked:

"How long have you worn the white mantle?"

"It will be six years the first week after the day of the Holy Trinity."

"When you have worn it six years longer, you will understand the affairs of the Order better. Jurand knows us better than you do. We will tell him: 'Your daughter is watched by Brother Shomberg; if you say a word, remember what happened to Witold's children!'"

“And then?”

“Then von Bergow will be free and the Order also will be free from Jurand.”

“No!” exclaimed Brother Rotgier; “everything is planned so cleverly that God ought to bless our enterprise.”

“God blesses all deeds whose purpose is the good of the Order,” said the gloomy Zygfried von Löve.

Then they rode silently, and before them went their retinue, to open the way, because the road was covered with a heavy snow, which had fallen during the night. The day was cloudy, but warm; therefore the horses were steaming. From the forest flocks of crows were flying toward the villages, filling the air with their gloomy cawing.

Sir de Fourcy remained a little bit behind the Knights of the Cross and rode along in deep thought. He had been the guest of the Order for several years, and had participated in the expeditions against the Zmudz, where he distinguished himself by great bravery. Everywhere he had been received as the Knights of the Cross knew how to receive the knights from remote countries; he became attached to them very strongly, and not being rich, he planned to join their ranks. In the meanwhile he either lived in Marienburg, or visited the commanderies, searching in his travels for distractions and adventures. Having just arrived at Lubowa with the rich von Bergow, and having heard about Jurand, he desired very much to fight with the man who was regarded with general dread. The arrival of Meiniger, who was always victorious, precipitated the expedition. The *comthur* of Lubowa furnished the men for it, but in

the meanwhile he told them so much not only about Jurand's cruelty, but also about his cunning and treachery, that when Jurand asked them to send away the soldiers, they refused to do it, fearing that if they did, he would surround and exterminate them or else capture and put them into the Spychowski dungeons. Then Jurand thinking that they cared less about a knightly fight than about plunder, attacked them and defeated them. De Fourcy saw von Bergow overthrown with his horse; he saw Meineger with a piece of a spear in his body, and he saw the men asking in vain for mercy. He escaped with great difficulty, and wandered for several days in the forests, where he would have died of hunger or been destroyed by wild beasts, if by chance he had not reached Ciechanow, where he found Brothers Godfried and Rotgier. From the expedition he emerged with a feeling of humiliation and shame, and with a desire for vengeance and a longing after Bergow, who was his dear friend. Therefore he joined with his whole soul in the complaint of the Knights of the Cross, when they asked for the punishment of the Polish knight and the freedom of his unhappy companion. When their complaint had no effect whatever, in the first moment he was ready to approve of any plan for vengeance against Jurand. But now some scruples were aroused in him. Listening to the conversation of the monks, and especially to what Hugo von Danveld said, he could not refrain from astonishment. It is true, that having become well acquainted during the past few years with the Knights of the Cross, he knew that they were not what they were represented to be in Germany and in the West. In Marienburg,

he knew, however, a few honest and upright knights who often complained of the corruption of the brothers, of their lasciviousness and lack of discipline; de Fourcy felt that they were right, but being himself dissolute and lacking in discipline, he did not criticise them for those faults, especially because all knights of the Order redeemed them with bravery. He had seen them at Wilno, fighting breast to breast with the Polish knights; at the taking of castles, defended with superhuman stubbornness by Polish garrisons; he had seen them perishing under the blows of axes and swords, in general assaults or in single combats. They were merciless and cruel toward the Litwa, but at the same time, they were as brave as lions.

But now it seemed to Sir de Fourcy, that Hugo von Danveld advised such actions from which every knight's soul should recoil; and the other brothers not only were not angry with him, but approved of his words. Therefore astonishment seized him more and more; finally he became deeply thoughtful, pondering whether it was proper to join in the performance of such deeds.

If it were only a question of carrying off the girl and then exchanging her for Bergow, he would perhaps consent to that, although his heart had been moved by Danusia's beauty. But evidently the Knights of the Cross wished for something else. Through her they wished to capture Jurand, and then murder him, and together with him,—in order to hide the fraud and the crime—must assuredly murder the girl also.

They had threatened her already with the same fate that Witold's children met, in case Jurand should dare to complain. "They do not intend to

keep any promise, but to cheat both and kill both," said de Fourcy, to himself, "although they wear the cross, and ought to guard their honor more than anybody else."

He became more and more indignant at such effrontery, and he determined to verify his suspicions; therefore he rode near Danveld and asked:

"If Jurand give himself up to you, will you set the girl at liberty?"

"If we let her go free, the whole world would immediately say that we had captured both of them," answered Danveld.

"Then, what do you propose to do with her?"

At this Danveld bent toward the knight, and laughing, showed his rotten teeth from beneath his thick lips.

"Do you mean what will be done with her, before or after?"

But Fourcy, surmising already that which he wished to know, became silent; for a while he seemed to struggle with himself; then he raised himself in his stirrups and said so loudly that he could be heard by all four of the monks:

"The pious brother, Ulrych von Jungingen, who is an example and an ornament of knighthood, said to me: 'Among the old knights in Marienburg, one can still find worthy Knights of the Cross; but those who control the commanderies near the frontier, only bring shame upon the Order.'"

"We are all sinful, but we serve the Saviour," answered Hugo.

"Where is your knightly honor? One cannot serve the Saviour by shameful deeds. You must know that I will not put my hand to anything like that, and that I also will prevent you."

"What will you prevent?"

"The artifice, the treachery, the shame!"

"How can you do it? In the fight with Jurand, you lost your retinue and wagons. You are obliged to live on the generosity of the Order, and you will die from hunger if we do not throw you a piece of bread; and then, you are alone, we are four—how could you prevent us?"

"How can I prevent you?" repeated de Fourcy. "I can return to the mansion and warn the prince; I can divulge your plans to the whole world."

Here the brothers of the Order looked at one another, and their faces changed in the twinkling of an eye. Hugo von Danveld, especially, looked questioningly into Zygfried von Löve's eyes; then he turned to Sir de Fourcy:

"Your ancestors," said he, "used to serve in the Order, and you wished to join it also; but we do not receive traitors."

