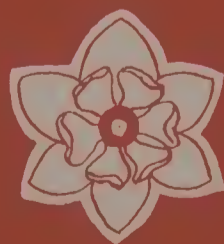


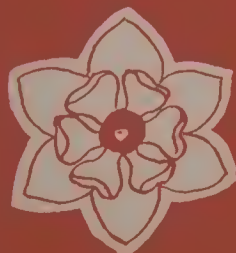
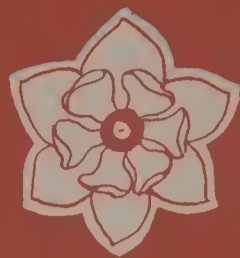
A BOY OF POLAND

BY
MARIAN KING



PICTURED BY
ELEANORE HUBBARD WILSON





A Boy of Poland



TADEK AND BIALEK



ELEANORE HUBBARD
WILSON

A Boy of Poland

By MARIAN KING



Illustrations by
ELEANORE HUBBARD WILSON

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INTRODUCTION

Once in Poland I visited in a wide white house on an immense estate. The living room and dining room opened directly, and without steps, on the courtyard. Dinner was at two o'clock in the afternoon—a long dinner with many delicious courses. Toward the end of my first dinner, when we were ready to lean back in our chairs and tell stories, in through the broad doorway walked a beautiful white horse.

He came straight toward the table and then walked all around it, while each one of the family gave him a bit of apple or sugar. He was extremely dignified and had just as good manners as anybody seated at the table.

Often, during my visit in this Polish house, the white horse, who was the family's best friend, came in for a little conversation at the end of dinner.

This happened in a big house. In the smallest houses in Poland—low houses with thatched roofs and dirt floors—the animals have their room, with its hay and feed, right next to the family's room.

This family room usually has a great fireplace at one end, and often a low brick wall in front of the fire to prevent both the children and the wooly sheep from getting too near the leaping flames. The baby is safe for he is up in the air. He lies comfortably in a cradle that swings high above the floor, fastened to a ceiling-beam by an iron chain.

It is because I grew to love the Polish horse and the other animals, and the Polish people, who understand them so well, that I am particularly glad that Marian King has, in this book, taken us to Poland.

I am glad she takes us to the fair city of Krakow, and gives us plenty of time in its gay market place, near which I once lived, and at one end of which stands the fine Church of Our Lady. From its high balcony at a certain hour, the trumpeter blows a silver tune. I have heard many times the story of why the trumpeter ends the tune today on a broken note, but I have never heard the reason more beautifully told than it is when Uncle Stach tells it to Tadek in the Krakow Market Place.

Nor have I heard anyone else tell so interestingly the brave

story of Kosciusko, and of how his historic mound was built up toward the sky in fair Krakow—the great mound out of just little handfuls of dirt.

And the sparkling halls and shrines in the marvelous Wieliczka Mines, all carved from glittering salt—into what a fairy picture Marian King paints them! And the wedding with the prancing horses and the bride's floating ribbons! Even though I have visited fair Krakow several times, this book makes me want to go straight back to see it all over again.

The lucky people in the world are those who have a golden key—or maybe it is just a golden look in their eyes. This makes them perfectly at home in all countries. It makes them understand all animals and people and trees, and birds and flowers too, and rocks and singing streams.

They do not need particular languages to do this, though it is very pleasant to know many different languages. But just as you and I understand exactly what Bialek, the little Polish pig, means when he says, 'Oink,' so the people who possess the golden key or have the golden look in their eyes, understand all sounds and looks and motions.

The unlucky people often work very hard to learn somebody else's language and after they know all the grammar and dictionary, they cannot even understand Tadek and Uncle Stach when they talk. I have a friend who studied the Polish grammar for seven years and does he know what 'Oink' means when he hears it? He does not. Because he has not got the golden key or the golden look in his eye. I feel most sorry for him.

Now Marian King undoubtedly has the golden look in her eyes. Which means that wherever she lives and she happens to live now in Washington—it is just as if the walls of her house and garden stretched so far that Kees in Holland or Tadek in Poland or the duck or the pig could come in and out whenever they liked. She in turn can go into their houses and gardens whenever she likes. For she is at home in their countries and in their hearts.

That is why I think it would be very wonderful to live with Marian King. And, indeed, many thousands of us will feel that we are living with her and with Tadek and Bialek and all her other friends as we read this fascinating story of their adventures.

CHARLOTTE KELLOGG

Washington, D. C.

FOREWORD

The author wishes to acknowledge her sincere appreciation to the following for their generous help and criticism: Mr. and Mrs. Thaddeus Hoinko of the Polish Chamber of Commerce in New York City; Mr. and Mrs. Eric Kelly; Mrs. Tobias Dantzig; Mrs. Kate Zuk-Sharszewska of Krakow; Miss Viga de Pereswit; Mr. Charles Phillips of the University of Notre Dame; Mr. George R. Noyes of the University of California; Miss Grace Humphrey; Mr. Frank H. Simonds, Mrs. Vernon Kellogg, Professor William R. Rose of Dartmouth College for his translation of the verses used in this book; M. Arct Publishing Company, Warsaw, and Marja Dynowska for their permission to use the verses from her book "Dylu Dylu Na Badylu" and the verses from "Spiewnik" by Maria Konopnicka; and to Bernard Poloniecki, publisher, for the use of the Christmas carols from the book *Carols for Christmas Day* collected by Franciszek Baranski.

MARIAN KING





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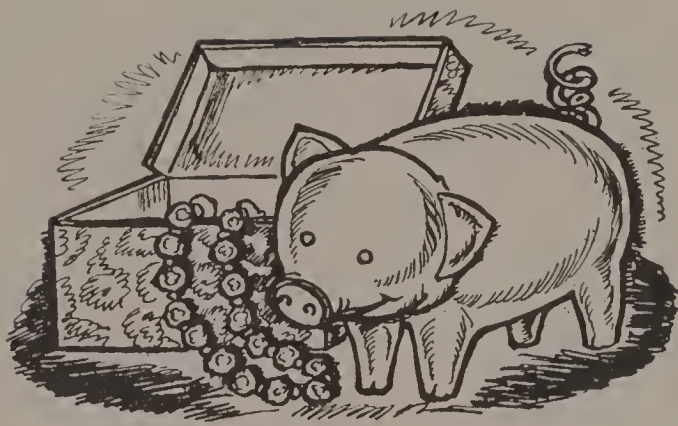




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“I’m going to run ahead and meet them.”



TADEK AND HIS FAMILY

CHAPTER I

MOTHER! Here they come! Here they come!" excitedly called Tadek, the little Polish lad, from a branch in the old apple tree that stood in the garden near the low, white-washed, stone cottage. The tree cast an uneven shadow that danced over the thatched roof as the late afternoon sun played through its branches.

A gentle-looking woman came smiling to

the door. As she crossed the doorstep to the little porch that framed the doorway, her full, three-quarters skirt, covered by a long, wide apron, hung gracefully over her bare feet and ankles. Her white blouse, showing through a tight red bodice, matched the kerchief that was tied neatly around her head and shone brightly as she stood before the whitewashed cottage wall.

She crossed the porch and stepped down on the soft spring earth. She looked at the freshly turned soil in which she had planted hollyhock seeds. As she passed the lilac bushes she stopped long enough to glance at their swelling branches swaying lightly in the afternoon breeze. The tall poplar trees that stood on each side of the path leading to the road looked larger and taller to her than ever before.

