

*with the translator's respect*  
April 1<sup>st</sup> 1887.

# OUR GRANDFATHER

A

## POLITICAL ALLEGORY;

BY

VITESLAV HALEK.

---

*"Why should the wisdom that destroyed the one  
Safeguard the many."*

---

Translated from the Czech by W. W. STRICKLAND, B.A., Trinity  
College, Cambridge.

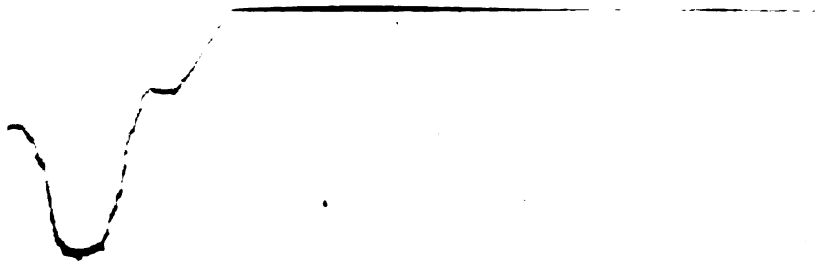
---

PRICE ONE SHILLING.

---

HULL.

LENG AND COMPANY, 15, SAVILE STREET.



.

..

5

# OUR GRANDFATHER:

A

## POLITICAL ALLEGORY;

BY

VITESLAV HALEK.

---

*“Why should the wisdom that destroyed the one  
Safeguard the many.”*

---

Translated from the Czech by W. W. STRICKLAND, B.A., Trinity  
College, Cambridge.

---

HULL:

LENG AND COMPANY, 15, SAVILE STREET.

1887.



## PREFACE.

---

Those who are quick to read between the lines will imagine that they have in this story an ingenious satire upon the Grand Old Man, and his attempt to effect the separation of England and Ireland. I do not think Halek had Mr. Gladstone in mind when he wrote it, because he died some ten years before that great statesman's last conversion, perversion, new departure, or whatever you choose to call it. But truth is eternal, and fits all cases.

THE TRANSLATOR.



# OUR GRANDFATHER.



## CHAPTER I.

IT has often been said to me that rural life is not a happily chosen subject for a story: that in the country uniformity prevails in life, in customs, in everything; and that the persons of the rural drama cannot interest us because there is no variety in them. If any of my readers hold such views, I must request them to suspend judgment until the end of my story. It is indeed, possible that the narrative will take us along unfrequented paths where the form of life is not so stirring as in the town. But yet man in essence is an exact copy of the citizen, for man is always interesting in so far as he is human; and he appreciates his good fortune just as little in the country as in the town; at the same time I do not wish to constrain my reader's judgment.

We were still "wee scraps" when our father took us to visit grandfather. Grandfather dwelt in a house about an hour's journey from ours. It was, then, a great event when father told us we were going there. Very wisely, he used always to tell us the week before, and though, to be sure, we were restless enough at all times, and each day tore our clothes, we were sure to be good children for the whole week if he told us where we were going the week after.

So then it was that we were to go to spend St Lawrence's festival with grandfather. This festival occurs at the beginning of August, when cocks begin to crow soon after midnight, and the sun still rises very early. But still earlier than those cocks did we children awake, and before the first cock had cock-a-doodled, we were already dressed ; and before the first ray of sunrise had shown itself, we were already seated, smart and tidy, before the manse, on the doorstep, congratulating ourselves that we were going to spend the festival at grandfather's.

Our parents slept in the room next to ours, and we had sneaked out so quietly that they had not the least idea of our secret preparations. How mother must have started when coming to wake us she found our bed empty and not a sign of us. We heard entreaties and outcries—mother ran from room to room, then about the courtyard, looking for us everywhere, at last even in the well, while we all the time nestled against one another like chickens, and scarcely breathed with fright lest mother should find us, and we, early as it was, should be punished, for there was already a great disturbance about us. And now it occurs to mother to look for us on the village green, to see whether she could find some trace of us. Opening the door she found us cuddled close together on the door-step. Mother almost smothered us with delight when she caught sight of us, and we told her that we wanted to set off that instant to the feast at grandfather's.

“But you cannot go without breakfast,” said she, leading us back again, and glowing with delight, because her dismal fears were so soon dispelled.

What did we understand about breakfast just then ?



We would have set off if need be at midnight, and of course grandmother would have given us breakfast as soon as we reached her house.

We helped mother to prepare breakfast—blew up the fire like young blacksmiths, only that breakfast might be ready the sooner; burnt our tongues with hot coffee only that that we might the sooner have breakfasted; and in general conducted ourselves solely with a view to be off and away as soon as possible.

At last we are off.

Our father was a pedagogue. He never allowed our minds to flag, and kept relating things to us that we were just capable of understanding. He did not evade our questions in his answers, as we so frequently see done; and if we had gone on asking questions till doomsday, he would have gone on answering till doomsday.

And thus he made up a story for us—how that grandmother was already on the look out for us—how that she was coming to meet us as we never saw her do before, with a plate of cakes in one hand and a plate of red cherries in the other—red cherries, which are so scarce. Yet further did we picture grandmother to ourselves. She must have something also in her pockets—a doll, sugar plums, &c. And finally, how could it be grandmother unless she had brought something also in her lap? We certainly did not understand how she could carry it all; but if it was our grandmother she must be able to contrive everything.

And so also in every woman whom we observed in the distance, we saw grandmother approaching even with the plates, even with her pockets full of goodies. Although

she was a quarter of an hour from us we saw to a hair everything, down to the least detail, just as if she was already present with us. She smiled at us, smoothed her grey locks, and just as she comes near to us takes us each by one hand and tells us what perhaps father did not the least know when we asked him. But what was our astonishment when in place of grandmother's tranquil face, we saw another—cold and wholly unknown to us. No! Such a one we could never love, not if she had all her pockets full, and two plates in each hand.

And now father had to explain to us how it was that *he* failed to discern at a distance that it was not our grandmother, while *we* discovered it the instant she had come the least bit nearer to us, and yet we did not know half of what father knew? Then he began to excuse himself and to say that he had made a mistake; but that yonder, see, it really was she who was just coming on the hill top. Children are easily contented as soon as their mind finds some new object of interest. And thus even we ourselves discovered once more with all the force of youthful imagination grandmother's tranquil face in the person who was approaching us.

But when even this person proved to be quite a stranger to us, father began to excuse himself, saying that no doubt her plates had fallen out of her hands in the village, and so that she had had to return to the house, and that no doubt we should see her as soon as we came into the village.

And certainly we did see her. Not, indeed, as we pictured her coming to meet us, but at home in the living room, about the oven. The first greeting put all questions

out of our heads, and it was only after a few minutes that we asked her why she did not come to meet us before, and she told us that she was on the point of setting out to look for us when we entered the hall. But she placed cakes and ripe cherries on the table for us without delay, and we reconnoitred her pockets, in which there was always something ready stowed away for us.

While we were at our meal, she took into her hands a plate from the range, and wiping it with her apron, kept continually balancing on tiptoe, just as if she was going to dance. This sort of dancing made her appear almost a young woman, and you always seemed to see it in her face when she told you anything of auld lang syne.

Grandfather was slightly lame of one foot, and he always sat in an arm chair, having this foot on a low stool. He wore the old-fashioned Bohemian dress of Manchester velveteen ; this he always had new at festival time, and never ceased to wear it until a new festival again changed it for another suit.

As this dress was always of a black colour it contrasted very strongly with his greyness. He always wore his hair cut short in front, but long behind, so that it hung down over the collar of his velveteen camisole.

We only concerned ourselves with grandfather when we had completely done with grandmother. Then only we went to him, told him about what we had learnt at school, who of us could make the best whistles, who won at ball, and similar things, at which grandfather always smiled. After that we all of us got a few coppers for sugar plums from him, and all at once it seemed to us that even grandfather had something in him which pleased us

children, though it was something totally different from what we liked in grandmother. But now we have already had quite enough of indoors. Hurrah then for the farm yard !

Grandfather had a large farm, and in the farm yard was more than enough of things we were longing to have a look at. Here we crept into the stable and observed how that the white mare had got well ; then again how that the dun cow had a little straw laid under her ; immediately after this we visited the rabbits and chivied them all over the court ; then we explored the pigeon cote, the granary, the hayloft, even the summer house, and before an hour had elapsed, we had made such friends with the grey haired dog Vorjeh that he performed a quite unique somerset for our benefit, and at the same time we put him through tricks which no one on the whole farm had given a thought to all the past year. And now the rest of our relations also gathered together—uncles, aunts, their children, and so on. We kissed the hands of all our older relations : this ceremony being repeated at every fresh arrival and called forth from each uncle a few coppers for goodies. We took it for granted that we only kissed their hands to shew them that they must carry small change at festival time.

After this we young people immediately divided into two camps ; the girls to themselves, that they might inspect one another's dresses, and to see how they had their hair plaited ; and we boys to ourselves, that we might take counsel about things of greater dignity.

Then began a comparing of notes as to who knew of any nests, how many eggs the chaffinch lays, how the partridge makes its nest, what nestlings have yellow beaks,

and what the nightingales' eggs look like. Some of us knew also already of cuckoos' nests—aye even of pies' nests, and such among us were worthy of special admiration.

Next in order came bird traps, which all of us knew how to make, and how proud was he who had already caught most birds, and how very high and mighty he who had succeeded in catching a tom-tit ! By doing this he had proved that he was a master of trapmaking, for the tom-tit will creep through the smallest crevice in a trap.

Grey-haired Vorjech also listened : and so we caught him by both ears and put him through tricks I had taught him here before the others had yet arrived at grandfather's.

This made us lively. After a little time we released Vorjech, and began to wrestle with one another.

In this way each had the best opportunity of showing what he had learnt since last festival, and which of us was "captain."

If sometimes on these occasions a smarter blow than usual fell, or if blood showed itself, that was no great matter. Besides, we knew that if the battle became serious our papas' would soon appear on the threshold and read us a homily, although we were allowed special freedom at festival time at grandfather's. And even if all our papas' had come with the warmest proofs of paternal affection, we knew that grandmother would take us under her wing, and indeed at festival time our consciences were very accommodating.

After battles people usually make peace that they may drub one another afresh, but in a different manner. So also did we. We ceased blood letting and divided ourselves into two camps to compete in notching pennies against a

wall. This game diverted us most of all, for it touched our pockets and our livelihood. And he who lost most was very glad if he had not vexed his father too much in the previous battle, for uncles don't give coppers twice and so father must make up deficiencies.

Having then quite exhausted in the forenoon all the amusement the farm-yard could furnish, we were not at all sorry when grandfather summoned us to dinner. On this occasion he always presented himself in company with his sons, our uncles and fathers, and reviewed us, his grandchildren. He who had a bruise concealed it; he who had lost sidled up to his father, and he who was safe and sound continued to play with Vorjech.