"And I do not wish to serve with traitors."

"Ej! you shall not fulfill your threat. The Order knows how to punish not only the monks——"

Sir de Fourcy being excited by these words, drew his sword, and seized the blade with his left hand; his right hand he put on the hilt and said:

"On this hilt which is in the form of the cross, on St. Denis, my patron's head, and on my knightly honor, I swear that I will warn the Mazowiecki prince and the grand master."

Hugo von Danveld again looked inquiringly at Zygfried von Löve, who closed his eyelids, as if consenting to something.

Then Danveld said in a strangely muffled and changed voice:

"St. Denis could carry his head after he was beheaded, but when yours once falls down——"

"Are you threatening me?" interrupted de Fourcy.

"No, but I kill!" answered Danveld. And he thrust his knife into de Fourcy's side with such strength, that the blade disappeared up to the hilt. De Fourcy screamed dreadfully; for a while he tried to seize his sword which he held in his left hand, with his right, but he dropped it; at the same time, the other three brothers began to pierce him mercilessly with their knives, in the neck, in the back, and in the stomach, until he fell from his horse.

Then there was silence. De Fourcy bleeding dreadfully from several wounds, quivered on the snow. From beneath the leaden sky, there came only the cawing of the crows, which were flying from the silent wilderness, toward human habitations.

Then there began a hurried conversation between the murderers:

"Our servants did not see anything!" said Danveld, panting.

"No. The retinues are in front; we cannot see them," answered von Löve.

"Listen: we will have cause for a new complaint. We will publish the statement that the Mazowiecki knights fell upon us and killed our companion. We will shout aloud—they will hear us in Marienburg—that the prince sent murderers even after his guests. Listen! we must say that Janusz did not wish to listen to our complaints against Jurand, but that he ordered the accuser to be murdered."

In the meanwhile, de Fourcy turned in the last convulsion on his back and then remained motionless, with a bloody froth on his lips and with dread pictured in his widely-opened dead eyes. Brother Rotgier looked at him and said :

“ Notice, pious brothers, how God punishes even the thought of treachery.”

“ What we have done, was done for the good of the Order,” answered Godfried. “ Glory to those——”

But he stopped, because at that moment, behind them, at the turn of the snowy road, there appeared a horseman, who rushed forward as fast as his horse could go. Having perceived him, Hugo von Danveld quickly exclaimed :

“ Whoever this man is—he must die.” And von Löve, who although the oldest among the brothers, had very keen eyesight, said :

“ I recognize him ; it is that shield-bearer who killed the bison with an axe. Yes ; it is he ! ”

“ Hide your knives, so that he may not become frightened,” said Danveld. “ I will attack him first, you shall follow me.”

In the meanwhile, the Bohemian arrived and reined in his horse at a distance of eight or ten steps. He noticed the corpse lying in the pool of blood, the horse without a rider, and astonishment appeared on his face ; but it lasted only for the twinkling of an eye. After a while, he turned to the brothers as if nothing had happened and said :

“ I bow to you, brave knights ! ”

“ We recognize you,” answered Danveld, approaching slowly. “ Have you anything for us ? ”

“ The knight Zbyszko of Bogdaniec, after whom I carry the spear, sent me, because being injured by the bison, he could not come himself.”

“What does your master wish from us?”

“My master commanded me to tell you that because you unrighteously accused Jurand of Spychow, to the detriment of his knightly honor, you did not act like honest knights, but howled like dogs; and if any one of you feels insulted by these words, he challenges him to a combat on horseback or on foot, to the last breath; he will be ready for the duel as soon as with God’s help and mercy he is released from his present indisposition.”

“Tell your master, that the Knights of the Order bear insults patiently for the Saviour’s sake, and they cannot fight, without special permission from the grand master or from the grand marshal; for which permission they will write to Malborg.”

The Czech again looked at de Fourcy’s corpse, because he had been sent especially to that knight. Zbyszko knew that the monks could not fight in single combat; but having heard that there was a secular knight with them, he wanted to challenge him especially, thinking that by doing so he would win Jurand’s favor. But that knight was lying slaughtered like an ox, by the four Knights of the Cross.

It is true that the Czech did not understand what had happened; but being accustomed from childhood to different kinds of danger, he suspected some treachery. He was also surprised to see Danveld, while talking with him, approach him closer and closer; the others began to ride to his sides, as if to surround him. Consequently he was upon the alert, especially as he did not have any weapons; he had not brought any, being in great haste.

In the meanwhile Danveld who was near him, said:

"I promised your master some healing balm; he repays me badly for my good deed. But no wonder, that is the usual thing among the Polaks. But as he is severely injured and may soon be called to God, tell him then——"

Here he leaned his left hand on the Czech's shoulder.

"Tell him then, that I—well—I answer this way!——"

And at the same moment, his knife gleamed near the throat of the shield-bearer; but before he could thrust, the Czech who had been watching his movements closely, seized Danveld's right hand, with his iron-like hands, bent and twisted it so that the bones cracked; then hearing a dreadful roaring of pain, he pricked his horse and rushed away like an arrow, before the others could stop him.

Brothers Rotgier and Godfried pursued him, but they soon returned, frightened by a dreadful cry from Danveld. Von Löve supported him with his shoulders, while he cried so loudly that the retinue, riding with the wagons in front at quite a distance, stopped their horses.

"What is the matter with you?" asked the brothers.

But von Löve ordered them to ride forward as fast as they could, and bring a wagon, because Danveld could not remain in his saddle. After a moment, a cold perspiration covered his forehead and he fainted.

When they brought the wagon, they put him on some straw in the bottom and hurried toward the frontier. Von Löve urged them forward because he realized that after what had happened, they could not lose time in nursing Danveld. Having

seated himself beside him in the wagon, he rubbed his face with snow from time to time ; but he could not resuscitate him. At last when near the frontier, Danveld opened his eyes and began to look around.

“How do you feel?” asked Löve.

“I do not feel any pain, but neither can I feel my hand,” answered Danveld.