“Mother,” called Tadek again.

“I’m coming,” she answered, taking the path that led to the tree in which Tadek was sitting. “How much nearer are they?” she called.

“They’re coming up the hill toward the road by the pasture,” he answered, picking

his way safely across the sturdy limb of the budding tree. Swinging his bare legs as far as they would go around the trunk of the tree, Tadek slid down easily and rapidly to the ground.

“Mother, let’s go and meet them!” he suggested eagerly.

Just as they started down the path to the pasture, Tadek ran back to the apple tree and went around to one side of it. After he had picked up a little pinkish-white figure, he started down the path again to join his mother.

“Oink, oink,” squealed Bialek with delight when he felt the soft hands of his master on his fat little self.

“I almost forgot Bialek,” laughed Tadek breathlessly catching up with his mother, as he gently stroked the little pig’s soft ears.

Tadek, leading the way, in his homespun blouse and his ankle-length trousers was half running, half walking as he went along. How good the soft spring earth, warmed by the sun, felt to his bare feet! The soft wind ran through his thick dark hair and made his whole body tingle with delight. The fruit trees in the orchard were a cloud of misty

pink, and the tiny bits of new grass shooting up from the ground seemed to nod to them as they passed by.

"I see them now," called the mother over Tadek's head, as she followed closely behind him.

The thumping of the horse's hoofs could be heard on the ground and the wagon made a cracking sound as it bumped over the dirt road.

"I'm going to run ahead and meet them! I want to see the new plow!" shouted Tadek.

"Not so fast, my son," called his mother. "You may fall with Bialek."

But the warning came too late. Tadek's foot caught in a root, and he and Bialek came down with a loud thump. Bialek rolled over and squealed loudly as if to say, "It was much better under the apple tree!"

"Not hurt one bit," laughed Tadek, picking up his pet and rubbing him gently behind the ears. His mother came over to where he sat on the ground.

"You had better let me carry Bialek the rest of the way," she smiled. "There's no telling what you'll stumble over next."

It was not long before Bialek was tucked safely in her arms, and the three started from the path to the road that led by the pasture.

"Tadek, now you may run ahead," said his mother. "But do be careful!"

"Here comes Marynka with our geese," shouted Tadek, as he looked across the pasture.

"I see her," answered his mother, watching the eleven-year-old daughter of a neighbor crocheting as she walked along guiding homeward the flock of geese. Krutchek, the black dog, barked now and then at a goose that tried to stray from the others. As they waddled along, the geese looked like bits of white fluffy cotton blowing in the soft green grass.

"Marynka," shouted Tadek as the small girl came nearer to them, "my father's coming!"

Marynka looked toward him. "I know. He passed me as I was crossing the road," she called back.

The wagon was coming closer. Tadek could now see his father and Antek, his cousin, on the seat. He saw something, too, stretching out from each side of the wagon. "The

new plow!" he called, excitedly picking up his sturdy legs to run as fast as he could.

"Father," said Tadek breathlessly, when he came to the wagon, "Mother and Bialek and I have come to meet you. We all want to see the new plow!"

"Here is Mother now," replied the father; and handing the reins to Antek he got down from the wagon. "A pretty big plow!" said the father, as Tadek stood looking at it.

"Is it larger than our old one?" asked the child excitedly.

"Just a little longer in the handles," answered his father proudly. "But come," he continued, "the sun is beginning to go down. We must hurry home. Tadek, how would you like to ride with Antek? Mother and I are going to walk."

"But what about Bialek?" asked Tadek anxiously, thinking what fun it would be to have his pet with him sitting up so high in the air. "May he ride too?" he asked eagerly.

"Of course he may," laughed his father.

Antek took Bialek and handed Tadek the reins. "Hold them loosely and he will go right along for you," smiled his cousin.

“Come along, Kary,” called Tadek, the way he had heard his father speak to the horse.

Again the clump, clump of hoofs sounded on the road as the horse picked his way with the wagon rumbling behind him. High on the seat, Tadek, with the reins proudly held in his hands, glanced back from time to time to look at the new plow.

Bialek lifted his head to look about him.

“Bialek likes it too,” laughed Tadek.

“Here comes Jòsef with the cows,” said Antek, as he looked back across the pasture.

After they had driven into the yard, Antek took the reins and guided Kary around to the stable. Antek climbed down from the high seat with Bialek in his arms. He then helped Tadek, whose legs were still too short to reach the hub of the wheel.

Behind them the colors of the setting sun were like a large rainbow stretched out flat across the sky.

“Antek,” said Tadek, but he stopped as quickly as he had begun, for just then a soft tolling of a bell could be heard in the distance.

“The Angelus,” breathed Tadek, bowing his head in prayer. Antek did the same thing.

As the prayer ended Tadek's father called to him from the kitchen doorway, "Come, hurry. It's time for supper. Zosia is in here helping your mother. Antek will unharness Kary. We'll put the new plow away after supper."

Picking up Bialek, Tadek went toward the house.

"Umm, smells good!" he said as he entered the kitchen and saw his mother dishing up the steaming potatoes. His sixteen-year-old sister, Zosia, was busy patting the cheese into a fancy form and sticking little pieces of green here and there, to make tiny patterns against the white mould.

Tadek put Bialek in his box on the floor by the big stove in the back of the kitchen. He then went to a basin of water that stood on the little wooden table and washed his face and hands. Then he called, "All ready!"

It was not long before the happy little family was seated on benches around the big wooden table. From the center of the table a lamp glowed warmly on the brown earthenware bowls and wooden spoons.

Antek came into the room and took his place

beside Zosia. "Well, Zosia," he asked her, "how are the chickens? and did Marynka say how the geese behaved today?"

"The baby chicks are fine!" she answered. "They are growing fluffier every day. And Marynka said the geese behaved very well—all except one. She wandered away several times, but Krutchek brought her safely back, either with a bark or a friendly sniff."

"The geese are worse than Bialek," laughed the father, "always looking for something more to eat."

"How were the markets today?" asked the mother, looking toward her husband.

"They were quite crowded with peasants selling eggs, butter, cheese, and poultry," he answered. "By the way, before I forget," he added, "Jan is coming over tomorrow to help with the plowing, and—"

"May I help too?" broke in Tadek.

"Perhaps toward evening," smiled his father.

"Father," asked Tadek suddenly, "may I have a garden of my own?"

"Let me see," answered his father looking at the mother. "Just let me think. Oh! I know!" he said good naturedly. "You may

have the little plot of ground on the other side of the path that leads from the kitchen to the stable. But remember, you must attend to it, watch over it, weed it, and see that it is kept clean and watered regularly."

"I'll make you some garden tools," promised Antek.

"And I'll plant pansies around the garden," smiled Zosia.

"And you, Mother, can have some of the flowers for your altar," Tadek said, turning to her.

"Thank you. That will be very nice," smiled his mother.

"And I'll grow enough vegetables so that we all can have some. Even Bialek too!" laughed Tadek.

"Come, Antek," said the father after they had finished their supper. "I want to take a look around the farm and put the new plow in the stable. Zosia, see that the milk is skimmed, and tell Jòsef that there are extra scraps for the pigs. And you, Tadek," called his father as he turned to go into the yard, "I believe there is still fresh milk in the pitcher on the table for Bialek's supper."

"I'm coming now," Tadek almost shouted, getting up from the table where he had been dreaming of the patch of unturned earth by the side of the house.