We distributed ourselves in the corners of the room and sat in silence. But even our fathers did not carry on the conversation, and grandfather who was a confirmed smoker, continually puffed away at his pipe, and did not seem to wish to notice us. Grandmother hovered about the kitchen range, plates and spoons jingled, and we increased the clatter with our forks. But she wouldn't so much as smile at us. A child has an instinctive feeling about the sort of look she wore. He very soon discovers when it is in earnest, and when it is feigned, and thus we children had no need to ask questions in order to discover that something very much out of the common was brewing at the old folks'.

After a short time grandfather said, "Come, set the dinner on the table."

Grandfather, be it understood, always nagged at grandmother. Grandmother began to excuse herself, saying that supper was not so easily served up as he seemed to

think, that she had still this and that root to peel, and soon grandfather began to puff his meerschaum yet more frequently, and smoked until he almost vanished from our eyes in a cloud of tobacco.

Father was wont to say that this augured nothing good with him.

After this they began to talk about one thing and another, but through it all it was evident that they only talked for the sake of talking, and such conversation never succeeds, because it does not come from the heart. All of them had some topic continually in his mind, which he kept trying to lead up to, and on that account kept saying "yes," and nodding and answering in a formal manner, until all again languished.

"What a piece of work the supper takes to-day," said grandfather again after a pause.

"You always have something to complain of," answered grandmother, and kept bustling about the kitchen grate.

"To be sure, let him learn to come in time," said grandfather, and began again to smoke furiously.

"It is just to-day you are aware that he is not coming; on other occasions you scarcely trouble yourself about him," answered grandmother.

"Let him hang about your neck like a spoilt child," said grandfather contemptuously.

"After all he is my son, and if I do not stand by him you certainly will not stand by him," she answered.

It was only then that we children noticed that we had not seen Uncle John. And about him the matter was.

Uncle John was two and twenty years old—of an age

then when a young man is generally on the look out for a bride, particularly if he has the prospect of a farm, and grandfather's farm was already as good as John's.

At this moment a servant from a farm in the neighbouring village came and saluted.

"Welcome, welcome! Krejza," said grandfather. "What is it you have brought us?"

"Young Mister John sends to say that he will not be at home to dinner; he has stopped with us for dinner," said Krejza, giving his message.

"Tell him if you please, Krejza, that if he doesn't come to dinner to-day he need not come home any more," said grandfather, almost perfectly coldly.

"Oh! no; don't take any message, there is no need. Why shouldn't he stay there for dinner," interposed grandmother.

"Because I do not wish it. Only be so good as to give my message just as I have told you," said grandfather yet more precisely.

Krejza departed.

My father and uncles began to excuse Uncle John.

"Well, well, I know what I am doing," answered grandfather curtly. "So now set on table; who is not here, perhaps will be more punctual another time."

Supper was served. Grandfather generally said grace aloud before beginning; but to-day it would have been more a curse than a prayer.

It was a strange repast. No one relished talking and no one relished eating either. To us children it seemed as if we sat at table more for penance; and if we had only known how to do it, we should have fled pell-mell to the



court-yard without caring a straw for the victuals. But both fathers and mothers when out visiting take a particular pride in their children behaving well at table. But just now it seemed to us that we dared, verily, ten times more boldly dance a hornpipe than sit quiet and well behaved at table.

After we had been seated thus about half an hour at table Uncle John entered the room.

All rose and greeted him in a friendly manner, but everything was carried on constrainedly, or rather with a kind of indescribable fear as if behind each greeting lurked a dagger. Only formal inquiries were made as to how he was, what he was doing, and so forth. Uncle John answered drily; on his brow was something like spite, and he fixed his eyes on the ground, and would not look at us. And then when we children greeted him he made no response to our salutation, and it never occurred to us that we could possibly have got from him any coppers for goodies.

He sat at table. Grandmother gave him soup on a plate, but Uncle John did not touch it.

“Lord save us,” said grandfather, with the short laugh which was natural to him, “and well-a-day! When a man cuts his mutton elsewhere he looses his appetite for what he gets at home.”

“Particularly with the seasoning one gets at home,” answered Uncle John, and leant his head on his hands.

Grandfather after that was silent, but his hands trembled. Indeed, he cut some meat and the knife slipped on the plate.

Grandfather certainly did not look at uncle, but all the same he saw what uncle was doing.

“ Did you learn to sit slouching thus at Kubista’s,” he said after a while, as if indifferently.

“ I cannot always be here merely to be stared at by you,” said Uncle John, as he got up from the table and left the room.

It was well that he left the room, and happy for him that grandfather hobbled on one foot. Grandfather was not aware certainly that he held a knife in his hand, but sure enough he would have hurried after Uncle John with the first thing he got hold of. And perhaps he would actually have run after him had not the bystanders withheld him.

Grandmother trembled all over, but she saw that speaking would be of no avail. But for us children the sitting was over so to say, just as if the word had been passed round, we dispersed in flight to the farm-yard, and troubled our heads no further about what was doing in the dining hall.

We just caught a glimpse of Uncle John as he passed out by the gate.

In the afternoon we went to spend the coppers we had collected from our uncles at the Hostinets k poutavé Babé (hostelry sign of the Pilgrim Grandmothers). Boys with plenty of goodies trouble themselves about nothing in the whole world. But for me I saw very well how Uncle John ordered song after song, and how he drank and danced more than anyone at the Hostinets.

In the evening everyone poured out of the alehouse—children first of all, after them the music, after the music Uncle John, accompanied by a bevy of gay young men, and last of all the old women. Uncle John, be it under-

stood, would have the musicians accompany him home, a thing which even the richest and wildest young men seldom do except in the morning.

As it was in the evening the whole village was afoot, Uncle John whistled, and the musicians had to accompany his whistling. Before grandfather's house stood all his guests. Grandfather trembled all over.

“And now play till they hear you in the neighbouring village at Kubista's” cried Uncle John, and whistled till they became alarmed about him.

They had to lead grandfather away lest he should forget himself and injure uncle, and they had to humour Uncle John somewhat in order to quiet him. The musicians were well paid with drink-money ; these went back to the hostinets and the people after them, but this affair which I am relating just as it happened was already in everybody's mouth.

They led Uncle John away to bed. And they locked fast his door that grandfather might not discover where his son slept.



## CHAPTER II.

Betuska, daughter of Kubista, fed poultry. First came the cock and chose himself a few nice morsels, but the best he gave to one hen who was before all dear to him. The other hens clucked and said that she was his wife. But for all that the others were not idle either. They jumped on to Betuska's hand, her shoulder, and into her lap, and complained to her as their good friend that the cock cheated them of their due by paying attention to only one of them, while after all it was they who laid all the eggs for the egg basket. Betuska was their judge; she cursed the cock for a reprobate and permitted the hens to take their corn out of her lap.

But these chickens were like children: order them with an affable countenance, and something for dainties and they do not desert you. Provided it kept coming they would most willingly have got all their food by themselves. Betuska called them to her with empty maws, and sent them away well primed. They hopped away clucking, sidled up to the cock, and kept on gabbling that they were not at all inferior to the cock's wife. They knew thus much about her, and even hinted at her infidelity, until the cock himself ceased to peck, his comb swelled, and he measured them with a look such as a choir master gives to naughty choir boys.

But, indeed, they were not long left to themselves. There flew down to them even the aristocratic birds who dwelt one story higher—there flew down to them the pigeons. Where there was something for the gullet the pigeons forgot about their exalted origin. Only one, a pouter, thereupon cooed something about ancestors, and how many of them used to wear stars. He himself, he said, was formed of better flesh, and better leaven than chickens and pullets, and only so far humbled himself as to eat with them, because he wished to show them honour. "Let 'em move out of his road," said he, "that he might sit down in the first place and show 'em who he was." And he took their chickens' food out of their very beaks, like a regular brigand, as Betuska had nicknamed him. And even then he was not satisfied, but disputed until the chickens allowed him some scrap or another which he then ordered to be carried away to the pigeon cote.

This was about the year 1848 : the chickens had not even then a notion of equal rights. They gave where they had anything to give, they always retreated out of the pigeons' way, and the pigeons took where there was anything to take. Now, however, things are already different.

But the pouter pigeon fared ill with his boastings. Wherever the pigeons betook themselves thither the democratic sparrows betook themselves, and showed up the wisdom of the pigeon cote without mercy. One sparrow in particular, who to all appearance might have been an editor, smirked at the first nobility until they ran after him. But this did not distract him from his purpose. He described how they, the sparrows, all dwelt in perfect equality,

whereas the pigeons settled by themselves, in order that they might look with scorn on other birds. "But a time must come," said he, "when they will have to look out for another nest" and the like—briefly he smoked them.

The other sparrows pecked and laughed in full chorus, until they toppled over with their wings flapping against their sides.

But this clique, which wished to live at the expense of others, did not end here. Hither came also the proletarian hog, which routs in the earth and wallows in filth. At one side sneaked and lurked the cat, on the look out to see whether she could not arrest one of those impudent sparrows. Then came the geese and paraded like ladies in long dresses, and after them the little golden goslings, fresh and lively, but the geese so took them in hand with drill and schooling, that they turned out nothing but geese after all. Out of their holes the rabbits crept, and licked their lips and showed their teeth, but hearing the sparrows gasconade, they got frightened and crept back again into their holes. Even the poetical butterfly also hovered here. But, of course, no one gave him a thought, for who could eat a butterfly?

Like a true sage, dog Danube behaved himself. He constantly had for his aim an objective standpoint, frisked and sported in the sun like a Diogenes, and stretched himself idly like a very Sultan; but he had the intellect of a doctor of letters, only that he kept it all to himself.

And above it all shone the old sun, and the heaven smiled like the face of Betuska.

Betuska spent many a happy hour with her poultry, and, as it were, they completely understood each other.

She understood housewifery too, excellently, but the

poultry seemed to grow dear to her very heart. So whenever she came to the farm-yard all hurried after her as if in procession. The sparrows gave notice on the eaves that Betuska was coming, and from time to time a cackling hen would exhort the rest to renewed efforts that they might at least approach their mistress.

The men might improve their master's fields and meadows as they liked ; to that Betuska did not oppose a single word ; but also it never occurred to anyone's mind to meddle with Betuska's occupation. And the poultry would have stared with astonishment had any one dared to say that Betuska did not take good care of them, or if at any time he had wished to effect some reform in the farm-yard.