“Because it has grown stiff already ; that is why you do not feel any pain. It will come back in a warm room. In the meanwhile, thank God even for a moment of relief.”

Rotgier and Godfried approached the wagon.

“What a misfortune!” said the first. “What shall we do now?”

“We will declare,” said Danveld in a feeble voice, “that the shield-bearer murdered de Fourcy.”

“It is their latest crime and the culprit is known!” added Rotgier.

CHAPTER VII

IN the meanwhile, the Czech rushed as fast as he could to the prince's hunting residence, and finding the prince still there, he told him first, what had happened. Happily there were some courtiers who had seen the shield-bearer go without any arms. One of them had even shouted after him, half in jest, to take some old iron, because otherwise the Germans would get the best of him; but he, fearing that the knights would pass the frontier, jumped on horseback as he stood, in a sheepskin overcoat only and hurried after them. These testimonies dispelled all possible doubts from the prince's mind as to the fact who had murdered de Fourcy; but they filled him with uneasiness and with such anger, that at first he wanted to pursue the Knights of the Cross, capture them and send them to the grand master in chains. After a while, however, he came to the conclusion, that it was impossible to reach them on this side of the boundary and he said:

"I will send, instead, a letter to the grand master, so that he may know what they are doing here. God will punish them for it!"

Then he became thoughtful and after a while he began to say to the courtiers:

"I cannot understand why they killed their guest; I would suspect the shield-bearer if I did not know that he went there without weapons."

"Bah!" said the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek, "why should the boy kill him? He had not seen him be-

fore. Then suppose he had had arms, how could he attack five of them and their armed retinues?"

"That is true," said the prince. "That guest must have opposed them in something, or perhaps he did not wish to lie as was necessary for them. I saw them wink at him, to induce him to say that Jurand was the first to begin the fight."

Then Mrokota of Mocarzew said:

"He is a strong boy, if he could crush the arm of that dog Danveld."

"He said that he heard the bones of the German crack," answered the prince; "and taking into consideration what he did in the forest, one must admit it is true! The master and the servant are both strong boys. But for Zbyszko, the bison would have rushed against the horses. Both the Lotaringer and he contributed very much to the rescue of the princess."

"To be sure they are great boys," affirmed the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek. "Even now when he can hardly breathe, he has taken Jurand's part and challenged those knights. Jurand needs exactly such a son-in-law."

"In Krakow, Jurand said differently; but now, I think he will not oppose it," said the prince.

"The Lord Jesus will help," said the princess, who entered just now and heard the end of the conversation.

"Jurand cannot oppose it now, if only God will restore Zbyszko's health; but we must reward him also."

"The best reward for him will be Danusia, and I think he will get her, for when the women resolve to accomplish some object, then even Jurand himself could not prevent them."

“Am I not right, to wish for that marriage?” asked the princess.

“I would not say a word if Zbyszko were not constant; but I think there is no other in the world as faithful as he. And the girl also. She does not leave him now for a moment; she caresses him and he smiles at her, although he is very ill. I cry myself when I see this! I am speaking righteously! It is worth while to help such a love, because the Holy Mother looks gladly on human happiness.”

“If it be God’s will,” said the prince, “the happiness will come. But it is true that he nearly lost his head for that girl and now the bison has injured him.”

“Do not say it was for that girl,” said the princess, quickly, “because in Krakow Danusia saved him.”

“True! But for her sake he attacked Lichtenstein, in order to tear from his head the feathers, and he would not have risked his life for de Lorche. As for the reward, I said before that they both deserve one, and I will think about it in Ciechanow.”

“Nothing will please Zbyszko more than to receive the knightly girdle and the golden spurs.”

The prince smiled benevolently and answered:

“Let the girl carry them to him; and when the illness leaves him, then we will see that everything is accomplished according to the custom. Let her carry them to him immediately, because quick joy is the best!”

The princess having heard that, hugged her lord in the presence of the courtiers, and kissed his hands; he smiled continually and said;

"You see—A good idea! I see that the Holy Ghost has granted the woman some sense also! Now call the girl."

"Danuska! Danuska!" called the princess.

And in a moment in the side door Danusia appeared; her eyes were red on account of sleepless nights; and she held a pot of steaming gruel, which the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak had ordered to be put on Zbyszko's fractured bones.

"Come to me, my dear girl!" said Prince Janusz. "Put aside the pot and come."

When she approached with some timidity, because "the lord" always excited some fear in her, he embraced her kindly and began to caress her face, saying:

"Well, the poor child is unhappy—*hein?*"

"Yes!" answered Danusia.

And having sadness in her heart, she began to cry but very quietly, in order not to hurt the prince; he asked again:

"Why do you cry?"

"Because Zbyszko is ill," answered she, putting her little hands to her eyes.

"Do not be afraid, there is no danger for him. Is that not true, Father Wyszoniak?"

"Hej! by God's will, he is nearer to the wedding than to the coffin," answered the good-hearted *ksiondz* Wyszoniak.

The prince said:

"Wait! In the meanwhile, I will give you a medicine for him, and I trust it will relieve him or cure him entirely."

"Have the Krzyzaks sent the balm?" asked Danusia quickly, taking her little hands from her eyes.

“With that balm which the Krzyzaks will send, you had better smear a dog than a knight whom you love. I will give you something else.”

Then he turned to the courtiers and said :

“Hurry and bring the spurs and the girdle.”

After a while, when they had brought them to him, he said to Danusia :

“Take these to Zbyszko—and tell him that from this time he is a belted knight. If he die, then he will appear before God as *miles cinctus* ; if he live, then the rest will be accomplished in Ciechanow or in Warszawa.”

Having heard this, Danusia seized “the lord” by his knees ; then caught the knightly insignia with one hand and the pot of porridge with the other, and rushed to the room where Zbyszko was lying. The princess, not wishing to lose the sight of their joy, followed her.

Zbyszko was very ill, but having perceived Danusia, he turned his pale face toward her and asked :

“Has the Czech returned ?”

“No matter about the Czech !” answered the girl. “I bring you better news than that. The lord has made you a knight and has sent you this by me.”