"Mother," said Tadek, coming into the kitchen, "do you think Bialek could have some of that cheese that is left from supper?"

"Yes," she answered. "But first go and get the milk so that I can warm it up for Bialek while he is eating the cheese."

When Tadek had brought the pitcher of milk, his mother emptied it into the bowl that was warming on the stove. Then Tadek took the pan in which she had put the cheese for Bialek and went over to his little pet.

Bialek squealed with delight when he saw his master, and rolled over on his fat little side.

"It was good, wasn't it?" said Tadek, as Bialek ate the last mouthful, scraping in the pan for more.

"Here's the milk to wash it down," laughed his mother, handing Tadek the bowl.

"Here, not so fast!" Tadek warned, as the little pig drank and drank as fast as he could swallow the milk.

When Bialek had been fed, Tadek took him

out into the yard and left him to roll in the grass. He rooted and he sniffed here and there until he finally waddled over to the path that led to the field. There he found the leftovers from dinner that Jòsef had put in a large pan for the other pigs.

“Oink! Oink!” he squealed with delight. “I’m going to have another meal!” He put his hard little nose into the pan and went at the scraps as fast as any little pig could.

Meanwhile Tadek was in the kitchen helping his mother dry the dishes.

“Mother,” he said, “what kind of vegetables do you think I can have?”

“Perhaps beets, cucumbers, and radishes,” she answered, as she put the last wet bowl on the table for him to dry.

“But, Mother! I would like to have some lettuce, too!” said Tadek eagerly.

“Why?” she asked.

“Because Bialek likes lettuce leaves!”

“That is so,” laughed his mother. “I forgot about Bialek’s appetite. Now, Tadek,” she said, going to the kitchen door and looking out, “you had better bring Bialek in for the night. There is a heavy mist falling.”

“Bialek,” called Tadek, as he went out into the yard. But there was no little pig to be seen. “Bialek, Bialek, here, piggy pig—” he called again, but there was not even the slightest sound of a squeal.

“I wonder where he can be,” thought Tadek, looking anxiously around.

He walked a little farther—he heard something move. “That can’t be Bialek,” he thought to himself. But he walked briskly in the direction from which the noises had come.

There was a sudden squeal. Bialek lifted up his head to breathe, then went back for more.

“Bialek,” scolded Tadek affectionately, as he came closer to his pet. “I’ve never seen such a greedy pig! You’re always hungry!”

But Bialek was too busy to answer him.

Picking him up, Tadek walked back with Bialek squealing under his arm.

“Mother,” said Tadek when he came into the kitchen, “Bialek had a second supper. He found the pans in which Jòsef had put the scraps for the other pigs and—”

“What was he doing?” laughed Zosia, who had just come into the kitchen with a fresh pail of milk.

“Eating more supper,” smiled Tadek.

“Come, children,” said the mother. “It is getting late. It is time for you, Zosia, to get to your weaving. Tadek, if you want to finish your cousin Kasia’s wedding present in time you had better put Bialek in his box and start to work.”

“How many more days have I?” Tadek broke in wonderingly.

“What month is this?” asked his mother.

“*Kwiecien* (April), the flowering month,” he answered proudly.

“And what month is called the month of the blooming linden?”

“*Lipiec* (July),” Tadek answered. “Oh! I know,” he exclaimed, “I have three whole months.”

“Not quite,” answered his mother. “This is nearly the end of April. Now run along,” she said. “I must mix the dough for bread and Jòsef will soon be in for his supper.”

It was not long before Bialek was tucked safely in his box. Zosia put the milk into a tall crock. Then she and Tadek went about their duties.

“How pretty it looks!” exclaimed Tadek with pride, as he followed his sister over to the loom and looked at the table cloth she was weaving. “I like the red and blue stripes.”

“And how is the bowl coming along?” asked Zosia.

“I just can’t seem to get the star right,” said Tadek, going over to the carved chest in which he kept his tools and his work. He raised the top of the chest and took out his bowl and tools and came back to Zosia.

“All that the star needs is to be a bit more pointed,” she said, examining the bowl. “Then I am sure that it will be all right.”

“I’m going to paint the bowl blue and the star yellow like the ones in the sky,” beamed Tadek.

“That will be very pretty, I am sure,” answered Zosia, picking up her shuttle.

How happy the small boy and young girl looked as they sat in the lamp-lit room. Shadows were playing about the little painted table and benches and even along the side of the spinning wheel and across the loom. The colored designs on the soft blue tinted white-

washed walls shone in lacy patterns. The light of the little altar lamp flickered before the picture of the Holy Mother in the alcove.

A soft humming could be heard. It was their mother singing softly to herself as she worked.

A cow was mooing in the stable, and Kary was stamping in his stall.

"Listen!" said Zosia, "here come Father and Antek." She had heard the deep voices of the two men singing as they came up the path.

"Come, Mother," said the father jovially as he entered the kitchen. "Come, please sing with us. Antek will play his accordion and Jòsef his new willow flute that he made this winter. Then we can sing as we work, and I shall finish your leather case."

It was not long before lively tunes were coming from the accordion. Even the shrill flute sounded gayer than usual. The deep voices of the men, the soft notes of the women, and the boyish treble of Tadek floated into the late evening.

And Bialek was pleased. He turned over in his box and squealed with delight to think that he was being put to sleep by such gay music.

"Come, Tadek," said his father, when the

song was finished, "it is way past your bedtime. Don't forget that you have a garden to begin and —"

"May I start it tomorrow?" Tadek interrupted sleepily.

"That depends on how quickly you get to bed," answered his father.

When he had put his bowl and tools in the chest, Tadek went over to the little alcove, and, kneeling before the picture of the Holy Mother, said his prayers. Then bidding everyone a hurried good night, he started to bed.

"Hmmm!" he laughed as he crawled in under the homespun covers, "Bialek will be a big help—he will eat—all the—weeds—and—"

But Tadek was fast asleep.





A BUSY DAY

CHAPTER II

SOMETHING woke Tadek bright and early the next morning. A hand was shaking him gently.

“Come, Tadek, don’t make any noise—I’m going to help you get your garden started,” whispered Antek, as the sleepy little boy sat up suddenly in bed, rubbing the sleep from his eyelids.

It was not long before Tadek was dressed

and on his way with Antek to the kitchen. "Antek," he called softly, stooping to stroke his little pig's head, "may I take Bialek with me?"

"Yes, but don't let him make too much noise," answered Antek, picking up two medium-sized sticks as he started out of the room.

"Up so early!" said Jòsef good-naturedly, as he came into the kitchen.

"Yes," whispered Tadek excitedly. "We're going to start my garden."

"I wish that I had time to help," said Jòsef, "but I must start the fire in the stove, and feed the pigs."

"I wish that you could help, too," said Tadek, picking up Bialek and going to the open door.

As he went into the yard, the soft, damp morning air struck his face. He looked about him. The ruddy glow of the dawn was beginning to melt in the east, like the pearly colorings that live inside a sea shell. The stable and storeroom were still sleeping in the haze that clung along the ground. There had been a slight frost during the night and everything was shining in the white misty glow.

Cocks were crowing. The low bellowing of

the cows could be heard as they waited to be milked. A lark rose from the ground, and as it mounted high into the sky it called in a happy silvery voice to the whole countryside.

“See what I have for you!” said Antek, as they came to the plot of ground that was to be Tadek’s garden. “I finished them for you last night after you had gone to bed.”