Betuska had known Uncle John ever since the time when they first went to school. Even then the one tried to please the other as it might. If one child learnt its lessons well at school, it chiefly congratulated itself, because the other knew about it, and if Betuska was "mentioned" for good, Uncle John also tried his best to be mentioned that day also. If after school the boys played in a different place from the girls, Uncle John purposely let his ball roll to where the girls were playing, and he might be sure that Betuska would separate herself from her companions in order to give the ball into his hand. Thereupon she looked down, he pressed her hand, and the boys went on playing. Also Uncle John learnt to catch the ball like any other boy. He knew very well that not only the boys were looking at him, but that there were also two blue eyes watching, which sparkled with delight to see that he was the most skilful of the players. Even then the lads nick-

named him Kubista's boy. But Uncle John did not at all mind this ; rather it encouraged him to say to them, " When I am not Kubista's boy, then laugh at me."

Betuska was about three years younger than Uncle John, consequently in her ninth year when he ceased to go to school. Bitterly indeed they missed each other at first, for they were like children who had grown accustomed to one another. And Uncle John when a-field often looked towards the school, and if Betuska was ever distracted in school time, it was only when her thoughts fled to the field.

But even then they saw one another sufficiently often though they belonged to different villages. These villages were only about a ten minutes walk apart from one another, and grandfather's fields just bordered Kubista's fields. Thus it happened more than once, that the cattle of both fed on the same clover, because the young shepherd had so much to say to the young shepherdess.

They grew like plants from water. When Betuska was fifteen and Uncle John eighteen he already did not know where to find all the pictures with which he would compare those lovely blue eyes ; for the cornflowers appeared already pale and bleached. He did not know to what he should compare those beautiful thick raven locks ; for night was seldom so black as they were. And Betuska could think about none else except him ; for by day he smiled on her, and by night he was present to her dreams.

How he loved her ! He never let her stir sickle when she came to cut clover, and he was anywhere near. He took her sickle and before she expected it, he was in full swing. Betuska meantime sat at the boundary, and told



all about her domestic life, only pausing now and then to admire Uncle John's manly figure and athletic attitude, as though he had painted it for her to look at.

Uncle John was now nearly grown up. He went to hear the music, and as he belonged to a wealthy farm he treated those also who were less well off. But when ever a new polka appeared the musicians must take it at once to Uncle John, so that next Sunday he and Betuska might show all the village how it had to be danced. And what a lovely garland hung before Betuska's window on May day morning. It was certainly the best of all ; for only such has the honour of being taken down by the boys, and of being carried round from house to house—and for the last two years this garland had been uncle's giving, and had hung before Kubista's dwelling.

Of course Betuska returned the compliment. As soon as Great Night (Easter) drew near she had already chosen her best egg, and no one on the day of the festival had so finely and delicately painted an egg as Uncle John. There was a tiny heart, and round it tiny leaves and flowers, so that Uncle John was sorry to have to crack such a beautiful egg, which afforded great pleasure to Betuska.

Perhaps this was the reason she so loved her poultry, for she congratulated herself all the year on having afforded Uncle John so much pleasure.

The parents thwarted not their two children, who could thus meet openly, for they did so with their parents consent and knowledge.

Old Kubista and our grandfather had been comrades since their school days. They also served together during the French invasion, and together bore all the hardships

which that invasion brought upon the farmers. Moreover, one without the other would never undertake anything that they had not previously discussed together, and nothing pleased them more than to see their mutual predilection inherited by their children, and develop in these into true love.

Grandmother doated above measure on Uncle John, for he was the youngest son—who frequently gets a little spoiled. She it was who put into his hand all he had to give to Betuska, and if she had saved a few coppers in her household management she knew perfectly who would be pleased to have them.

But fortune began all at once to become overcast, so that perhaps it was never more destined to shine out clear and bright.

Kubista and grandfather were invited to the chase by the nobles and gentry—and they looked upon this as a special mark of distinction, for in those days even farmers scarcely knew the smell of powder, and if the father had not been a poacher the son would scarcely know how to load a gun, and where to pull the trigger.

But grandfather and Kubista were renowned all through the neighbourhood as good shots—granted, their hands shook slightly now—when they aimed with their flint-locks they never failed to hit. No considerable shooting party therefore took place in the neighbourhood without their being invited, and they always accepted the invitation with pleasure.

So then it was, once after a shooting party and the sportsmen had separated and were returning homewards, Kubista had just met grandfather, and forgot that he had

yet one barrel loaded, which he did not wish to take home in that state. When he saw grandfather he aimed at him in jest, on a level with his feet, drawing the trigger. As I say, he did it in jest, but it was a jest very much misplaced, and perhaps we may even call it besotted. Grandfather could never have believed that the barrel with which Kubista aimed would injure him, for he must have known that it was only a jest of his faithful friend. But just then there came upon him a kind of pang and sudden panic, and though after that Kubista immediately turned the gun from him and fired in the air, in quite a different direction, yet it seemed to grandfather as though he felt the charge in his foot.

“You have done me an ill turn Kubista,” said grandfather, and caught himself by the foot.

Kubista fancied this was merely a jest and laughed at grandfather.

But grandfather from that time forth never looked on him again. No entreaty, no protestation of Kubista could affect a reconciliation. He so hardened himself in his heart that he would not be moved from the belief that perhaps Kubista had fired at that place.

They separated. After that grandfather had a restless night. He started continually, for he fancied that Kubista was aiming at him, and these visions repeated themselves even in his waking hours. Briefly, grandfather after some days became so restless that he felt his foot in actual pain, was laid up with it and never recovered the full use of the limb to the day of his death.

Then after he had lain awake many a long night there developed in him so intense a hatred toward Kubista that

a year before he would have shuddered at the thought of. This hatred had no substantial foundation—at least none but what reason could overthrow. But just on that very account, grandfather reasoned too much about it, until he actually reasoned himself into his hatred.

Then to the general astonishment all learnt from grandfather that Kubista all his life had abused his friend's kindness, had cheated him, and even now wished to make capital out of him and prey on him. Moreover, as soon as he was somewhat better, grandfather began to set real disputes afoot between himself and Kubista about a certain boundary stone which divided their fields, and he ordered to have his boundary stone pushed forward, thus continually pouring oil on the fire.

At the beginning every one still imagined that it was only a jest, and Kubista, least of all of them imagined it to be in earnest. But when there now began to come to him official notices, and he had frequently to present himself to the law-court and there reply to questions about which he had never given a thought—then at last the affair assumed a more serious aspect and he began to think of effecting a reconciliation.

He actually did go to grandfather, but as soon as the latter saw him arrive in the courtyard he went off to his bedroom, locked the door, shut himself in, and nothing on earth would make him alter his mind. At this grandmother was in the highest degree distressed. She accompanied Kubista on his way home and urged him to pay no heed to things which originated solely from grandfather's state of health, saying that she trusted that these troubles would pass over before their children were old enough to

marry, for certainly her husband could not give them his blessing so long as his heart was so overflowing with hatred.

But in all this grandmother showed that she did not know grandfather well. Nothing in the world would induce him to give up an idea which he had once taken into his head and set his heart on.

So also he at once gave notice to Uncle John not to venture a single step in the direction of Kubista's, and gradually to wean himself from all thoughts of a marriage with Betuska.

Such commands, however, are more easy to speak than to execute. While things went well Uncle John and Betuska met openly, and when this was no more possible their meetings were clandestine. Grandfather was not so inventive in his hatred as these young people were in their mutual passion. And had he been a hundred times more watchful his vigilance would have been in vain. Here was it once more demonstrated that nothing can strengthen true passion more than the stimulus of opposition, and if Uncle John and Betuska met often before, they now met oftener than ever. He could not wait for morning to see at least the village in which she dwelt, and when he was a-field he could have dragged evening down to earth that he might meet Betuska at the boundary of their field.

It must be confessed, however, that their passion manifested itself in a somewhat changed form. What before flowed on in calm delight like a peaceful streamlet, now dashed along like the same streamlet after rain. Heretofore they kissed like turtle doves; now they wept their fill; now they stifled kisses in sobs, and soothed their sobs with kisses. And all the time they protested that

their passion was eternal, with hearts so sincere, so overflowing, that it never occurred to them that it could be doubted. Uncle John exhorted Betuska to constancy, and Betuska in fond despair protested that she would cease to breathe on the day when uncle should turn away from her. Here they came to the conviction that they were promised man and wife, that they were eternally predestined to make each other happy, and on this they built all their future plans.

When evening came and clover and corn fields were moist with dew, there fell and mingled with the dew, certainly more than one tear, from the blue eyes of Betuska. Then she said, poor thing, that it seemed to her that matters must take a bad turn, for she could not realise how she could figure as the dutiful happy daughter in a family where her own father was detested. Only the genuine love and affection which Uncle John felt for her could have succeeded in wholly quieting her, at least long enough to give her breathing time in her anguish.

Certainly the poultry noticed more than once, that Betuska did not show them the same predilection as formerly. She spread their chickens' food, it is true, but she did not talk to them : she remained pensive, and if her eyes had not been bedewed with tears, the chickens could not have the least conjectured why she was thinking of anything except themselves.

The chickens were also from this time most troublesome, and judgment fell upon them. They hopped on to her, fed themselves in her lap, and lodged mutual complaints against one another, till Betuska fairly drove them from her. The cock had a perfect torment with them.

But at our house, at grandfather's, it seemed as though contentment was completely banished to some foreign land ; it scarcely appeared there once a month, seldomer than the toyman, who stopped to ask whether we wished to buy aught of his wares. Grandfather remained obdurate, and at last no one dared to mention the name of Kubista. Moreover, it ended at last in Kubista winning, to grandfather's great grief, one side of the disputed boundary. Then every hope of reconciliation was at an end. He did not wait until some one began to talk about Kubista. No, he began himself ; in every way and on every occasion looking out for some pretext to abuse his late friend. He said that Kubista had bribed the officials, and by this had put the climax to his dishonesty, and that all his whole life, he had been thinking of nothing but how to cause him trouble and expense.

This stubborn immobility had something morbid, not to say spasmodic, in it, which was the more obvious to all because it was quite inconsistent with grandfather's age and his grey hairs.

Grandmother more than once wished to take upon herself the *rôle* of peacemaker. And then she reproached grandfather, telling him that he was greatly in fault to give himself to be so blinded in his old age by wrath, and that it became him now least of all when both he and Kubista stood with one foot in the grave.

But this only exasperated his anger to the highest degree. He upbraided her, telling her that she had no affection for him ; that she stood up for a man whose affection for himself was shown by his own lame foot ; that she depraved Uncle John by her fondness and

partiality ; that she ought never to have permitted him to begin those visits to Kubista's, and more to the same effect. Then no excuses were of any avail. Grandmother did not venture to remind him that he himself had once approved of their son paying court to Betuska.

And now grandfather became hardened not only against Kubista, but also to some extent against grandmother, and against his own son. He vowed that their only wish was to hurry him to the grave in order that they might conclude a match to which while living he would never give his consent. Aye, that he would even disinherit his son by will if he ventured to espouse the daughter of Kubista. Let the gentlemen at the office cancel this will or not, possibly they might, for Kubista had a happy knack of bribing, still he never swerved a hair's breadth from his fixed determination.