Having said this, she put beside him the girdle and the spurs. Zbyszko’s pale cheeks flushed with joy and astonishment, he glanced at Danusia and then at the spurs ; then he closed his eyes and began to repeat :

“How could he dub me a knight ?”

At that moment the princess entered, and he raised himself a little and began to thank her, because he guessed that her intervention had brought

such a great favor and bliss to him. But she ordered him to be quiet and helped Danusia to put his head on the pillows again. In the meanwhile, the prince, the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek, Mrokota and several other courtiers entered.

Prince Janusz waved his hand to signify that Zbyszko must not move; then having seated himself beside the bed, he said :

“ You know ! The people must not wonder that there is reward for good deeds, because if virtue remained without any reward, human iniquities would walk without punishment. You did not spare your life, but with peril to yourself defended us from dreadful mourning ; therefore we permit you to don the knightly girdle, and from this moment to walk in glory and fame.”

“ Gracious lord,” answered Zbyszko. “ I would not spare even ten lives——”

But he could not say anything more, on account of his emotion ; and the princess put her hand on his mouth because the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek did not permit him to talk. The prince continued further :

“ I think that you know the knightly duties and that you will wear the insignia with honor. You must serve our Saviour, and fight with the *starosta* of hell. You must be faithful to the anointed lord, avoid unrighteous war and defend innocence against oppression ; may God and His Holy Passion help you ! ”

“ Amen ! ” answered the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek.

The prince arose, made the sign of the cross over Zbyszko and added :

“ And when you recover, go immediately to Ciechanow, where I will summon Jurand,”

CHAPTER VIII

THREE days afterward, a woman arrived with the Hercynski balm and with her came the captain of the archers from Szczytno, with a letter, signed by the brothers and sealed with Danveld's seal; in that letter the Knights of the Cross called on heaven and earth as witnesses of the wrongs committed against them in Mazowsze, and with a threat of God's vengeance, they asked for punishment for the murder of their "beloved comrade and guest." Danveld added to the letter his personal complaint, asking humbly but also threateningly for remuneration for his crippled hand and a sentence of death against the Czech. The prince tore the letter into pieces in the presence of the captain, threw it under his feet and said:

"The grand master sent those scoundrels of Krzyzaks to win me over, but they have incited me to wrath. Tell them from me that they killed their guest themselves and they wanted to murder the Czech. I will write to the grand master about that and I will request him to send different envoys, if he wishes me to be neutral in case of a war between the Order and the Krakowski king."

"Gracious lord," answered the captain, "must I carry such an answer to the mighty and pious brothers?"

"If it is not enough, tell them then, that I consider them dog-brothers and not honest knights."

This was the end of the audience. The captain

went away, because the prince departed the same day for Ciechanow. Only the "sister" remained with the balm, but the mistrustful *ksiondz* Wyszoniak did not wish to use it, especially as the sick man had slept well the preceding night and had awakened without any fever, although still very weak. After the prince's departure, the sister immediately sent a servant for a new medicine apparently—for the "egg of a basilisk"—which she affirmed had the power to restore strength even to people in agony; as for herself, she wandered about the mansion; she was humble and was dressed in a lay dress, but similar to that worn by members of the Order; she carried a rosary and a small pilgrim's gourd at her belt. She could not move one of her hands. As she could speak Polish well, she inquired from the servants about Zbyszko and Danusia, to whom she made a present of a rose of Jericho; on the second day during Zbyszko's slumber, while Danusia was sitting in the dining-room, she approached her and said:

"May God bless you, *panienko*. Last night after my prayers I dreamed that there were two knights walking during the fall of the snow; one of them came first and wrapped you in a white mantle, and the other said: 'I see only the snow, and she is not here,' and he returned."

Danusia who was sleepy, immediately opened her blue eyes curiously, and asked:

"What does it mean?"

"It means that the one who loves you the best, will get you."

"That is Zbyszko!" said the girl.

"I do not know, because I did not see his face; I only saw the white mantle and then I awakened;

the Lord Jesus sends me pain every night in my feet and I cannot move my hand."

"It is strange that the balm has not helped you any!"

"It cannot help me, *panienko*, because the pain is a punishment for a sin; if you wish to know what the sin was, I will tell you."

Danusia nodded her little head in sign that she wished to know; therefore the "sister" continued:

"There are also servants, women, in the Order, who, although they do not make any vows, and are allowed to marry, are obliged to perform certain duties for the Order, according to the brothers' commands. The one who meets such favor and honor, receives a pious kiss from a brother-knight as a sign that from that moment she is to serve the Order with words and deeds. Ah! *panienko*!—I was going to receive that great favor, but in sinful obduracy instead of receiving it with gratitude, I committed a great sin and was punished for it."

"What did you do?"

"Brother Danveld came to me and gave me the kiss of the Order; but I, thinking that he was doing it from pure license, raised my wicked hand against him——"

Here she began to strike her breast and repeated several times:

"God, be merciful to me, a sinner!"

"What happened then?" asked Danusia.

"Immediately my hand became motionless, and from that moment I have been crippled. I was young and stupid—I did not know! But I was punished. If a woman fears that a brother of the Order wishes to do something wicked, she must

leave the judgment to God, but she must not resist herself, because whosoever contradicts the Order or a brother of the Order, that one will feel God's anger!"

Danusia listened to these words with fright and uneasiness; the sister began to sigh and to complain.

"I am not old yet," said she; "I am only thirty years old, but besides the hand, God has taken from me my youth and beauty."

"If it were not for the hand," said Danusia, "you need not complain."

Then there was silence. Suddenly the sister, as if she had just remembered something, said:

"I dreamed that some knight wrapped you with a white mantle on the snow. Perhaps it was a Krzyzak! They wear white mantles."

"I want neither Krzyzaks nor their mantles," answered the girl.

But further conversation was interrupted by the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek, who entering the room, nodded to Danusia and said:

"Praise God and come to Zbyszko! He has awakened and has asked for something to eat. He is much better."