“Thank you! Thank you!” said Tadek gleefully, taking the hoe and rake. “They are just my size,” he laughed, looking at them closely.

“Now put Bialek on the ground. He will make himself happy in the grass,” said Antek.

“First pull up the weeds. Then dig hard with your hoe to break the ground. I’ll go into the storeroom and get my tools, then we can work together,” said Antek.

Tadek bent his sturdy little body and went to work. He pulled up a big patch of weeds. Then he chopped the ground and dug hard into it with his hoe. Some of the earth was soft, other parts of it were hard and full of tiny stones and bits of roots.

“Put the stones and weeds into one pile,” directed Antek, returning with a large hoe and rake. “We’ll rake afterwards.”

How quickly the small boy and young man worked! They were too busy to talk with each other. All that they noticed or heard was Bialek squealing as he played.

“It seems to me, Tadek,” smiled Jòsef, as he stopped on his way to the stable, “that it will not be long before your garden will be ready for its seeds.”

“It does look that way,” answered Antek, looking at the upturned earth.

“Kleck, kleck,” called a familiar voice.

“A stork!” Tadek called out.

“A sign of good luck,” said Antek, making the sign of the cross.

As they continued their work, other things began to awaken and stir around them. They could hear the mother moving in the kitchen as she prepared breakfast. They heard other voices. It was the father and Zosia talking to each other as they came into the yard.

“Well! Well!” laughed the father in surprise when he saw Tadek and Antek at work in the garden. “‘Who rises with the sun is favored by God’,” he said and went on his way with Zosia beside him carrying a bowl of bread for the baby chicks.

"Come, Tadek! Come, Antek! The table is set and breakfast is ready," called Zosia, as she came back to the kitchen with her empty pan.

"We're coming," answered Antek straightening his long body and letting the hoe drop to the ground.

But Tadek still worked on.

"Tadek," called Antek as he started ahead. "We must hurry for there is plenty of work to be done today. There's the new plow, and —"

"Coming," broke in Tadek, following his cousin. "Bialek, Bialek!" he called. "It's time for breakfast."

Bialek waddled after them with his short tail curled up behind him.

"Mother! We've started my garden!" exclaimed Tadek, coming into the kitchen.

"So I see, my son," answered his mother, patting his face gently. "I went to waken you and found your bed empty," she said. "Zosia told me where I could find you."

"And you even found Bialek's bed empty, too!" laughed Tadek.

After a hearty breakfast the father said, "We're going to start our plowing today. Jan

has already come with his horse and has begun to work in the field.”

“I’m going to feed Bialek,” said Tadek, leaving the table and getting Bialek’s feed pan.

“Mother,” said Zosia, as she helped her mother remove the dishes from the table, “there are many more eggs this morning.”

“We’ll take them to market the day after tomorrow. The cheese should be ready by then,” she answered.

“And perhaps I’ll soon have some vegetables to sell from my garden,” called Tadek proudly, as he picked up Bialek’s empty pan.

“I’m going to take the cows to the pasture now,” said Zosia, as she finished helping her mother.

“Come, Bialek,” said Tadek. “We have work to do.”

It was not long before Zosia was on her way to the pasture and Tadek was back in his garden working. As he worked he sang:

“Weed and hoe, weed and hoe!
Singing as I make each row.
Rake and sow, rake and sow!
Singing as I gaily go.

“Rain-wind blow, sun-wind blow!
Singing for I know, I know,
Sun and rain will not be slow,
Singing as my seedlings grow.”

“The pile of weeds and stones is getting larger and larger,” said Tadek to himself, as he stopped to look at the pile beside him that had grown wider and higher. “Bialek,” he said, “just think we are almost ready to plant and —”

“Not quite, my son,” interrupted the mother, who had tiptoed into the yard after she had finished her household duties, to see how Tadek was getting along. “Give me the rake and I will help you,” she said.

As Tadek hoed, his mother raked. Soon the little strip of earth began to look clean, fresh, and smooth.

“Bialek, Bialek! Keep away from that dirt pile,” called Tadek when he heard a squealing sound coming from his pet.

“He certainly will eat anything,” laughed his mother, looking at Bialek’s fat little body as he went rooting around in the pile of weeds and stones. The two worked on and on while Bialek nibbled here and there, squealing every

so often to tell them that he was having a beautiful time.

Finally, when the ground was weeded, hoed, and raked, the mother said, "Come, Tadek. We must hurry. It is time to carry the dinner out to the men in the field."

With Bialek in his arms, Tadek followed his mother into the house.

"Oink! Oink!" squealed Bialek, as his little master put him into his box. "Those potatoes cooking smell good; I want some."

When hands and faces were washed, the mother took down a big dipper and with it scooped sweet milk from a large brown crock, emptying it into an earthenware pot. She went over to the stove and turned the steaming noodles into one-half a double earthen pot.

She then mashed the boiled potatoes and put them in the other section of the pot. Next she cut thick slices of bread from a large dark loaf and wrapped them in a cloth.

"Now I'm ready," she said, turning to Tadek.

"May I carry the big double pot?" he asked.

"I think that you had better carry the smaller one with the milk," answered his mother, picking up the heavier food. "Don't forget you have

Bialek too," she laughed as she started through the door.

With Bialek tucked under his left arm, Tadek took the pot in his right hand and followed closely behind his mother.

"Oink! Oink!" squealed Bialek, as he wriggled in Tadek's arm. "I want to get down."

"Not so soon," answered Tadek, holding the pig tighter.

How good the fresh earth smelled to them as they walked along! The sun shone down with all its might. Everything seemed to be alive!

"Look how big the baby chicks have grown!" exclaimed Tadek, as they passed by the chicken yard where many chicks were gathered about their mothers.

"Mmph, mmph," grunted the hogs as they wallowed in the mud.

"Oink, oink," squealed Bialek again, "I want to get down."

"Put him down," said the mother. "He will follow us. He smells the bread."

Bialek squealed half with delight and half with hunger, and he followed closely behind Tadek's bare feet.

When they came to the field where the men

were working, Tadek shouted, "There is father!"

He saw his father dressed in his long overblouse, belted in by a large dark girdle and hanging loosely over his baggy trouser legs, as he walked behind the new plow that was being tugged over the level field. It turned up the rich, warm soil in good deep furrows and made the ground ready for the sowing that was soon to follow. He heard his father calling, "Get up, Kary, get up!"

"Dinner time already?" asked the father, bringing Kary to a stop, as his wife and son stood beside him. "I had—"

The soft tolling of the church bell interrupted him.

"The Angelus," breathed the father, bowing his head in prayer. A sudden stillness came over everyone and everything. Tadek and his mother placed the pots on the ground and bowed their heads too in silent prayer, as they did every day when the Angelus rang—morning, noon, and evening.

"I had no idea that it was noon," continued the father after the last note of the bell had faded away.

“How does the new plow work?” asked Tadek eagerly, looking at the long, heavy curved handles.

“Smoothly and evenly,” answered his father.

He unhitched Kary and left the plough standing in the field. Then he led the horse to graze in the meadow. As he came back to where the mother and Tadek stood, he called, “Come, Antek! Come, Jan! Come, Jòsef! Come, Stas! Dinner is here!”

When all were seated under an old tree that grew by the side of the meadow, the mother spread the dinner before them. How good the sweet milk, the dark bread, the warm noodles, and mashed potatoes tasted to them, as they sat there in the shade!