In this state grandfather was an object of pity, but not less so grandmother and Uncle John. Uncle John avoided his father where and how he could. Already he had given up coming to supper, and always urgently entreated grandmother to lay his meals somewhere in his bedroom. No doubt grandmother did so, but she had thus to bear alone the weight of grandfather's displeasure. Though what burden would not a mother bear seeing that by so doing she alleviated the distress of her own son ?

Sometimes it happened that grandfather did not see Uncle John for several days, so that he could not give him orders early as to how to arrange his work, and where to go in the field, and more than once grandfather had to look for his son in the field to consult with him about the farm. Once one of the servants was so ill-advised that one



evening when grandfather inquired for uncle, the servant replied. "He! Why he sleeps soundly at Kubista's, to be sure."

It was well that grandmother heard this. She scolded the servant thoroughly, and in order to prove to grandfather that the man had lied grossly, she led him to the summer-house where Uncle John now made his bed and had already gone to rest.

Grandfather bade grandmother leave him alone with their son. She immediately complied, but did not go far, for she dreaded lest grandfather should do some injury to his son.

But it was not so bad as that then.

Uncle John did indeed affect to be asleep, but when he heard that grandfather desired to speak with him he sat up and grandfather beside him.

"Listen, John," said grandfather, "to-morrow is the festival, do this for my sake, stop at home to-morrow for the festival that it may not appear to our guests, at least, that we cannot agree."

Uncle John objected that really on the morrow he had settled with Betuska to go to church with her, and perhaps she would fall ill if he did not keep his word.

Whereupon grandfather said, "Oh! well, I shall see whether you have yet any affection left for me, for I shall not speak to you twice."

Uncle John did not reply to this, and grandfather left him.

The next day was the festival about which I have narrated from the beginning.



### CHAPTER III.

About a week after this they had just sat down to supper at grandfather's, when a certain man entered having first knocked at the door. Uncle John was not at table.

A knocking at the door is almost an event at a farm house, all the more so at grandfather's, because the village lay far from any high road. Thus it occasioned no little surprise if ever a stranger stopped there to ask his way.

The neighbours here still lived almost in a state of nature. The slight stock of reading which they had learnt at school, would have been long ago forgotten had not the prayer books which they took with them to church on Sunday, been printed in plain black letters.

As for writing they remembered just so much that most of them could subscribe their names, he who could not manage it did not trouble his head about it, for three crosses set all right. Without these, indeed, they scarcely ever subscribed their names.

The learning which they called ready reading and running hand they considered to be the privileged possession of the nobility, while it was their business to look after tilth and pasturage.

A book never strayed into this village, and if one had wandered out of the road hither, it would have been like a deserted orphan. No one would have received it into his

house, nor even given it a night's lodging. The parents only bought those A B C's, first and second part, which they called reading books. To give money for any other sort of book would have been to squander money godlessly. Even at grandfather's the calendar formed the whole library ; grandmother always put a large pair of spectacles on her nose to read it in winter, and its dog-eared leaves always sufficed just so far that it held out till St. Vaclav's day (28th September) when it was changed for a new one.

Now, however, things are somewhat changed there, but not much.

It was fortunate for them that they possessed a good soil, for that was what specially affected them. At that time it had never occurred to any of them to improve their land ; if it did not deteriorate, still it did not get better.

The furniture which ancestors had used came without change to their descendants, who in turn left it unchanged.

Even when a more enlightened age opened for our people they did not pay much attention to it here ; it did not speak to them. This is the more curious, because in the surrounding parishes their neighbours comprehend everything that bears the name of progress, and in this respect stand in the van of all our peasantry.

It is plain enough, indeed, that not only the sea hath its islands : even human progress hath them, and only here and there where the sea is tossed by storms and wind, fall on these islands some benign drops, but only as it would seem by accident.

Then, as I was saying, a knocking at the door was here in reality an event, and grandmother started so that she trembled down to the hand in which she held her spoon.

The man who entered the room saluted very obsequiously and was nothing but bows. Grandmother took against him immediately, at first sight, and specially repugnant to her was his cynical piercing eye. But he impressed grandfather favourably.

Grandfather was a strange man. Come to him and lay your grievance before him frankly and openly that obtained much ; but let a man come obsequiously, fawn upon him, and praise him to the skies, and he obtained everything.

Grandmother must immediately lay yet another cover, and the new comer must sit down to table, which he did with many ceremonious excuses to the effect that he had once before been to our house.

All this pleased grandfather but it disgusted grandmother.

Grandfather asked who he was, whence he came, and the like. But Novak (for such was his name) so managed even in this that after many ceremonious phrases from their questions and his answers, they should learn little about him except his name.

A kind of secret horror came over grandmother as if this man had come to them as an enemy to the house, and she shuddered at every word he spoke as if it was measured out for their ruin.

After supper he began at last, and then grandmother at once recognised his colours.

“I’m told you have an unmarried son,” quoth he inquiringly.

“We have, we have,” answered grandfather, gasping for further questions.

“Is he going to marry?”

“And who ever thought about that yet,” broke in grandmother, not being able to restrain herself.

“And who has thought about it if not we,” said grandfather, taking her up as if he wished to rectify what she had spoiled.

Grandmother said no more, and went out of the house, and there outside she told Uncle John who had come, and what was the matter.

What further conversation Novak had with grandfather is of no consequence, but so much as this is certain, that when he departed grandfather shook hands with him, as if he was his best friend, and promised himself the pleasure of more frequent intercourse.

When Novak inquired for grandmother she shut herself in the kitchen and would not even see him.

Uncle John did not trouble him to wait. The candle still burnt on the table, and grandmother was still stewing something at the hearth.

Grandfather told grandmother that he should like her to leave them alone, and that she should soon hear all about it. But he said this with an air of affability and grandmother obeyed at once.

In this affability of his there lay something very engaging so that in that moment grandfather was again like himself, and what he formerly used to be.

Uncle John was struck by it.

And he began like a diplomatist.

First about the work that had been done that day, then about what was to be done to-morrow, until he approached to the very threshold of what he had in mind.

"You see, John dear," he said, "when you reflect upon your life it has always been something sacred to me. Thou wert yet a little child when we two grey-headed folk wept over thee for joy to see what a merry little thing thou wert ; so ready, too, to take hold of anything good. And thou wast worthy of the pride we felt in thee. Thou didst prosper in everything and wert everywhere well spoken of. I well believed that I was sowing good seed in thy heart. If it was not all good, forgive me, my will was good, and if all did not turn out as I expected, who is to blame for that ? We always sow in hope that the harvest will succeed, but also it does not always depend upon ourselves. Sometimes the sky grows overcast, and when I ponder everything from thy young days it does not yet come into my head that thou deliberately desirest my affliction. Tears of joy and tears of affliction are two quite different things, and a father is hardly reconciled to weep in affliction over his son. What I have instilled into thee, impart again to thy children, but recollect that it is very sickening to be no longer obeyed by a son, on whom one has lavished every attention, and, indeed, I should not wish that thou shouldst ever experience it in thy children."

Grandfather stood there almost meek and gentle. Even Uncle John felt that much, very much, of what had so long separated him from grandfather's heart fell from him all at once. Those remembrances of early life, of that family union and that peace which had never been disturbed, awakened in him an eager longing to win back that peace which had been banished from their home as if by enchantment.

A man has moments when he slackens in his opposition. The harsher characteristics of those against whom we

struggle disappear, and there emerge in place of them better sides to which we had been blind for many a long day. This relaxation of mind is, in fact, a pause, and in moments of repose a man makes plans. If in such moments he should all at once stand hand in hand with his opponent, perhaps he would then and there give his hand in reconciliation.

As I say these moments are moments of rest and reconciliation. Sometimes, however, opposition slackens in them only that it may afterwards exhibit itself with new force, and develop to a truly amazing degree.

Uncle John did now slacken in his opposition. Sometimes a child takes a weapon out of our hands which we would not have surrendered before for all the world.

Grandfather disarmed Uncle John by his moderation ; he was meek and gentle as a child.

“Do you really think you cannot give up Betuska?” inquired grandfather, after a pause, during which he narrowly observed his son.

Grandfather’s voice almost quavered.

“Oh, father, have you called me to you only to demand this?” answered Uncle John, almost with anguish.

“Come, I did not wish to hurt your feelings, and you see that we separate in good part.”

Uncle John listened submissively.

“You think that Betuska really loves you.”

“As surely as I believe in God,” answered uncle.

“See, now, I do not wish to dissipate this belief. If you think you are acting rightly settle it with your own conscience. Only one thing I implore of you. If you are to undertake the farm you will require a wife who is a good

manager. For my part I do not wish to detract from Betuska, or suggest that she could not undertake our household. But yet there can be no harm in looking elsewhere also, in order that you may compare. In looking elsewhere, you by no means fetter yourself, and if you are convinced then at all events you act from conviction."

Uncle John saw what grandfather was aiming at.

"The Horakoffs, of Brizoff, begged us to send you to see them. I hear their daughter is pretty, and with expectations ; if you do not like her you need not take her."

"O, father, by everything in the world I implore do not tempt me so cruelly," cried Uncle John with clasped hands.

"Nay, nay, I do not intend anything so bad as you seem to think. But about this one girl I pray you to listen to me, in order that I may see whether my grey hairs have yet any respect paid to them by you. Go then to see her. I leave your will entirely free. I do not the least fetter you ; but only about this one thing, I pray you. If you are not suited there you may then do as you like. And if you still wish it you may then take—even Betuska."

This last word grandfather scarcely pronounced at all—his voice was as it were broken.

But Uncle John did not oppose his will. It appeared to him that this road was open to him in order that by it he might win Betuska. A moment before he had not the least idea that he was so near the realization of what was the single wish of his soul.

Uncle John kissed grandfather's hand, and grandfather felt that on it fell a tear. "I shall go there," he said, and went out of the room.



In appearance all was now again at peace at grandfather's, and reconciliation, as it were, now drew them all to one another.

When Novak departed from grandfather's he betook himself by a direct road to Kubista's. I do not know whether he did this by an impulse of his own, or whether grandfather had given him some hint. But this is certain that Novak was so crafty that he managed to extort everything from grandfather which might have endangered the success of his conspiracy.

Such people do everything for the sake of gain, and from the like motives pervert young people to passion, worse than in the olden times they perverted the barbarians to faith.

At Kubista's Novak again introduced himself as before with humble bows, flattery, and subtle speeches, and his eyes flashed from side to side like the sting of a wasp.

There is no need of the horse's hoof, and of horns on the forehead for a man to think, speak, and act, like a very devil.

Novak did not inquire for the daughter, for he at once recognised Betuska, when her mother signed to her to put bread and butter on the table.

"Thank you, kindly, I will not eat ; in fact, I have just risen from table." And here he mentioned the name of grandfather, and said he had dined with him.