In fact it was so. Zbyszko was a great deal better, and the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek was almost sure that he would recover, when an unexpected accident upset all his expectations. There came envoys from Jurand with a letter to the princess, containing dreadful news. In Spychow, half of Jurand's *grodek* had been burned, and he himself during the rescue was struck by a beam. It is true that the *ksiondz* Kaleb, who wrote the letter, said that Jurand would recover, but that the

sparks had burned his remaining eye so badly that there was very little sight left in it, and he was likely to become blind.

For that reason, Jurand asked his daughter to come to Spychow as soon as possible, because he wished to see her once more, before he was entirely encompassed by darkness. He also said that she was to remain with him, because even the blind, begging on the roads, had some one to lead them by the hand and show them the way; why should he be deprived of that pleasure and die among strangers? There were also humble thanks for the princess, who had taken care of the girl like a mother, and finally Jurand promised that, although blind, he would go to Warszawa once more, in order to fall at the lady's feet and beg her for further favor for Danusia.

The princess, when the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak had finished reading the letter, could not say a word for some time. She had hoped that when Jurand came to see his daughter and her, she would be able by the prince's and her own influence to obtain his consent for the wedding of the young couple. But this letter, not only destroyed her plans, but in the meanwhile deprived her of Danusia whom she loved as well as she did her own children. She feared that Jurand would marry the girl to some neighbor of his, so as to spend the rest of his life among his own people. It was no use to think about Zbyszko—he could not go to Spychow, and then who knew how he would be received there. The lady knew that Jurand had refused to give him Danusia; and he had said to the princess herself that on account of some secret reason, he would never consent to their marriage.

Therefore in great grief she ordered the principal messenger to be brought to her, as she desired to ask him about the Spychowski misfortune, and also to learn something about Jurand's plans.

She was very much surprised when a stranger came instead of the old Tolima, who used to bear the shield after Jurand and usually carried his messages; but the stranger told her that Tolima had been seriously injured in the last fight with the Germans and that he was dying in Spychow; Jurand being very ill himself, asked her to send his daughter immediately, because every day he saw less and less, and perhaps in a few days he would become blind. The messenger begged the princess to permit him to take the girl immediately after the horses were rested, but as it was already dusk she refused; especially as she did not wish to distress Zbyszko and Danusia by such a sudden separation.

Zbyszko already knew all about it, and he was lying like one stricken by a heavy blow; when the princess entered, and wringing her hands, said from the threshold:

"We cannot help it; he is her father!" he repeated after her like an echo: "We cannot help it——" then closed his eyes, like a man who expects death immediately.

But death did not come; but in his breast there gathered a still greater grief and through his head ran sad thoughts, like the clouds which driven by the wind, obstruct the sun and quench all joy in the world. Zbyszko understood as well as the princess did, that if Danusia were once in Spychow, she would be lost to him forever. Here everybody was his friend; there Jurand might even refuse to

receive him, or listen to him, especially if he were bound by a vow, or some other unknown reason as strong as a religious vow. Then how could he go to Spychow, when he was sick and hardly able to move in bed. A few days ago, when the prince rewarded him with the golden spurs, he had thought that his joy would conquer his illness, and he had prayed fervently to God to be permitted to soon rise and fight with the Krzyzaks; but now he had again lost all hope, because he felt that if Danusia were not at his bedside, then with her would go his desire for life and the strength to fight with death. What a pleasure and joy it had been to ask her several times a day: "Do you love me?" and to see how she covered her smiling and bashful eyes, or bent and answered: "Yes, Zbyszko."

But now only illness, loneliness and grief would remain, and the happiness would depart and not return.

Tears shone in Zbyszko's eyes and rolled slowly down on his cheeks; then he turned to the princess and said:

"Gracious lady, I fear that I shall never see Danusia again."

And the lady being sorrowful herself, answered:

"I would not be surprised if you died from grief; but the Lord Jesus is merciful."

After a while, however, wishing to comfort him, she added:

"But if Jurand die first, then the tutelage will be the prince's and mine, and we will give you the girl immediately."

"He will not die!" answered Zbyszko.

But at once, evidently some new thought came to

his mind, because he arose, sat on the bed and said in a changed voice :

“ Gracious lady——”

At that moment Danusia interrupted him ; she came crying and said from the threshold :

“ Zbyszku ! Do you know about it already ! I pity *tatus*, but I pity you also, poor boy ! ”

When she approached, Zbyszko encircled his love with his well arm, and began to speak :

“ How can I live without you, my dearest ? I did not travel through rivers and forest, I did not make the vow to serve you, that I might lose you. Hej ! sorrow will not help, crying will not help, bah ! even death itself, because even if the grass grow over me, my soul will not forget you, even if I am in the presence of the Lord Jesus or of God the Father—I say, there must be a remedy ! I feel a terrible pain in my bones, but you must fall at the lady’s feet, I cannot—and ask her to have mercy upon us.”

Danusia hearing this, ran quickly to the princess’ feet, and having seized them in her arms, she hid her face in the folds of the heavy dress ; the lady turned her compassionate but also astonished eyes to Zbyszko, and said :

“ How can I show you mercy ? If I do not let the child go to her sick father, I will draw God’s anger on myself.”

Zbyszko who had been sitting on the bed, slipped down on the pillows and did not answer for a time because he was exhausted. Slowly, however, he began to move one hand toward the other on his breast until he joined them as in prayer.

“ Rest,” said the princess ; “ then you may tell

me what you wish ; and you, Danusia, arise and release my knees."

"Relax, but do not rise ; beg with me," said Zbyszko.

Then he began to speak in a feeble and broken voice :

"Gracious lady—Jurand was against me in Krakow—he will be here also, but if the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek married me to Danusia, then—afterward she may go to Spychow because there is no human power that could take her away from me——"

These words were so unexpected to the princess, that she jumped from the bench ; then she sat down again and as if she had not thoroughly understood about what he was talking, she said :

"For heaven's sake ! the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek."

"Gracious lady ! Gracious lady !" begged Zbyszko.

"Gracious lady !" repeated Danusia, embracing the princess' knees.

"How could it be done without her father's permission ?"

"God's law is the stronger !" answered Zbyszko.

"For heaven's sake !"

"Who is the father, if not the prince ? Who is the mother, if not you, gracious lady ?"