“Oink! Oink!” squealed Bialek, as if to say, “when do I get my dinner?”

“Here you are,” laughed the father, breaking some bread into a cup partly filled with milk.

“Look at him eat!” called Antek. Bialek ate his dinner as though he had not tasted food for days.

“I wonder how Marynka and the geese are getting along,” said the mother.

“The geese will behave today, I am sure,” replied Antek.

“I saw Krutchek keeping that wandering goose close to the flock as they went across the meadow,” broke in Jòsef.

“He’s a faithful dog,” said the father, thinking of the dog, who was so very black that he had been named after the crow.

“Soon we’ll be ready to sow!” remarked Antek after a little silence, looking across the furrowed ground.

“It won’t take us long now,” agreed the father. “The extra help and the new plow certainly have made the work go along faster.”

“Mother,” said Tadek when he saw his father get up from the ground to hitch Kary to the plow, “may I stay here and help? My garden is all ready to plant. May I?” he begged eagerly.

“Yes,” she smiled. “But don’t get in the way. I am going back to the house to do some mending and put the supper on,” she said, picking up the empty pots and putting them one within the other.

“Father,” said Tadek, as his mother started

toward the house singing to herself softly as she went. "May I plow?"

"I'm afraid you can't reach the handles," answered his father.

"Oh, I know what I can do!" said Tadek excitedly, looking at the long curved handles that were a bit too high for him. "I can get between them and walk in front of you."

"That is so," laughed the father. "But stand very close to me. Now, what about Bialek?" he asked, turning around.

But Bialek was fast asleep, curled up in a little ball at the foot of the tree where the family had eaten their dinner.

"He'll take care of himself," laughed Tadek's father. "He keeps himself busy by either eating or sleeping. Now come, Tadek," he said.

It was great fun to walk between the big handles in front of his strong father and watch the earth turn over and over until it made deep furrows.

"Here comes Antek with the harrow!" said the father, turning the horse to another strip of plowed ground. "You know that he will run it over the plowed part. It will break up all the



It was great fun to walk between the big handles.

lumpy earth until it is fine and smooth. Then the ground will be ready to receive the seeds that we shall start sowing tomorrow.”

“Now, Tadek,” said his father when he had brought the horse to a stop, “suppose you sit down under the tree and rest a bit. I will call you when I am ready to go home.”

Tadek went over to the tree, where he found Bialek nibbling at the grass.

“Oink! Oink!” squealed the pig. “I have had a beautiful afternoon. All by myself, too, first sleeping, then rolling in the grass and finding strange things to eat,” his squealing seemed to say as he went back to his nibbling.

Tadek lay down under the tree. His little body felt tired and his hands were red from holding on to the hard handles of the plow.

“Oink! Oink!” squealed Bialek—but Tadek was counting the furrows. “There are——”

“Tadek! Tadek!” he heard a voice calling. “It’s time to wake up.”

“That’s Father, I know,” he said, “but he seems so far away—”

“Tadek!” the voice was coming nearer and louder. “Come, sleepy head,” said his father, shaking him gently. “It’s time to go home.”

"I was counting the furrows," said Tadek, getting up from the ground.

"You were counting them in a dream," smiled his father.

Tadek watched his father unhitch Kary from the plow. "I'll leave it here for the night. The sky looks clear," his father said as he turned the new plow over on one side. As he turned back to Tadek he laughed, "My, but I'm hungry! How about you?"

"I'm hungry, very hungry," answered Tadek, suddenly realizing that he was. He knew now why his stomach felt so empty and his throat so dry. Something did feel hollow inside of him. It seemed more than just hours ago that he had had something to eat and drink.

"Come. You may ride back on Kary. I'll carry Bialek," said his father.

"Oink! Oink!" squealed Bialek. "I am hungry and tired, too. I've had a very busy day for a pig."

The sun was setting. The father put Tadek on Kary's big broad back. When he had picked up Bialek and tucked him under his arm, they started for the house.



VISITORS

CHAPTER III

FATHER," called Tadek, as he jogged along on Kary, "there is some one coming up the road!"

"Let me see who it is!" said the father, turning to look in the direction his son had indicated.

An old man was walking slowly toward them under the tall poplar trees that led to the house.

“Why! It’s Uncle Stach,” exclaimed the father in surprise. “Come, Tadek,” he said, helping the little fellow down. “I’ll hitch Kary to the post. You run and tell Mother that Uncle Stach is here.”

As the father went to meet the old man, Tadek picked up Bialek and ran into the house calling, “Mother, Uncle Stach is here. He’s coming up the road with Father now!”

“I’m glad he’s come! We haven’t seen him for a long time. He will bring us news!” answered his mother as she went to meet the visitor, with Tadek running beside her.

“Praised be Jesus Christ,” greeted the uncle when he was met by the mother and Tadek.

Together they answered him, “Unto the ages of ages—Amen.”

“How you’ve grown, Tadek!” smiled his uncle. “It wasn’t but last autumn that I was here!”

“Yes, and I have a garden of my very own,” said Tadek proudly.

“You must be tired, Uncle Stach,” said the mother.

“I’ve come a long way,” he answered, “but something to eat and drink will refresh me.”

“You shall have plenty of both,” smiled the mother, as they entered the house.

“Why! Uncle Stach! When did you come?” exclaimed Zosia in surprise as she came into the kitchen.

“Just a few minutes ago,” replied the uncle.

“Come, Zosia, pour the milk. Uncle Stach is hungry,” said the mother, as she emptied the steaming potatoes into a bowl.

“So am I,” Zosia answered.

After they had eaten heartily of their plain supper the father inquired of Uncle Stach what news he brought.

“Everyone is well. Jan read his first mass in the Church of Our Lady last Sunday,” he answered.

“You must have been very proud,” smiled the mother.

“Yes, I was proud and happy,” replied the uncle, as he thought of his youngest son in his first priest’s robes.

“And what about Michael and his family?” asked the father.

“I do not see Michael quite so often. He is busy with his wife, preparing for Kasia’s wedding and—”

“Look! Uncle Stach!” interrupted Tadek, pulling out his bowl from the chest. “I’m making this for Kasia.”

“How well you are doing it” smiled his uncle. “I am sure she will enjoy using it!”

“But look! See what Father has made for Kasia,” said Zosia proudly.

“It is beautiful!” exclaimed the old man, as he stood admiring the chest with its lovely colors painted in the carved designs.

“Look inside, and see what Mother and Zosia have made, too,” urged Tadek, as he set his bowl on the table.

The mother opened the chest and took out a piece of linen that she had woven and helped Zosia to embroider.

“Where did you get the flax?” inquired the uncle.

“Antek’s mother sent it to me,” she answered. “It was so soft and fine!”

“It has made beautiful cloth,” said the uncle, “and—”

“Is that music I hear?” interrupted the father.

“It certainly is,” said the mother, as they listened.

"It's coming from the fields," said Antek, going to the open window.

"It must be the gypsies that I saw from the field," said Zosia. "They were coming along the road as I came home."

"Let's go and see!" exclaimed Tadek.

"Come along," said the father, as he started out of the house with Tadek walking beside him.

"I'll feed Bialek," offered Zosia.

"All right," answered Tadek.

As Tadek and his father crossed the field, they saw near the road a group of people gathered around covered wagons. From their midst came the soft voice of a girl singing to the music of a fiddle.

When they reached the group, the father said, "Good evening!"

"Good evening!" answered a tall dark man. "Is this your field?" he asked, as the other gypsies gathered about him.