He was not at fault in mentioning grandfather's name. By so doing he so far constrained Betuska at least to his purpose that she wished to listen to him. Passion is not particular about the messenger, but is very observant of the message.

Then Novak began jestingly to speak about betrothals, and weddings, and what a grand wedding had but lately been arranged by him, and how people thanked him wherever he went, and said he was like a father to young people ; and indeed they almost everywhere called him father ; and he ran on in the like strain about good deeds of his own that would have been sufficient to make a man glorious to the third generation.

“ Oh ! ho ! little daughter,” he said, as if it slipped his tongue, and blinked at Betuska’s mother in a particular way which is vulgarly called “ tipping the wink.”

Her mother smiled slightly, and Kubista said “ Come, Betuska, what do you say to that.” But he said it in a jesting tone of voice, and not as though he had anything in his mind.

“ I have a husband on hand,” said Novak, and thereupon he snapped the fingers of his right hand, “ of regular habits, *comme il faut*, spruce as a cedar, and with plenty of these.”

And he slapped the pocket in which his money jingled.

“ Perhaps I might bring him to you next Sunday,” said Novak aiming straight to his purpose.

Betuska, seeing that he really meant something stayed in the room, and with imploring eyes looked at her father and mother.

“ Come, come, you know,” said Kubista, “ that might have been ; but then you know, that cannot be, for there is a certain hitch in the affair.”

Could anything in the world have surprised Novak ?

Novak put on an expression of countenance just as if he wished to say that he thought as much all along, but his

eyes darkened with a peculiar venom, and around his mouth just such a sneer formed itself as though he wished to say frankly, "How I pity you for trusting him."

And out loud he said—

"Perhaps some family friend, eh?"

"Possibly something of the kind," answered Kubista.

"Hm!" sneered Novak. "There is a hitch in this affair also."

All thought that Novak alluded to the well-known relation of old Kubista to grandfather, and paid no further attention to what he had said.

But Novak perceiving that they failed to catch his real drift, put on a fresh grimace, as though he had hit upon just the right trump.

"For John is making friends somewhere else."

"That is a lie!" cried out Betuska, enraged at the light manner in which he spoke of Uncle John, and her face flushed scarlet.

"Lie, or no lie," continued Novak, "I cannot know everything; still less, for that matter, can a young school girl. But next Sunday John is off to Brizoff on a visit to the Horakoff's."

"You lie in your throat," cried out Betuska again, and trembled all over. The storm of passion which then for the first time came in a kind of paroxysm, did not allow her time to find any other defensive weapon. But at the same time her countenance reflected all the indignation she felt at the lightly spoken words of Novak.

Betuska went to her mother, laid her head on her mother's shoulder, and gave way to a bitter fit of weeping.

Sobbing she reproached her parents for suffering any one to speak—any godless miscreant.

Kubista loved his daughter above measure. He did not permit Novak to say any more in that daughter's presence, but at the same time, for the sake of her mother, he wished to test whether the matter had any substantial foundation. He took Novak by the hand, went out with him into the parlour, and then cross-questioned him at considerable length.

The end of the interview was this, that Kubista told Novak not to come to his house again, and as to the visit of that youth to which Novak had pledged himself—that nothing more must be said about it.

Novak excused himself with many fresh bows and obsequious speeches, without retracting a word of what he had said. He begged them to forgive him for having come. "My intention," says he, "never was to disturb your domestic tranquillity—indeed, I assure you I came with the purest intentions." And when he had said everything that he meant to say he departed.

But now they had to comfort Betuska. She reproached her parents for confiding their anxiety about her to any one, though it broke her heart, and for having more regard to strangers than to their own daughter. The poor girl was only quieted when her parents assured her that they did not believe anything that Novak had said in their house.

Betuska met Uncle John about two days after this, in the evening, at the fatal boundary stone of grandfather's and Kubista's fields.

Uncle John noticed at once that she had been crying, and asked her the reason of it.

Instead of answering Betuska burst out into a fresh fit of crying, and tears, hot as the anguish in her heart

trickled over her poor face, testifying to the measureless disquietude of her soul.

The more Uncle John questioned her the more she sobbed. He refrained from further attempts, and kissed her face with so much warmth that her tears fell afresh over it.

When this struggle had somewhat subsided in her she began to bewail the misfortune of their parents' mutual estrangement. She augured nothing good from this, and for some time she could not rid herself of a certain presentiment which foreboded misfortune. Even a stranger began uninvited to meddle with their affairs, and who could say but his sole business was to separate them.

Uncle John consoled her. He succeeded after this natural explosion of a sensitive soul, for Betuska was so shy that she did not dare to mention a single word about Novak's visit and what she had heard from him. She was in her heart of hearts convinced that it was all a scandalous lie, and only trumped up by gossips in order to separate them. And yet this conviction paved the way to fresh tears, just because it failed to find words to express itself.

Uncle John encouraged her to be patient. Nothing he said could occur even the least to dissipate their mutual trust and confidence. Next, as to the relation in which their angry parents stood to one another he thought they might soon hope to see an end of it. For grandfather—his father—had just begun to show himself much more amenable to reason, much more conciliatory, than he had ever done before. Let interlopers say what they liked, for himself he meant to show them by deeds what he

thought of their speeches, and by that means, certainly, check all unbridled gossip.

Twilight had already gathered, and the scent of mown clover and meadow land was wafted over the fields, while birds winged their way to a neighbouring coppice, there to spend the evening and the night according to their wont.

Betuska seemed to be already quite easy in her mind.

Only as it were involuntary she hinted that she was looking forward to next Sunday, and glanced up at uncle's eyes to see what he thought of it. But Uncle John seemed as if he had not paid much attention: at first he was slightly abstracted, then he smiled and kissed Betuska.

And Betuska was soon as she had been before; she even jested a little,—aye, even hinted that next Sunday she should put on a new dress, which she hoped uncle would like, and think suited her.

After that Uncle John hinted, only as it were involuntarily, that on Sunday he would not be at home.

A pang went to Betuska's heart, but she made as though it were a laughing matter to her.

"Certainly I cannot guess where you are going," she said, half jestingly.

"And perhaps I don't mean to tell you," said Uncle John, and pressed her hand more warmly than before.

"I will guess in what direction you are going," and she guessed, pointing with her hand in different directions, until at last she pointed as if by accident in the direction of the place where uncle was to go on Sunday.

"Come, come, I will tell you no more," said uncle, and kissed her mouth to prevent hearing any further questions.

But Betuska now apparently meant to have her own way. She said she could never bear to await Sunday for she would not dare to be looking in the direction of the place whither uncle had to go.

Uncle John now slightly hesitated, for he was afraid of occasioning her superfluous anxiety. He already consoled himself in fancy by picturing how on his return he would communicate his message to her, and tell her how he meant very soon to take her home with him to his own farm, with the words, "You see, in this farm, you are mistress, and my wife. I am merely going for a walk to Brizoff," he said, and as if to make up for his reticence, he added, "I must do it to please my father."

Betuska had heard enough : more she did not wish to know. All the blood in her body crowded to her heart, and in that heart resounded something like the tolling of a funeral bell. But she never let it appear. And this was the fault, just as though she thought that Uncle John had not been perfectly sincere with her. She smiled, but her lips trembled. She would perhaps have soonest burst out crying, but already tears refused to flow. But she concealed it all in the presence of Uncle John. While he conducted her home she jested, and when he gave her a kiss at parting she returned it as warmly as if she wished to empty all her store of affection, and had no more cause to think of a future day.

Just as they separated she said almost jestingly that she wished him success at Brizoff.

Sunday came and Uncle John set off to go to Brizoff just at the same time when people were setting out for church. Thus among others he met Betuska, who was

dressed in her new white dress, but even her face was dressed in a new dress : it was paler than ever before. Betuska long held Uncle John by the hand, and begged him in a voice almost painful to hear, to forgive her if she had ever wronged him in anything, "For," she said, "I am going to church to-day, and would gladly be reconciled with all."

These words struck Uncle John to the heart, but he felt himself happy beyond measure.

Then she said that she would wait for him in the evening so he must return pretty early. And when they had bade one another adieu, Betuska looked long after him, until he vanished behind the nearest hillock.

The whole afternoon she waited at a spot on the road to Brizoff. Already early the shades of evening settled over the fish pond, while she waited for uncle. The stars came out and the moon rose, and uncle yet came not. Betuska knelt on the bank, looked up to a firmament full of light and beauty, looked down to the waters in which all that beauty and all that light were reflected ; she yearned for that beauty and prayed for her lover.

Her parents already missed her from home, and went to seek her. They found her, but Betuska belonged no more either to them or to herself. The waves on the margin of the pool frolicked with her dress, raven locks emerged for a moment above the glimmering water, her white hands were clasped in prayer, the beautiful mouth breathed no more.



## CHAPTER IV.

The corn which had sprung up in Spring matured to yellow spikes, and sickles converted the copious crop of the field into rows of sheaves. Boldly now over it wander grey-fleeced sheep after a piping shepherd ; the cricket hops insolently about the boundary stone, the partridge with her young scarce hides herself from the searching looks of the pointers, and St. Martin's summer hangs from stalk to stalk in glittering threads.

The breast of mother earth now needs the showers of the Spring—no young corn bursts from it to ripen into fruit—or if some tinge of green yet bedecks the field, it is but the memory of that which was, but which alas shall be no more.

And man is like the divine field of nature, capable of all—of passion, learning, puissant deeds, noble actions—happy is he in whom all ripens which germinated in his spirit of lovely and exalted.

But the spiritual sowing hath also its ill seasons, which though perhaps they do not shake the world can drive to despair him whom they encounter—can even perchance annihilate him. The spiritual sowing hath also its hailstorms, which splinter the beautiful, hopeful stalks, batter down what was destined to life, and so crush it, that what awakened in us hopeful delight is now but a source of pity and astonishment.

It is easily said—Betuska was buried. On a coffin adorned with garlands young men and maidens threw handfuls of earth, the gravediggers raised a mound, and parents spread over the grave fresh turf and adorned it with flowers.

But if by the grave closing over us everything else that was bound up with us could also come to an end, perhaps it were better it should die with us ; but perhaps yet better it should live.

I am, in truth, in difficulties how to find words if I am to depict the spiritual state of Uncle John. Despair is little, and at the same time also much. He had moments when not the least anguish survived in his breast ; hatred and wrath took its place, but he had moments also in which all this gave way to a horrible quietude, a sort of stupor, so that he could laugh with him who laughed, and curse with him who cursed.

And this before grandfather, who spoke but little with his son, and avoided his looks, which were full of reproach and horrible accusation, partly perhaps justified, but partly not so.

And at other times again, he went like a man crushed at heart, without will and feeling, chilled in all his perceptions, inaccessible to grief, and indifferent to pleasure.

Then he almost jested : he told grandfather that now he need not dread a hated marriage, and in general that affairs had turned out better than had ever been looked for.