And Danusia added :

"Dearest *matuchna* !"¹

"It is true, that I have been and am still like a mother to her," said the princess, "and Jurand received his wife from my hand. It is true ! And if you are once married—everything is ended. Per-

¹ Diminutive of mother ; it is a charming expression. The Polish language, like the Italian, has a great variety of diminutives.

haps Jurand will be angry, but he must be obedient to the commands of the prince, his lord. Then, no one need tell him immediately, only if he wanted to give the girl to another, or to make her a nun; and if he has made some vow, it will not be his fault that he cannot fulfill it. Nobody can act against God's will—perhaps it is God's will!”

“It cannot be otherwise!” exclaimed Zbyszko.

But the princess, still very much excited, said:

“Wait, I must collect my thoughts. If the prince were here, I would go to him immediately and would ask him: ‘May I give Danusia to Zbyszko or not?’ But I am afraid without him, and there is not much time to spare, because the girl must go to-morrow! Oh, sweet Jesus, let her go married—then there will be peace. But I cannot recover my senses again—and then I am afraid of something. And you Danusia, are you not afraid?—Speak!”

“I will die without that!” interrupted Zbyszko.

Danusia arose from the princess' knees; she was not only really on confidential terms with the good lady, but also much spoiled by her; therefore she seized her around the neck, and began to hug her.

But the princess said:

“I will not promise you anything without Father Wyszoniek. Run for him immediately!”

Danusia went after Father Wyszoniek; Zbyszko turned his pale face toward the princess, and said:

“What the Lord Jesus has destined for me will happen; but for this consolation, may God reward you, gracious lady.”

“Do not bless me yet,” answered the princess, “because we do not know what will happen. You

must swear to me upon your honor, that if you are married, you will not prevent the girl from going to her father, or else you will draw his curse upon her and yourself.

"Upon my honor!" said Zbyszko.

"Remember then! And the girl must not tell Jurand immediately. We will send for him from Ciechanow, and make him come with Danusia, and then I will tell him myself, or I will ask the prince to do it. When he sees that there is no remedy, he will consent. He did not dislike you?"

"No," said Zbyszko, "he did not dislike me; perhaps he will be pleased when Danusia is mine. If he made a vow, it will not be his fault that he could not keep it."

The conversation was interrupted by the entrance of Danusia and the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak. The princess immediately asked his advice and began to tell him with great enthusiasm about Zbyszko's plan; but as soon as he heard about it, he made the sign of the cross from astonishment and said:

"In the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Ghost! How can I do it? It is advent!"

"For God's sake! That is true!" exclaimed the princess.

Then there was silence; only their sorrowful faces showed what a blow those words of the *ksiondz* Wyszoniak were to all of them.

Then he said after a while:

"If you had a dispensation, then I would not oppose it, because I pity you. I would not ask for Jurand's permission, because our gracious lady consents and vouches for the prince's consent—well! they are the mother and the father for the

whole of Mazowsze. But without a bishop's dispensation, I cannot. Bah! if the *ksiondz* bishop of Kurdwanow were with us, he would not refuse a dispensation, although he is a severe priest, not like his predecessor, Bishop Mamphiolus, who used always to answer: *Bene! Bene!*”

“Bishop Jacob of Kurdwanow loves the prince and myself very much,” said the lady.

“Therefore I say he would not refuse a dispensation, more so because there are some reasons for one: the girl must go to her father and that young man is ill and may die—Hm! *in articulo mortis!* But without a dispensation I cannot.”

“I could obtain it afterward from Bishop Jacob; no matter how severe he may be, he will not refuse me this favor. I guarantee, he will not refuse,” said the princess.

To this the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek who was a good and easy man, replied:

“A word of the Lord's anointed is a great word. I am afraid of the *ksiondz* bishop, but that great word! Then the youth could promise something to the cathedral in Plock. Well, as long as the dispensation will not come, there will be a sin—and nobody's but mine. Hm! It is true that the Lord Jesus is merciful and if any one sin not for his own benefit, but on account of mercy for human misery, he forgives more easily! But there will be a sin, and suppose the bishop should refuse, who will grant me pardon?”

“The bishop will not refuse!” exclaimed Princess Anna.

And Zbyszko said:

“That man Sanderus, who came with me, has pardons ready for everything.”

The *ksiondz* Wyszoniek probably did not believe entirely in Sanderus' pardons; but he was glad to have even a pretext so that he could help Danusia and Zbyszko, because he loved the girl, whom he had known from childhood. Then he remembered that at the worst, he would be punished with church penitence, therefore turning toward the princess he said:

"It is true, I am a priest, but I am also the prince's servant. What do you command, gracious lady?"

"I do not wish to command but to beg," answered the lady. "If that Sanderus has pardons——"

"Sanderus has. But there is the question about the bishop. He is very severe with the canons in Plock."

"Do not be afraid of the bishop. I have heard that he has forbidden the priest to carry swords and crossbows and has forbidden different licenses, but he has not forbidden them to do good."

The *ksiondz* Wyszoniek raised his eyes and his hands, and said:

"Let it be according to your wish!"

At this word, joy filled their hearts. Zbyszko again sat on the bed and the princess, Danusia and Father Wyszoniek sat round it and began to plan how they should act.

They decided to keep it secret so that not a soul in the house should know anything about it; they also decided that Jurand must not know until the princess herself told him in Ciechanow about everything.

In the meanwhile, the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek was to write a letter from the princess to Jurand and ask

him to come to Ciechanow, where he could find better medicine and where he will not weary. Finally, they decided, that Zbyszko and Danusia will go to confession, that the wedding ceremony will be performed during the night, when everybody will retire.

The thought came to Zbyszko to have his shield-bearer, the Czech, as a witness of the wedding; but he gave up the idea when he remembered that he had received him from Jagienka. For a moment she stood in his memory as though present, so that it seemed to him that he saw her blushing face and her eyes full of tears, and heard her pleading voice say: "Do not do that! Do not repay me with evil for good, nor with misery for love!" Then at once great compassion for her seized him, because he felt that a great wrong would be done her, after which she would find no consolation under the roof of Zgorzelice, nor in the depths of the forest, nor in the fields, nor in the abbot's gifts, nor in Cztan and Wilk's courtship. Therefore he said inwardly: "Girl, may God give you the best of everything; for although I am willing to bend the sky for you, I cannot." In fact, the thought that he could not help it, immediately brought him relief, and tranquillity returned, so that immediately he began to think only about Danusia and the wedding.