"Yes," answered the father, "we're getting ready to plow this part of the field in the morning."

"We're moving on at daybreak," said the gypsy.

"Then you may camp here for the night," replied the father.

"Come, Maryska! Come, Jendrek!" called the gypsy. "Come, sing and play for the little boy."

A small girl got down from one of the wagons and came into the circle of firelight. Her dark eyes sparkled in a face browned by sun and wind, and from beneath the red kerchief on her head hung two braids of very dark hair. Her blouse was a bright red color, as was the full skirt that hung nearly to her bare ankles. A boy a few years older followed her.

"What shall it be?" she asked, turning to Tadek.

"The one that you were singing as we came up the road," he answered.

"My Spring Song!" she commanded, turning to the boy with the fiddle.

As she sang she told of the little seeds that were planted in the warm earth; how they grew into flowers; how the birds built their nests in the trees; how the children played in the warm sunshine; how the goose girl tended her flock; and how the busy bee sang as it worked in the clover field.



A small girl came into the circle of firelight.

“I like that! I like that!” exclaimed Tadek happily. “I wish Mother and Zosia could hear it,” he continued, turning to his father.

“Perhaps they have!” said the father. “We heard the song from the wagon while we were still at home. Now the little girl has sung for us in the open. I am sure that her song was carried across the field to Mother.”

“I hope so,” said Tadek. Then he and his father thanked the girl for her song and the boy for his music. When they had bade the gypsies good night, they started back to the house.

“Mother!” exclaimed Tadek excitedly, as he came into the kitchen. “They were gypsies! A little girl sang for us! A boy played the fiddle!”



TADEK LISTENS

CHAPTER IV

TADEK," said his uncle, as he and the little boy sat on the porch step watching the stars fill up the sky, "I've some stories for you!"

"Some more like the one that you told me the last time?" asked Tadek eagerly.

"No, these are quite different," answered the uncle.

"Please begin, please," pleaded Tadek.

"It is said," began the old man, "that many,

many hundreds of years ago the Polish people were already living in this country which had been theirs as far back as anyone knew. The country was in part covered with large, majestic forests. But the people did not care to live mostly by hunting, so they chopped down some of the trees to get more land to cultivate. The country became, by and by, not only forest-grown but covered with vast fields as well.

“As you know, the word for field in Polish is ‘*pole*.’ Because our people loved nature so very much and loved to work the soil, they gave to their country the name of Polska, which means the land of the fields.

“They were peaceful folk and would not attack any of their neighboring people. Yet they had, now and then, to defend their fields and homes from raids by some of their neighbors. So they decided for that purpose that they would elect a chief, also called king, to lead their young men in battle for the protection of women, children, homes, and fields.

“One of these kings, ever so long ago, had the name of Lech. He was very brave and noble of spirit.

“One day while King Lech was coming home

through the forest he saw a white eagle soaring high in the sky. The sight of this bird, the noblest of its species, appealed to him. It looked so proud and dauntless flying straight up to the sun.

“A little farther on King Lech discovered a nest with some little white eagles. Then he said to his followers riding close to him, ‘This is a sign. I shall build a town upon this place and it will be my capital. It will be called Gniezno (from a word in Polish meaning nest). The White Eagle is to be the emblem of my country.’ ”

“Oh! I know!” Tadek broke in excitedly.

“What is it?” asked his uncle curiously.

“That is why our Polish flag has a white eagle on it now,” answered Tadek proudly.

“It certainly is,” answered the uncle, continuing. “Now, my little fellow, how would you like to hear another story? Only this one will be quite different from all the others.”

“Please tell me another,” answered Tadek pleadingly.

“Do you know that crimson flower that grows in the wheat fields, and what it is called?” asked the uncle.

“It’s the poppy, Uncle Stach,” answered Tadek, moving closer to the old man.

“Well, Tadek,” went on the story-teller, “it is told that the Blessed Mother, when walking through the fields, was pricked by the sharp stalks of grain that lay on the ground, causing her feet to bleed. The marks of her footprints have remained there ever since, only in the shape of red flowers. The blue flowers that you have also seen growing in the field get their color from her robe.”

“What about the pink ones?” asked Tadek. “Where did they come from?”

“The little pink flowers, whose heads look so much like nails, those that you have seen so often growing wild over the fields and in the ditches, are said to have sprung from the nails that fastened Our Saviour to the Cross. Some even say that sparrows flying by the Cross on Mount Calvary protected Our Lord from other flying birds and insects. When the nails dropped from the cross the sparrows buried them in the fields and from them sprang the little pinks in the shape of nails. That is why the sparrows never touch a pink nor do it any harm.

“The sparrows, too, were always silent birds until one day the hands of the Christ Child stroked their feathers. They were so happy that they chirped loudly for joy, to show how thankful they were for His kindness. That is how the sparrow got his chirp.

“Plums,” continued Uncle Stach, “were always known to be a very dry fruit. But one day when the Lord was still a Child He became very hungry, and in His search for food He came across some plum trees. He played with the dry branches and the fruit. At His touch the fruit began to fill with juice and became round and full on the twigs.

“The poor aspen tree was not so fortunate. When the Holy Family fled from Egypt, it did not dare give them shelter underneath its branches because it feared King Herod. That is why the tree still shivers and trembles.

“But the hazel tree was kind. It opened its leaves and the Holy Family found shelter beneath them in safety. And from that day on the hazel tree has had a special blessing. It will never be struck by lightning and all that seek shelter beneath it, even today, shall be sheltered from harm during a thunder storm.

“Still, it is told that the cuckoo bird was resting in the branches of the hazel tree while the Holy Family was beneath it. To please King Herod, the cuckoo called loudly, ‘Cuckoo! Cuckoo!’ For that the little bird suffered, as he has never again had a nest which he could call his own.

“The lark fared better. He was more successful. He sang his sweet song to Adam, to comfort him when he left the Garden of Eden. He even sang above Our Saviour’s cross on Calvary and tried as hard as he could with his little bill to pick the thorns out of Christ’s crown. He is also the special song bird of the Virgin Mary in Paradise. It is known that she protects him; and God has allowed the lark to remind us of Heaven by his sweet silvery song. We all know that if anyone harms a lark he will suffer the penalty of blindness.

“The nightingales are also birds that are especially guided by Heaven. Although we hear them singing in the night, they have another song we do not hear here on earth—one that they sing to Heaven alone.”

“Don’t we ever hear that one?” asked Tadek anxiously.

“No, that song is sung without our ever hearing it. That one is for Heaven alone,” repeated Uncle Stach; then he continued:

“And you know from Epiphany onward, for a number of weeks, if you look on a bright, clear evening at the sky you will see the Three Kings going across the Milky Way dressed in beautiful robes. They are not the three Wise Men, but three kings, who at one time ruled the earth. It is said that the Archangel Gabriel chooses them on New Year’s day to welcome Christ in Heaven as they greeted Him in His crib. Not everyone can see them. If you have been honest, truthful, and good, you shall be blessed not only with seeing them, but blessings of good fortune shall come to you all of that year.”

“Now, my lad, what day comes after Friday?” asked the kind uncle.

“Let me see,” said Tadek, still thinking of the Three Kings crossing the Milky Way, as he looked into the starry sky.

“Saturday,” he beamed.