Grandfather was now more afflicted than his son. The misfortune which he had caused to fall on the head of old Kubista, did not suffer him now to sleep more often than

did the hatred which before he had felt for that trusty friend.

Even in his work Uncle John was like two different beings. Sometimes he did everything thoroughly and conscientiously ; sometimes again he took no pains, and at times he did not work at anything for a whole day.

Once he came to the boundary stone which divided grandfather's field from that of old Kubista.

Old Kubista was a-field. Uncle John went to him, kissed his hand, and said to him, "You know, Kubista, you only yet remain till death my father."

Kubista's tears fell fast. Without speaking a word he went home, and his people who worked with him a-field ceased in their work for the anguish which they felt with their honoured master.

Then uncle's horses had a rest. He loosed them from the plough, and sat himself down alone at the boundary stone and thought—God alone knows of what ; perhaps even he did not think of anything.

They brought him his dinner and he did not touch it. He sat till evening and perhaps would have sat even till next morning if Kubista had not gone back to the field and sat down beside him.

"I have not spoken to you about your daughter," said Uncle John, as if between the time that Kubista departed and returned not a minute had intervened, "and trust me I am more intent upon reconciling myself with you than with my own father."

"What avails hatred here. We know how you grew up together, and I, without her, might have been a happier father than as it is I am. Would that your father were now also happier than he has been hitherto."

They spoke long together, and Uncle John in his presence unbosomed himself completely, as if he had seen in the father the spirit of poor Betuska—so he disclosed in his presence everything without reserve. He added that he desired but one thing, and that was that Kubista should recognise that he was worthy of his daughter.

And Kubista did indeed stand to him in place of a father, at least according to sorrow.

Whenever they saw one another a-field they always came together, and their first salutation was dedicated to the memory of Betuska.

Only sometimes uncle came here alone, alone and then complained to heaven and earth, fell on his face, and drowned his grief in tears. Aye, he could not see this place without shuddering, but his eyes in vain sought the village, to see whether Betuska would come from it, to make all clear to him as none else could.

Coming home again he was so variable that neither grandfather nor grandmother could understand him.

Sometimes indeed quite affable, and at other times again he shut himself within himself like a monastic in his cell.

He did not speak much with people, and if he spoke he touched on matters entirely indifferent, so that it might appear to others as if this misfortune had not so very deeply affected him.

Sometimes also he jested with them—even cruelly. He said “So! I told you to laugh at me when I was no more Kubista’s boy. Laugh now, you have a right to do so.”

And he began himself to laugh, as though he wished to give them a taste for laughing.

Who saw him thus found his taste for laughing with him soon gone.

And after that again he was so leaden-hearted that grandmother felt grave concern about him, lest, perhaps, he should attempt his own life. Meek and gentle sometimes like a child, and sometimes again he dealt out his words as though he would speak daggers.

“You know excellently how to take care of children,” he said to grandfather, “not only of your own but even of Kubista’s—for you have taken care of Betuska better than he himself did. No one could have provided for her better. Faith ’tis quite a peculiar talent when a man can so prettily blast another’s happiness.”

Grandfather was scared at these words. There lay in them an enormous weight of accusation, and yet they were pronounced with as much coldness as if he had said, “My pipe has gone out.”

Grandfather, however, did not dare to evade the charge implied, but began to consider how he might divert Uncle John to other pursuits. He sought counsel of grandmother, but with her he did not succeed very well, for she told him curtly, that he had already shown how clever he was at managing, so then let him manage again according to his own sweet will.

Grandfather began to feel himself veritably isolated. At home all avoided him, and indeed he avoided others more than they avoided him. He then began to drive out to his sons and married daughters, but there also he did not gain much help. None of them was willing to take upon himself the responsibility of advising when matters might turn out badly—for they knew grandfather well.

And after all what advice could they give? Even could they have disentangled his eager confused questions as easily as he entangled them, grandfather would still not have wanted any of their advice. He always knew best himself the author of the confusion—if he could not find the clue who was to find it. When therefore he returned home from these visits to his children, he felt his own desolateness even more strongly than before. He had no one to whom to unburden himself and was an object of pity like all the rest.

It is said "Paint not the devil upon a wall or verily he will appear."

In fact, grandfather began to hanker after Novak, and when Novak appeared quite unexpectedly, grandfather felt it almost a blessing to have him to converse with.

Novak well knew that he would find it no jesting matter with grandmother, or with Uncle John. He did not come to grandfather at the house, but managed to call him behind the barn, where stood in about seven rows the huge ancestral lindens, in whose shadow he rested as on a feather bed. To their branches had migrated, at some time or other, a family of starlings, and because the place pleased them had settled themselves there, and multiplied to an innumerable colony. Here it was "chiff-chaff" all day long, and if the old ones flew away, why then the young ones piped.

Here then Novak awaited grandfather, and when grandfather told him that he thought the weight on his heart grew lighter, Novak said he knew of a remedy, but it must be taken at once if it was to have any effect.

Grandfather, however, had been starving for want of advice, and he enquired what the remedy was. Novak

answered without circumlocution "Your son must get married."

And at once he had so many reasons for it at the tip of his tongue that grandfather's head went round.

He said that Uncle John dissipated his energies by reflections which afflicted him, that his looks and thoughts fastened only on women, and that what the women altogether had so long failed to effect a single woman would effect if he could be brought acquainted with her.

Grandfather thought all this supremely wise, and wondered at himself for not thinking of it before, and as for Novak, faith he was a man more sensible than a doctor of law.

Novak, however, reasoned according to his trade, and if he had been a butcher he would have recommended that uncle should eat plenty of meat. Had he been an innkeeper he would have recommended plenty of beer. Being a go between in love affairs, he recommended that uncle should wive.

And all at once he knew everything about a bride in prospect, and described her in such glowing colours that Horakoff's daughter at Brizoff vanished before her, and was not fit to reach her water at table.

Grandfather thought that he had won "terns," and he had no need to trouble himself further about anything; for Novak took upon himself all trouble and eased grandfather's mind by promising that Uncle John should conform to everything.

After this grandfather himself took Uncle John in hand. After suitable circumlocutions, he asked him, as if casually, whether he yet thought of marriage, seeing that

his parents were growing old and could not manage the household much longer.

“And why not then?” said Uncle John, as if in good humour, “then I shall have obeyed you in everything.”

Grandfather was quite accustomed to his biting sentences, and already sometimes failed to feel their incisiveness. But here, at any rate, he had at last managed to know what he wished to know. He thought, then, that he must be contented with the reply.

And in reality the business began to make satisfactory progress, and before anyone expected it a letter came to the house. Uncle John was, moreover, so resigned to grandfather's wishes, that grandfather must have been delighted with him.

Whether Uncle John read this letter I do not know, but certain it is that when grandfather told him he must write a reply, Uncle John told him he had an answer all prepared.

And the messenger took a letter from him to his intended bride, only that it was the same which he had brought from her to him.

Grandfather must have had satisfaction in seeing how everything succeeded—and he had it.

When after several days, the evenings began to close in, a wedding was already openly mentioned, the servants continually agitated the matter, and after some days even the poultry at Kubista's talked it over.

Old Kubista's head spun round.

Now even Novak began to present himself openly at the farm, and when Uncle John greeted him affably enough it followed that the last stumbling block was quite removed.



He flew from the bride to our farm, and thence to the bride elect like one possessed.

It was a wonderful message which Novak carried to the young lady. When he asked Uncle John what proposal he should take to her, Uncle John referred him to grandfather, and in reality grandfather was as well able to compose a marriage proposal as if he had been going to take a wife himself.

Things went on a-pace.

All unexpectedly one morning grandmother got a command from grandfather to see how many calves were ready for the butcher, what number of fat pigs, how many geese were fit to kill, and she herself was to see to the poultry, for the marriage was even at the doors.

Novak ran to the registry office ; put out the banns ; briefly, Novak had a matter to settle, and he succeeded in it.

Only one thing was still wanting. Uncle John had not as yet made the acquaintance of his intended bride. That indeed was a very trifling hitch. Still it was all in the day's work that Novak should put that matter straight also.

Novak, then, must bring them together. He must put the matter before Uncle John in all its different aspects until the latter assented to it.

He might very well have spared himself his pains, for Uncle John scarcely listened with one ear. So much, however, he understood of it all as this, that next Sunday he was to pay a visit to his intended bride, and was to order the servants to have the carriage as smart as possible.

When Novak further assured him that he would be

thoroughly satisfied with everything, uncle answered, "You see that I am always satisfied as it is."

Grandfather took a fresh lease of life, and even his foot ceased to pain him ; he walked to the farm-yard with Novak, under the lindens, and again from the farm-yard to the house. He was more active than Uncle John.

Grandmother did, indeed, often look into uncle's eyes thus inviting him to confidence, that he might unbosom himself to her, for she felt, as no one else could, that what she had heard from grandfather, Novak, and others, could not be his genuine desire and will. A kind of terror fastened itself at her heart.

But Uncle John only looked at her from time to time with anguish, and that was all his answer. At other times he was inaccessible to all. No one could find the key to his soul ; perhaps at times he could not even find it himself.

Sunday came, the vehicle was prepared, the horses harnessed. They went for Uncle John, but they did not find him. Grandmother could scarcely speak for terror and surprise, and if she could have concealed the truth from grandfather, she would not have told it for the whole world.

Servants ran hither and thither to look for Uncle John. Even Novak, whose mind was bewildered, and whose countenance paled at the unexpected turn things had taken, set off to search ; even grandfather himself looked where he could, calling out and searching, not without fear.

But it was not so bad as that. They soon found Uncle John, at the very boundary stone of grandfather's and Kubista's fields. They found him with his face to the ground, in tears and protestations. Without witnesses he

poured out laments to heaven for his affliction, and burden of misery, seeking the comfort which he found not among men.

They did not venture to disturb him. They returned home and mentioned to grandfather where and how they found him, adding that he would return by himself.

And uncle soon returned. Not with tears in his eyes, but with a smile on his face, and cold in mien.

To those who saw him in his previous state but a moment before, that smile must have been capable of a strange interpretation.

Uncle John dressed himself and they drove off. On the way Novak repeated very much about his previous performances, about bridals and marriages, until Uncle John bade draw up at an inn that he might have a glass to encourage himself.

And he drank enough to encourage him. They then drove on. Uncle was still in a courageous mood when they alighted, and Terinka, his intended bride, presented herself on the threshold, while in the meantime her father greeted his honoured guest.

It is true that Uncle John was merry enough. It was no secret even to the Brezinoffs where this merriment came from, but they did not look too nicely at that. Only let a young man have courage what matter whether it comes from the heart or the pewter.

And old Brezinoff took further care that it should come so long from the pewter, that it reached the heart at last.

Uncle John jested, pinched Terinka's cheek, and Novak winked slyly at Brezinoff, who merely smiled in reply.