But he was obliged to call the Czech to help him; therefore although he determined not to say a word to him about what was going to happen, he summoned him and said:

"To-day I am going to confession as well as to the Lord's table; therefore you must dress me in my best clothing as if I were going to the king's palace."

The Czech was a little afraid and began to look into his face ; Zbyszko having noticed this, said :

“ Do not be alarmed, people do not go to confession only when they expect to die ; the holy days are coming, Father Wyszoniak and the princess are going to Ciechanow, and then there will be no priest nearer than in Przasnysz.”

“ And are you not going ? ” asked the shield-bearer.

“ If I recover my health, then I will go ; but that is in God’s hands.”

Therefore the Czech was quieted ; he hurried to the chests, and brought that white *jaka* embroidered with gold, in which the knight used to dress for great occasions, and also a beautiful rug to cover the bed ; then having lifted Zbyszko, with the help of the two Turks, he washed him, and combed his long hair on which he put a scarlet zone ; finally he placed him on red cushions, and satisfied with his own work, said :

“ If Your Grace were able to dance, you could celebrate even a wedding ! ”

“ It will be necessary to celebrate it without dancing,” answered Zbyszko, smiling.

In the meanwhile the princess was also thinking how to dress Danusia, because for her womanly nature it was a question of great importance, and under no consideration would she consent to have her beloved foster child married in her everyday dress. The servants who were also told that the girl must dress in the color of innocence for confession, very easily found a white dress, but there was great trouble about the wreath for the head. While thinking of it, the lady became so sad that she began to complain ;

“ My poor orphan, where shall I find a wreath of rue for you in this wilderness ? There is none here, neither a flower, nor a leaf ; only some green moss under the snow.”

And Danusia, standing with loosened hair, also became sorrowful, because she wanted a wreath ; after awhile, however, she pointed to the garlands of immortelles, hanging on the walls of the room, and said :

“ We must weave a wreath of those flowers, because we will not find anything else, and Zbyszko will take me even with such a wreath.”

The princess would not consent at first, being afraid of a bad omen ; but as in this mansion, to which they came only for hunting, there were no flowers, finally the immortelles were taken. In the meanwhile, Father Wyszoniak came, and received Zbyszko's confession ; afterwards he listened to the girl's confession and then the gloomy night fell. The servants retired after supper, according to the princess' order. Some of Jurand's men lay down in the servants' room, and others slept in the stables with the horses. Soon the fires in the servants' room became covered with ashes and were quenched ; finally everything became absolutely quiet in the forest house, only from time to time the dogs were heard howling at the wolves in the direction of the wilderness.

But in the princess', Father Wyszoniak's and Zbyszko's rooms, the windows were shining, throwing red lights on the snow which covered the court-yard. They were waiting in silence, listening to the throbbing of their own hearts—uneasy and affected by the solemnity of the moment which was coming. In fact, after midnight, the princess took

Danusia by the hand and conducted her to Zbyszko's room, where Father Wyszoniek was waiting for them. In the room there was a great blaze in the fireplace, and by its abundant but unsteady light, Zbyszko perceived Danusia; she looked a little pale on account of sleepless nights; she was dressed in a long, stiff, white dress, with a wreath of immortelles on her brow. On account of emotion, she closed her eyes; her little hands were hanging against the dress, and thus she appeared like some painting on a church window; there was something spiritual about her; Zbyszko was surprised when he saw her, and thought that he was going to marry not an earthly, but a heavenly being. He still thought this when she kneeled with crossed hands to receive the communion, and having bent her head, closed her eyes entirely. In that moment she even seemed to him as if dead, and fear seized his heart. But it did not last long because, having heard the priest's voice repeat: "*Ecce Agnus Dei*," his thoughts went toward God. In the room there were heard only the solemn voice of Father Wyszoniek: "*Domine, non sum dignus*," and with it the crackling of the logs in the fireplace and the sound of crickets playing obstinately, but sadly, in the chinks of the chimney. Outdoors the wind arose and rustled in the snowy forest, but soon stopped.

Zbyszko and Danusia remained sometime in silence; the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek took the chalice and carried it to the chapel of the mansion. After a while he returned accompanied by Sir de Lorche, and seeing astonishment on the faces of those present, he placed his finger on his mouth, as if to stop the cry of surprise, then he said:

"I understand; it will be better to have two

witnesses of the marriage ; I warned this knight who swore to me on his honor and on the relics of Aguisgranum to keep the secret as long as necessary."

Then Sir de Lorche first kneeled before the princess, then before Danusia ; then he arose and stood silently, clad in his armor, on which the red light of the fire was playing. He stood motionless, as if plunged in ecstasy, because for him also, that white girl with a wreath of immortelles on her brow seemed like the picture of an angel, seen on the window of a Gothic cathedral.

The priest put her near Zbyszko's bed and having put the stole round their hands, began the customary rite. On the princess' honest face the tears were dropping one after another ; but she was not uneasy within, because she believed she was doing well, uniting these two lovely and innocent children. Sir de Lorche kneeled again, and leaning with both hands on the hilt of his sword, looked like a knight who beholds a vision. The young people repeated the priest's words : " I . . . take you . . . " and those sweet quiet words were accompanied again by the singing of the crickets in the chimney and the crackling in the fireplace. When the ceremony was finished, Danusia fell at the feet of the princess who blessed them both, and finally intrusted them to the tutelage of heavenly might ; she said to Zbyszko :

" Now be merry, because she is yours, and you are hers."

Then Zbyszko extended his well arm to Danusia, and she put her little arms round his neck ; for a while one could hear them repeat to each other :

" Danuska, you are mine ! "

“Zbyszku, you are mine!”