“Yes, Saturday,” answered his uncle. “Well, always on Saturday, whether it is summer or winter—even on the coldest or the



“ . . . three kings who once ruled the earth.”

warmest days—whether it is raining or the day is very dreary, the day will not pass by without one tiny bit of the sun's rays. That's because it is told that this day, Saturday, the Christ Child's shirt was being washed and the sun came out and shone down brightly to dry it."

"Oh, I know!" exclaimed Tadek excitedly, "that is why Mother says that you can always find a light some place in the sky on Saturday."

"Yes," answered his uncle, getting up from the porch step and starting into the house.

Tadek followed closely behind him but stopped as he came into the kitchen, for he heard Bialek squealing in his box.

"Humph," laughed Tadek out loud and said, "Perhaps that is why Bialek is always so white, much whiter than the other pigs—even his mother and father and his brothers and sisters. He must have been born on a very sunny day and the sun must have shone down very, very hard on him."

"That must be it. Perhaps it was Saturday," laughed Uncle Stach good-naturedly, as they left the kitchen together.



AN INCIDENT IN THE NIGHT

CHAPTER V

ANTEK lay quietly in his bed listening. "Was I dreaming?" he wondered.

Something was moving about, near the house.

Getting out of bed, Antek tiptoed past the sleeping Tadek. Stopping at Jòsef's cot, he shook him. "Listen," he whispered, "do you hear footsteps?"

Jòsef and Antek crept to the window and looked out into a night sky, still heavy with

stars. They heard a growl, some hurried steps. Then all was quiet. Nothing moved.

“Krutchek never growls like that unless there is something strange around!” whispered Antek, as he and Jòsef slipped quickly into their clothes, then tiptoed out of the room, through the kitchen and into the yard.

“Sh-sh!” breathed Antek. “I hear something.”

Steps sounded slowly and stealthily on the grass near the chicken yard. A shadow darkened the light garden path.

“Come, Jòsef!” whispered Antek, leading the way. “Crawl on your hands and knees!”

As they reached the stable, Antek and Jòsef dropped flat on the ground.

The footsteps were coming closer! A man with a bag over his shoulder stopped in front of the chicken house. The door swung easily on its hinges and he went in.

“I’ll let Krutchek loose! You watch the man,” said Antek softly, crawling toward the stable door.

“That’s queer!” thought Antek. “I shut the stable door tight the last thing this evening and now it is open!”

He crawled through the dark opening. "Krutchek!" he called softly. "That's queer, too," he thought. "He always answers and comes when I call!"

He stood up and struck a match. Shielding the tiny light in his cupped palms, he looked eagerly about in the shadows.

"There you are!" he cried softly, when he at last spied the dog. "No wonder you can't move or bark—tied and muzzled!"

Taking a long rope from a hook, Antek looped it around Krutchek's neck. Then he untied the dog's legs, but left his mouth muzzled. With Krutchek straining at the leash, the two slipped quietly out of the stable.

"Sit down, old boy," Antek whispered softly, when the two had crawled back to Jòsef. "You'll be free in a moment."

"Listen!" commanded Jòsef.

The man in the chicken house was talking. "What a fine dinner you're going to make, my fat hen, and—"

"Cluck! Cluck!" interrupted the bird, as a reaching hand disturbed her rest.

The clucking of one hen aroused the other fowls. Soon all were awake and squawking.

In the meantime, the father was getting hurriedly into his clothes. "Mother," he whispered, "something's wrong at the chicken house!"

"I hear a noise!" she answered, listening. "Shall I come, too?"

"No, I'll get Antek and Jòsef," he answered as he went out of the door. But Antek's and Jòsef's beds were empty.

Hastening out of the house, the father walked quickly down the path. He stopped at the stable, as he heard Antek saying, "Jòsef, here's our chance!" Then Antek untied the rag that had been fastened around the dog's mouth.

The stranger came out of the chicken house, his shoulders stooping under the bulging bag on his back. As he started down the path, Jòsef whispered, "Let Krutchek go!"

"Get him, old boy!" cried Antek, loosening the rope, but still holding on to it. The dog jumped forward, barking.

The man jumped. When he saw the dog, he ran. But his bag was heavy. He had the choice of being caught by the dog or losing the chickens; he dropped the bag.

“Give Krutchek more rope!” cried Jòsef.

Antek lengthened the leash, and Krutchek ran snapping at the man’s heels.

“Let the man go,” laughed the father. “He’s frightened enough. A gypsy, just as I thought!”

“He picked the best hens!” said Antek, opening the bag.

When all the chickens were safely back in their coop, Jòsef said, “I’ll sleep in the stable for the rest of the night.”

“Oh, he won’t return!” assured the father. “Krutchek won’t let him,” he added, patting the dog’s head.

“I’ll make a bed in the kitchen,” offered Antek. “If Jòsef needs me, I’ll be near.”

As the father and Antek walked back to the house, a small form came down the path.

“Tadek!” exclaimed the father, “what are you doing out here?”

“I heard noises and couldn’t find Antek and Jòsef and—”

“Come,” said his father, as he heard Tadek’s teeth chattering, “the night air is cold!”

“What was out there?” asked Tadek excitedly, as they came into the warm kitchen.



When he saw the dog, he ran.

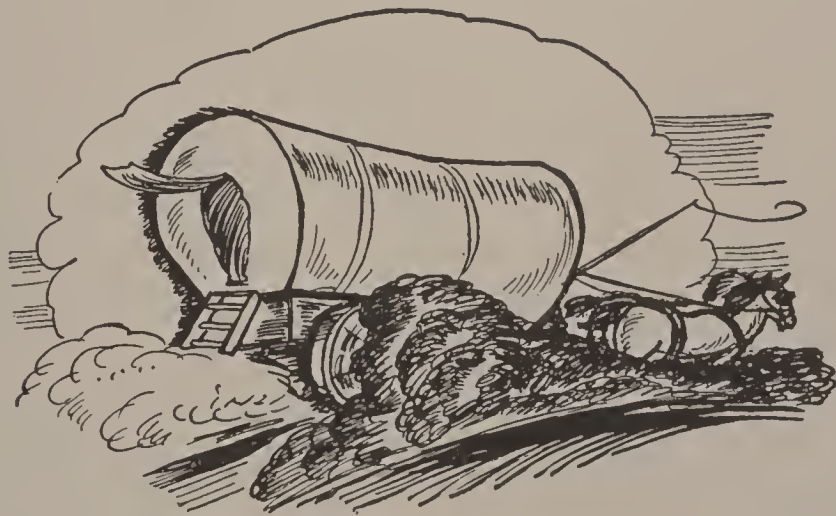
“Only a gypsy trying to steal our best hens for his breakfast,” smiled his father.

“Tell me all about it!” pleaded Tadek.

“Not tonight. Wait till morning,” answered his father.

“I’m glad that he didn’t take Bialek!” said Tadek, looking into the box where his little pet pig slept soundly.

As the father got back into bed, he heard wagon wheels going over the road. “Mother,” he laughed, “the gypsies are moving on.”





SOWING SEEDS

CHAPTER VI

LOOK! Uncle Stach!" called Tadek excitedly the next morning, as he looked at the little furrows with he had made in his garden.

"That looks fine!" said his uncle. "But come, we shall make the others."

As the uncle drew lines across the earth with a stick, marking off the garden in even strips, Tadek took the handle of his rake and pulled it across the marked ground. As he

pushed hard into the soft earth, it separated, forming little mounds on either side.

“Tadek,” said his uncle, when they had finished making the ground ready to plant, “it is time for the seeds.”