Uncle John asked Terinka, whether she wished to have

him for a husband, adding that he had been sent to ask her to be his wife ; and he said this without circumlocution.

Terinka blushed becomingly and then responded also becomingly.

Briefly Uncle John made good progress. He was yet shouting on the road as they returned home long after nightfall.

In the house then at grandfather's it was now a matter of certainty that there would be a wedding ; the banns were sent at once to the parson and a day fixed on which the guests were to assemble.

Grandfather strongly insisted upon there being a large gathering of guests present. And Novak went with the young folk all one day the round of the neighbourhood to invite the whole of it.

Several hogsheads of beer were ordered at once from the brewery, and from Prague were brought about four dozen of the choicest rosolek for the ladies.

The wedding then was prepared.

And when it came everything went off according to the programme. The bride wept, as did also her parents, and when they brought her to grandfather's she had with her about a score of relations.

Evil tongues, and on such occasions some tongues never fail to be so, ran on in this wise :—

“ All these relations are instead of furniture, you know ; for the bride has not much of that, you know ; and if it is a long time coming, that doubtless is because they want to get it cheap to the farm. But how odd ! 'tis always such a long way off, you know ; and after all 'tis possible the relations have brought it in their pockets.”

But at grandfather's things went merrily enough. Grandfather was in his element. He at once made friends with all the bride's relations, and told them all about his own history. Some of these relations were indeed rather distant relations of the Brezinoffs, but that did not signify.

Grandfather showed them everything, conducted them everywhere, and walked so easily that even his foot seemed well again. He paid them so much attention, aye, each and all of them, that the remainder of his sons and daughters were scarcely welcomed. He did not allow himself to converse with his own children, for to-day he had new, more honourable guests.

These were, indeed, convinced that they had found capital quarters for Terinka, but it a little vexed grandfather's own sons that they could not put in even a single word; and they dispersed long before evening, when grandfather led the new relationship a-field. They did not shake hands with grandfather at parting, they said to-day doubtless he would not miss them—and grandfather did not miss them that day.

The festivities lasted until the third day, for grandfather was most anxious that the whole neighbourhood should talk about it. He thought that he must needs do something, for latterly such wonderful rumours were afloat concerning the sayings and doings of all of us at the farm, that now verily seemed a fitting opportunity to demolish all such rumours at a single blow.

When on the third day all drove off, grandfather began to settle the bride in the farm-house. Uncle John, indeed, scarcely paid any attention to any one, consequently his part must be played for him by grandfather.

Grandfather had always taken so much pains to bring all this about, that it was not possible for him all at once to renounce all participation in it.

He had enough to do. Ere he had shown the young mistress everything that appertained to her household duties several days had elapsed.

And yet Terinka had excellent capacities. She remembered everything at once and adapted herself to everything with facility, so that after a short time it was soon shown who now ruled in the farm, and who obeyed.

As I have already said, grandfather had spared no pains to get the farm this mistress, and now that he had obtained her, he took still more pains to fix her there for ever, and to make every one obey her absolutely.

Grandfather was now happy—at least he thought so.

I cannot say, however, that Terinka was really a very welcome guest at the farm.

Grandmother was constrained in manner towards her, for a kind of trepidation continually affected her, though she could not hit upon a name for it. Her thoughts always lost themselves whenever she tried to conjecture whether Uncle John was now happy. When she wiped the plate with her apron, she also wiped more than one tear from her eye, and few saw her then balance herself on tiptoe, and dance according to her ancient wont.

Nor was Uncle John by any means an example of how conjugal affection may make of two people one spirit, causing them to feel with one heart and to think with one mind.

Uncle John did not change in anything to speak of after his marriage, except that he became somewhat more

indifferent. He seemed as though he had determined, by the punctual fulfilment of his father's wishes to show grandfather how those his wishes had brought misfortune not only on his son, but also on the whole household.

And so it was.

He obeyed grandfather most exemplarily, and since grandfather had no other wishes save those that Terinka expressed, he more particularly obeyed his wife in everything.

Grandfather, then, very diligently himself took his daughter-in-law in charge, so that his presence should make up for every deficiency in other quarters. He himself now contrived and did for her everything for which she had the least fancy. Aye, he even looked into her eyes as a stargazer looks at the heavens in order to conjecture what would please her and what would elicit a smile from her, for that pleased him beyond measure.

The servants whispered that there was a new mistress, and this lady was imperious and proud, and in a louder voice they declared to the other servants that she was hasty and unobliging, and that there was more wanton wastefulness in the household management than had ever been before.

All day long he spoke of nothing but Terinka. He praised her every movement, her every step. Every gesture seemed to him so becoming that more than once he pronounced her to be the most perfect woman in the world.

The household secretly, and indeed openly, laughed at his eulogiums; and grandmother sometimes felt almost vext. Uncle John assured him that he was right in everything.

Wonderful it was where grandfather found all the expressions for heaping praise after praise upon her.

But even grandfather at last grew tired of calling her the best woman in the world, and he named Terinka his Flower of Paradise, which he had long been seeking for his house.

"Yes," he cried, "she is our happiness, and our ornament, in whom we all grow young again."

And Terinka was indeed a Flower of Paradise. She expanded in all directions, every place was full of her. Every one was made to feel her influence.

Already she had not space enough in the rooms which were originally allotted to her, and she expanded even into the living room, which grandfather had reserved for himself and grandmother.

Grandfather did, indeed, always, and in everything, give way to her only that she might be content, and he told her that she had only to order what she pleased, and that all her orders must be carried out.

So Terinka began to give her orders in earnest. Once she declared to Uncle John, in the presence of grandfather and grandmother, that "old gran" disgusted her because she had always to be looking at his diseased foot, and she suggested that it would be better if he were banished out of the living room.

This fell like a thunderbolt.

But grandfather laughed it off, for he supposed it was only jest, though, on second thoughts, it occurred to him that it was a curious mode of jesting.

Grandmother stood aghast, and Uncle John said nothing.



He always heard from grandfather a hundred times a day that everything which Terinka ordered must be carried out—that Flower of Paradise.



## CHAPTER V.

Grandfather, however, learned very soon what he had praised to the skies : he experienced very soon what is the character of these Flowers of Paradise, and learned by many an unpleasant surprise what it is to carry out the commands of a daughter-in-law.

Old people are slow to adapt themselves to new ideas. What they have once got into their heads is only abandoned by a difficult process, and grandfather had so thoroughly got it into his head that he had provided his home with an excellent mistress as to recognise that he was already in very truth too greyheaded to teach himself new views and new maxims. And so sometimes he reminded Terinka as if involuntarily of his grey hairs. But that scarcely availed him much. Terinka told him flatly that his grey hairs and the grey dog Vorjeh, were one as dear to her as the other.

Here grandfather no longer smiled ; tears trickled down his old face, and though his foot began somewhat to pain him, yet he hobbled out of the living room, across the threshold, to the farm-yard, and there retired under the old lindens, where he sat himself down on a bench. The starlings piped in their nests, and grandfather looked towards his house and reflected on all that he had enjoyed and suffered there.

There was enough to begin to occupy his thoughts. In the meantime Terinka ruled her household like a fine lady—like a very duchess. The servants had very often to harness the horses, and prepare the carriage, and the carriage rolled off to the town, whence she and Uncle John seldom returned before evening. It was not, indeed, possible ; before she had completed all her commissions the day had flown like lightning.

But after this our young mistress always appeared in new clothes ; aye, sometimes in several dresses the same day, and the servants guessed that in spite of this it was not she who wore all their master bought her.

Verily, with the servants she had a perfect torment, and if Terinka could have learned all they said about her, she would never have recovered from her vexation.

Thus, for example, they said, “Mistress has all her presents and dowry stowed away at a merchant’s in the town, you know ; that’s why she drives there so often, you know—to bring it home bit by bit.” For example, she had all her dresses stowed away at his house.

But even at home our young mistress’ dresses out-did all rivalry.

Visits were, indeed, very frequent, not perhaps that grandfather’s own sons and daughters drove over there, but Terinka had uncles enough to fill up the calendar, These did not come all at once, but were good enough to relieve guard, not wishing to be in the way.

On these occasions there were dinners such as only occurred at festivals in grandfather’s time. And every one ate and drank to repletion.

At these feasts grandfather took care still at least to

appear to be the host, and gave out that Terinka did it all at his own particular request, and he often consoled himself with the thought that he was not driven out of the house, because he helped to supply the table with drink and victuals. And how sedately Terinka always invited him to seat himself with them. It was enough to move his goodness when he scarcely knew whether he was to sit among them or not.

But he sat with them still.

And then when the relations went home, they could scarcely carry all the presents with which Terinka loaded them. Once a maidservant allowed herself to play a very untimely joke. Her mistress despatched her for a carpet bag in which to pack something for the Lord knows which of her uncles, and the maid brought a regular sack, saying she could not find anything else.

But besides all this there were other things to be observed in our young mistress.

When some one or other of her female relations paid her a visit the servants soon perceived that this relation wore a dress which no long time before their mistress had on new, and that when this aunt or cousin departed she invariably forgot that she had on her hostess' gown.

Uncle John paid no attention to these littlenesses, he always acted according to grandfather's wishes, and the instant our young mistress desired it he bade put to the horses afresh, that he might drive with her to the town where she laid in a fresh stock of things to be distributed at home.

They quite understood at the farm what driving to the town meant.

And Novak ?

This worthy when he came to the farm, behaved as though he were part lord and master. To grandfather he scarce paid any attention at all, and merely said a few words to him, though grandfather would gladly have continued the conversation.

On the other hand he listened to our young mistress a full hour, while she related to him how she managed everything, what a torment the old folks were to her, and similar matters.

It would have seemed that Terinka certainly needed no one to establish her in household management, for she already gave evidence of her excellent capacities. But still the advice which Novak gave her was by no means to be despised.

Whenever Novak gave advice he took pains fully to express his meaning. He set down the old folk as dotards, who were already unsuited to the new times, and he complimented Terinka for her kindness to them. "You *are* kind," says he, "indeed I must confess you seem to me too kind to them."

And then we must remember that Novak was not by any means a man to leave the farm with empty pockets, nor was Terinka either likely to let him depart with them empty. She always perfectly understood Novak when he told her he was so glad to see her comfortably settled there.

And if Novak did not always carry off all he meant to take at once, of course he came the oftener, to carry away more than he could manage on a single journey.

Our young mistress had not too good health, and therefore the doctor often drove over to the farm.

But such visits cost money, and therefore Uncle John sometimes himself drove Terinka over to the doctor, to spare the cost of his coming, and to exercise the horses.

Certainly, very few people quite believed in our mistress' delicate health, but still she had to spare herself on account of it. She did not venture to undertake any heavy work ; she did not venture to walk much, or to exert herself, and Uncle John sometimes did not go to look after the field, because he was obliged to take care of his wife.