But soon Zbyszko became weak, because there were too many emotions for his strength, and having slipped on the pillow, he began to breathe heavily. But he did not faint, nor did he cease to smile at Danusia, who was wiping his face which was covered with a cold perspiration, and he did not stop repeating:

“Danuska, you are mine!” to which every time she nodded her fair head in assent.

This sight greatly moved Sir de Lorche, who declared that in no other country had he seen such loving and tender hearts; therefore he solemnly swore that he was ready to fight on foot or on horseback with any knight, magician or dragon, who would try to prevent their happiness. The princess and Father Wyszoniak were witnesses of his oath.

But the lady, being unable to conceive of a marriage without some merriment, brought some wine which they drank. The hours of night were passing on. Zbyszko having overcome his weakness, drew Danusia to him and said:

“Since the Lord Jesus has given you to me, nobody can take you from me; but I am sorry that you must leave me, my sweetest berry.”

“We will come with *tatulo* to Ciechanow,” answered Danusia.

“If only you do not become sick—or—God may preserve you from some bad accident.—You must go to Spychow—I know! Hej! I must be thankful to God and to our gracious lady, that you are already mine—because we are married and no human force can break our marriage.”

But as this marriage was performed secretly

during the night and separation was necessary immediately afterward, therefore from time to time, not only Zbyszko, but everybody was filled with sadness. The conversation was broken. From time to time, also the fire was quenched and plunged all heads in obscurity. Then the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek threw fresh logs on the charcoal and when something whined in the wood, as happens very often when the wood is fresh, he said :

“ Penitent soul, what do you wish ? ”

The crickets answered him and the increasing flames which brought out from the shadow the sleepless faces, were reflected in Sir de Lorche’s armor, lighting in the meanwhile Danusia’s white dress and the immortelles on her head.

The dogs outside again began to howl in the direction of the forest, as they usually do, when they scent wolves.

As the hours of the night flew on, oftener there was silence ; finally the princess said :

“ Sweet Jesus ! We had better go to bed if we are going to sit like this after a wedding, but as it was determined to watch until morning, then play for us, my little flower, for the last time before your departure, on the little lute—for me and for Zbyszko.”

“ What shall I play ? ” asked she.

“ What ? ” said the princess. “ What else if not the same song which you sang in Tyniec, when Zbyszko saw you for the first time.”

“ Hej ! I remember—and shall never forget it,” said Zbyszko. “ When I heard that song somewhere else—I cried.”

“ Then I will sing it ! ” said Danusia.

And immediately she began to thrum on the lute; then, having raised her little head, she sang :

“If I only could get
The wings like a birdie,
I would fly quickly
To my dearest Jasiek!
I would then be seated
On the high enclosure;
Look, my dear Jasiulku,
Look on me, poor orphan.”

But at once her voice broke, her mouth began to tremble and from beneath the closed eyelids the tears began to flow down her cheeks. For a moment she tried not to let them pass the eyelashes, but she could not keep them back and finally she began to cry, exactly as she did the last time she sang that song to Zbyszko in the prison in Krakow.

“Danuska! what is the matter, Danuska?” asked Zbyszko.

“Why are you crying? Such a wedding!” exclaimed the princess. “Why?”

“I do not know,” answered Danusia, sobbing. “I am so sad! I regret Zbyszko and you so much.”

Then all became very sorrowful; they began to console her, and to explain to her that she was not going to remain in Spychow a long time, but that they would surely be with Jurand in Ciechanow for the holy days. Zbyszko again encircled her with his arm, drew her to his breast and kissed the tears from her eyes; but the oppression remained in all hearts, and thus the hours of night passed.

Finally from the court-yard there resounded such a sudden and dreadful noise, that all shivered. The princess, having rushed from the bench, exclaimed :

“For God’s sake. The sweeps of the wells! They are watering the horses!”

And the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek looked through the window, in which the glass balls were growing gray and said:

“The night grows white and the day is coming. *Ave Maria, gratia plena*——”

Then he left the room but having returned after a while, he said:

“The day breaks, but the day will be dark. Jurand’s people are watering their horses. Poor girl, you must be ready!”

The princess and Danusia began to cry very loudly and both, together with Zbyszko, began to lament, as simple people do when they have to separate; it was half lamenting and half singing, which flowed from full souls, in a natural way, as the tears flow from the eyes.

“Hej! there is no use of lamenting,
We must separate, my darling,
Farewell — hej!”

Zbyszko nestled Danusia for the last time on his breast and kept her for a long time, as long as he could breathe and until the princess drew her from him, in order to dress her for the journey.

In the meanwhile it was broad daylight.

In the mansion everybody was up and moving round. The Czech came to Zbyszko to ask about his health and to ascertain what were his orders.

“Draw the bed to the window,” said the knight to him.

The Czech drew the bed to the window, very easily; but he was surprised when Zbyszko told him to open it. He obeyed, however, only he covered his master with his own fur coat, because

it was cold outside, although cloudy, and snow was falling.

Zbyszko began to look; in the court-yard, through the flakes of the falling snow, one could see lights, and round them, on steaming horses, Jurand's people were standing. All were armed. The forest was entirely covered with the snow; one could hardly see the enclosures and the gate.

Danusia, all wrapped up in furs, rushed once more into Zbyszko's room; once more she put her arms around his neck and bade him farewell:

"Although I am going, still I am yours."

He kissed her hands, her cheeks and her eyes, and said:

"May God protect you! May God lead you! You are mine, mine until death!"

When they again separated them, he raised himself as much as he could, leaned his head on the window and looked out; consequently, through the flakes of the snow, as through a veil, he saw Danusia sitting in the sleigh, the princess holding her a long time in her arms, the ladies of the court kissing her and the *ksiondz* Wyszoniek making the sign of the cross for the journey. Before the departure, she turned once more toward him, stretched out her arms and exclaimed:

"Zbyszku, remain with God!"

"May God permit me to see you in Ciechanow!"

But the snow was falling abundantly, as though to deaden every sound, and to cover everything; therefore those last words came muffled to their ears, so that it seemed to each of them that they were already calling to each other from afar.

END OF PART THIRD.