Doubtless by these devices Terinka advanced to the wished for goal.

On the strength of her delicate health she told Uncle John that she could not move about in the living room with sufficient freedom so long as the old people were there. And as the doctor assured him that her delicate health might last some time longer during which she would require rest, Uncle John one day put the matter clearly before grandfather, and the upshot of it all was that grandfather and grandmother were to be banished to a neighbouring room for so long as Terinka continued in delicate health.

This by itself was no doubt a trifling matter, for any one who knew the spare rooms would admit that they were spacious and clean. But still it rather stung grandfather when he was so summarily banished from the living room, in which for half a century he had experienced all the boons and ills of life.

His eyes were certainly slightly bedimmed, and he told uncle that he thought perhaps Terinka would find it more quiet in the spare room than where so many people were constantly coming and going ; but Uncle John objected that opposition only made her worse, and that delicate women must be humoured.

Grandfather now recognised himself that his objections were trivial, and submitted to be banished with grandmother the more easily, the more urgently the young people laboured to effect his banishment.

On the whole the poor invalid was not so badly off. Grandfather, according to his custom, went to visit Terinka, and consoled himself with the thought that there would be so soon an end of all.

But it seemed all at once to occur to Terinka that he consoled himself with the notion that he would soon be reinstated in the living room. And so one fine evening after a warm day, she just reminded him that he had not yet gained his point. "For you know," says she, "my indisposition might easily return."

I cannot really blame Uncle John for any harshness towards grandfather; not at all. But he was indifferent to him as to everything else in general. For that man was yet to find in the world who could discover something that should console him. If grandfather had still had the stronger will, the son would have obeyed his father: as his wife had it, he obeyed her.

Perhaps he would have obeyed anyone, for it was wholly indifferent to him what he did.

Briefly, to which ever side grandfather looked he found himself completely deserted. His sons and daughters now rarely visited him, for the Terincine character was not too alluring. And how could grandfather open out his heart to them when it was all his doing, that he had almost forgotten even those of them who were yet living.

My father, on one occasion, did indeed delicately suggest that grandfather should pay him a visit, and if our

house pleased him, that he should establish himself there. But grandfather answered that after all he could not bear to die anywhere but at home.

And now, too, grandfather could not open his heart to grandmother, who complained of her daughter-in-law perpetually, and since grandfather had always from the beginning taken Terinka under his protection he felt that he must seem to do so still, for the sake of consistency.

And once when seated in the yard he tried to think of anyone to whom he could open out his heart; then, and not till then, he recognised that he was alone, alone.

Thus involuntarily his eyes fell on the grey-haired dog Vorjeh, who stood there before him, looking up at his eyes and wagging its tail, for it was long since grandfather had noticed it.

So it occurred to him, as if by accident, how that Terinka had several times compared his head with the grey-haired dog Vorjeh, and involuntarily he looked again into Vorjeh's eyes.

Vorjeh seemed to understand him. He never stirred, and his eyes seemed to grow bedimmed and moist just as grandfather's eyes did.

"Dear Vorjeh, we are then discrowned," said grandfather, "we are completely alike."

And Vorjeh whined, sprang up, and finally laid himself down at grandfather's feet. Thenceforward Vorjeh followed at grandfather's heels. Grandfather had, indeed, sunk very low: not only in mind; even in his dress this was apparent. Hitherto he had had his suit of velveteen clothing new at least at every annual festival, but now it was long past festival time, and grandfather had not yet changed his suit of clothes for a new one.



Perhaps it never once came into his mind. But during that time he pondered more frequently on his previous life. He saw that everything was not well done as he did it.

His previous hardness now melted into meekness, and then he saw that everything was not well done as he did it. He had been often in fault.

In this, his isolation, he began seriously to look out for some one who could understand him. But let him turn the pages to whichever side he would, every name was erased and everywhere only emptiness.

Nor again, were the servants such that he could converse with them. Our young mistress took the greatest pains to show them that they were not to obey grandfather. If he ever gave them any order Terinka bade them do just the very reverse, and that purposely.

The servants soon saw how the land lay. They laughed outright at grandfather, did not obey their mistress, and each one acted according to his own inclination.

And so our household was managed strangely—passing strangely.

Grandfather now at times even began to reflect that after all he had not a trustier friend than Kubista. It came to him that he had wronged, cruelly wronged his friend, and this sense of pity yet further increased his spiritual weakness.

More than once he even thought that it would be well to give the hand to Kubista. He thought that it would be a far better action than any he had hitherto performed, and that it would be perfectly in keeping with self-respect if he were to make the first step.

It occurred to him that hitherto he had never distin-

gushed himself by any particularly good act, though he was originally capable of everything, and to reconcile himself with Kubista would be at least a beginning, may be also an end. He felt that it would be better to weep on Kubista's bosom than to lament alone, and to the empty air.

He was already too weak to bear all that he had brought upon himself.

Thus he more than once found himself looking in the direction Kubista used to come and meet him, and if Kubista had really approached, perhaps he would have fallen on his neck, and with lamentations have implored his forgiveness.

Kubista did not indeed appear in that direction, but fate decreed that they should first meet one another in a different place.

It was Sunday, and grandfather decided to go to church early in the morning. It was not perhaps because he found little to console him at home that he went in better time than the rest, but because he walked slowly, for his foot had latterly been again more painful, and then he said he liked to be in time. So at least he said.

And he hobbled to church, in point of fact, before the bells had ceased to chime, and then as the church was still locked, he went to look at the church-yard.

He had not been there for a long while. He could not indeed remember how long since.

Many changes there were. Many a new cross had been added, and of those mounds which he remembered fresh more than one was overrun with turf of many years growth. Many again were newly dug. Which was to be for him?

On that solitary grave who knelt yonder? That face was known to him, though it aged to unrecognition.

It was old Kubista. He knelt on the grave of his daughter Betuska, and prayed for his daughter.

Grandfather felt all his hatred suddenly collapse ; all the better sides of old Kubista came to mind, and he was touched with pity for his unfortunate friend when he learned to realize how unhappy he had himself become.

He did not know how it happened, but he knelt beside Kubista at the grave, and with a quavering voice pronounced the words "Forgive us our trespasses as we forgive them that trespass against us."

To Kubista it was the most joyous awakening out of prayer. He took grandfather by the hand, pressed it, and said, "Aye ! we have committed many errors."

Kubista knew not hatred, and it so touched him to see grandfather kneeling beside himself, that he forgave his friend frankly, and from the bottom of his heart.

They sat by Betuska's grave, and Kubista asked grandfather what had led him thither.

"I came here to choose some place or other," said grandfather. "Among the living I have one no longer, and I see that I am already a burden to them."

"Things have not succeeded with us," said Kubista, but without reproachfulness, only pronouncing the whole truth. "We ourselves have taught friends by our example to desert one another, and now we find ourselves deserted. John even now but seldom comes here, and so I must tend the grave alone. But *I* will never desert Betuska, and when I have no more power to walk, I will lay myself down beside her."

Grandfather did in reality feel himself elevated, ennobled, and good—perhaps for the first time in his life. He wished he had still the strength of youth that he might

set everything to rights just as he had reconciled himself with Kubista.

Kubista now stood his friend once more. He often visited him behind the barn under the lindens, and seated there on the grass they lightened each other's sorrows.

The starlings in the trees had much to say to one another, but still they had exhausted themselves ere these neighbours of "auld lang syne" turned homewards again together.

Grandfather also little by little adapted himself to his fate. He hardly ever complained the least, but learnt to look upon his present circumstances as if they had been so all his life, and were not amenable to change.

He seldom went now to the living room to see his daughter-in-law; nor did it ever occur to him that he might yet be reinstated there. Indeed, it would even have been a source of grief to him if he had been recalled thither. It had been a hard struggle to disaccustom himself to that room, but now it seemed to him that by being established there he would also put on all his long past frailties.

Terinka was at times thoroughly out of health. She was sallow, little inclined to move about, and more like a specimen preserved under a glass case than an animated being. Uncle John did not experience much pleasure in her company; however, he did not look for much pleasure of this kind. Even the child which was born to them, and which Terinka always dressed in the finest clothes, awakened in him no special delight. 'Twas seldom he even smiled at it.

Sometimes he would follow grandfather to his pension-house to talk over old times, but what they said on these occasions was of trifling value. It touched upon topics of merely general interest.

I used to go pretty often to visit grandfather at a later period, particularly during the summer time. I knew where his gardens and shrubberies were, and thus made straight for him, for grandfather in summer time was head gardener.

Grey-haired Vorjech was there his inseparable companion. He always stood in front of his kennel and growled when he observed me, for he could not remember my face. Grandfather basked in the sun, scolded Vorjech for not knowing me, and welcomed me with immense satisfaction. Sometimes I also found old Kubista with him.

When I asked him how he felt, he only smiled and said—  
“Ah! well a-day! I am not now what I used to be.” And in these words lay all his confession; his whole life—everything.

And then, when I described to him what went on in Prague, at school and elsewhere, he forgot for very pleasure everything else in the world. He would not let me leave him, and I had to give him an account of everything I had heard and seen. It seemed as though a new world unrolled itself before his eyes. He always said by way of supplement, “Ah, well, Pepik” (so he had named my father) “knows how to bring up children—he did not learn it from me.”

It was once more St. Lawrence's Festival, and I was already in the bloom of manhood.

It was holiday time and I had just written to my parents to say that I was going to grandfather's for the festival, where I hoped they would meet me, and then after the festival we could return home together.

Just then memories of early days and our visits to grandfather and grandmother, came upon me with uncom-

mon force. I felt as though I were their own child, and with all a child's fondness for them. I saw before my eyes grandmother as my childish fancy had pictured her on a charmed height. I felt the immeasurable delight which had always drawn me to her, and that unrest of youth which made us yearn to get the earliest possible glimpse of her wrinkled face. Grandfather had questioned me with special interest the last time I had seen him, and so I had already collected quite a medley of things of which I wished to give him an account. I thought with satisfaction how he would listen, and I felt happy in anticipation at the idea of causing him once again a few moments of simple pleasure.

As I was thus musing, a letter came from father, in which he gave me to understand that I was not to go to grandfather's for they had buried him that very day, and he explained that he could not inform me about it sooner because he himself only got the news on the very day of the funeral.

I am not sufficiently versed in medical science to say what disease he died of. But he suffered only a very short time.

I am told he was buried most sumptuously, and Uncle John when they came to the church-yard, knelt first by the grave of Betuska, and only then turned aside and threw on grandfather's coffin three handfuls of earth.

It was the last touch of poetry in uncle. From that time forth he became what people call a well-regulated man.

Later they laid Kubista next Betuska on the other side. Thus kindly mother earth lulled to equal rest those who made havoc of each other's lives.

And those who still abide on earth, still make havoc of each other's lives.