“Which shall we plant first?” asked Tadek eagerly.

“In the first two rows,” answered Uncle Stach, “suppose you sow the lettuce seeds, then the beets, next to them the radishes, and in the last two rows, the cucumbers.”

Bialek waddled over to Tadek. Looking around, he called, “Oink! Oink! I don’t see anything but earth—I’ll go back to the grass.” And off he waddled again.

As Tadek scattered the seeds in their rows, his uncle drew the earth back over them with the rake.

“And now, Tadek,” he said, as he stamped down the planted ground, “we shall sprinkle it with water.” They filled two wooden buckets at the well, and carried them back to the garden.

Finally, when the ground was thoroughly sprinkled, Tadek said, “Uncle Stach, Zosia is going to plant pansies around my garden.”

“Then you will have two gardens,” laughed his uncle, picking up the empty buckets. “Now come, Tadek,” he said, “put your tools away; then we’ll go into the fields.”

As Tadek started toward the house with his hoe and rake, he turned around and called, “Bialek, Bialek, come. We are going to help father!”

“Oink! Oink!” squealed Bialek, as he rolled over, stood up, and waddled after his little master.

“Mother!” exclaimed Tadek, coming into the kitchen. “My garden is all planted! And now Bialek and I are going with Uncle Stach to help father,” he said, placing his rake and hoe in a corner out of the way.

“I’m coming, too,” said his mother, picking up the dinner pots, “but I am afraid Bialek will have to stay at home. He will be in the way. There is a great deal to be done. I’ve put his dinner in his pan.”

Tadek picked up Bialek’s feed pan, full of bread and milk, and went into the yard. “Bialek,” he called, “here’s your dinner. Now, be a good pig while I am helping Father.”

“Uncle Stach,” said Tadek, as he and the

mother met his uncle coming from the store-room, "Mother's coming too!"

When they reached the field they saw Antek with a long bag hanging from his shoulders. As he walked along, guiding himself by the furrows, he held the bag straight before him with his left hand, while with his right he dipped into it and sowed the seed on the prepared ground.

"Father!" called Tadek, when he saw his father behind the new plow. "Father!" he repeated, "my garden is all planted!"

"So you've come to help us!" laughed his father, bringing Kary to a stop.

"Yes," responded Tadek, "but Bialek had to stay at home."

"Well, that's too bad. But let me see," said his father good-naturedly, "what work we have for you. Oh, I know!" he laughed. "You can help Mother and Jòsef in the potato field."

After their midday meal the mother, Jòsef, and Tadek crossed the rye field into another part of the plowed land.

"The potatoes are all ready to plant," said Jòsef. "Antek and I quartered them this morning and Jan brought them over in his cart."

“Look how many pieces there are!” exclaimed Tadek excitedly, as he fingered the quartered potatoes heaped in little piles along the ground.

“Tadek,” said his mother, “you and I’ll plant the potatoes and Jòsef will cover them over with the soil.”

What fun it was to drop one of the little pieces, each with an eye, into the deep hollows and hear the earth fall softly over it as they walked along.

“Now, Tadek,” said his mother when the last pile of potatoes had been planted, “come, we must hurry home. There is the supper to get, the eggs to put in baskets, the cheese to put in cloth, and—”

“Oh, I know!” exclaimed Tadek. “Tomorrow is market day.”

“Yes,” answered his mother, “and I need your help.”

As they started homeward they saw Jan with his horse pulling the brush harrow across the sown field.

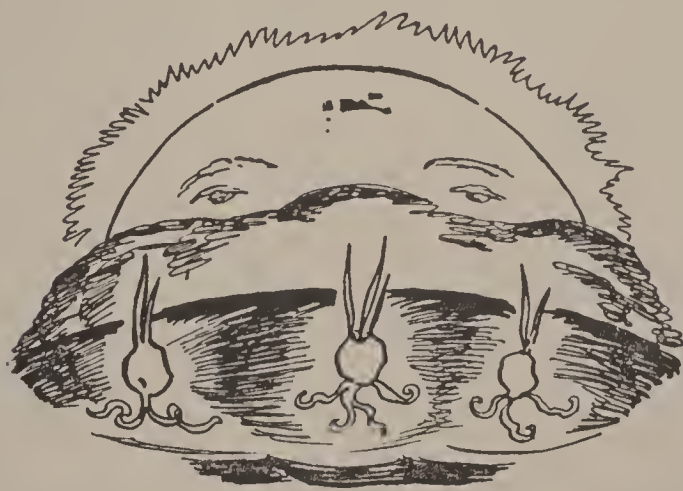
“Soon there will be little green shoots coming up,” smiled his mother, looking at the harrow, as the horse dragged it slowly across



He held the bag straight before him.

the land, mixing the seed and earth together, and pressing it firmly into the ground.

“And I’ll have vegetables soon too,” laughed Tadek, thinking of his own garden.





TO KRAKOW

CHAPTER VII

TADEK," called his mother very early next morning, "we're ready to start. Let's sing before we go!"

The boy replied excitedly from the yard, and picking up Bialek ran toward the cart. Standing together they began to sing the Morning Hymn, as the men bared their heads:

“When morning dawn doth rise,
To Thee, earth, sea, and skies,
To Thee, each living thing,
Be praised, O Lord, doth sing.

And man, whom measureless
Thy various gifts do bless,
Who dost preserve his days,
Shall he not give Thee praise?

Search sleep unseals mine eye
To Thee, O Lord, I cry;
My Lord in Heaven I call,
And seek Thee round in all.

Many are dead who lay
To sleep but yesterday;
We have awaked once more,
To praise Thee and adore.”

Uncle Stach mounted the seat. The mother followed him. All the baskets and bundles of green stuff for market were already packed in.

When Kary was given his reins, boy, pig, mother, and uncle were on their way. As they drove along, they saw the folk at work in the freshly ploughed fields. The late spring planting was still on. Ahead in the distance was the smoke of the chimneys of Krakow. And an hour later they began to enter the New Town.

Through the long streets they drove, lined with brick houses, past the big hospital, and at last out on to the beautiful Plantations that run in a circle right around where the moat and wall of the Old Town used to be. Turning here to the left they made their way slowly through the moving crowd of peasant women towards the Florian Gate. Everywhere were wagons laden with poultry, eggs, and cheese.

When they came to a large turreted circular fort built of brick, the uncle brought Kary to a stop. "Tadek," he said, "you already know that this old fortress is called the Rondel or the Barbican."

"Yes," agreed Tadek.

"Oink! Oink!" squealed Bialek, as if to say, "I know too."

"Those loopholes in the middle on the ground floor," explained the uncle, "were at one time used for cannon. Those smaller loopholes that you see higher up made it possible to throw down stones or pour boiling pitch or water on the enemy when they came too near. Those seven turrets that stand out like separate towers on the roof served as sentry boxes. There was a gangway with a draw-

bridge over the moat that connected the Barbican with the City Gate."

They were now at the ancient Florian Gate, a tall square stone tower fitted into the wall, mellowed by long standing. As they drove slowly through the large archway from the new into the old city of Krakow, they came into a street lined on both sides with shops and big venerable houses. In the distance, the uneven towers of the famous old church, Panna Marya, or Our Lady Mary as it is called, stood like tall pillars against the blue sky.

Very soon they came to the Rynek, or market place. Right in front was one of Krakow's most celebrated landmarks, the Sukiennice, or Cloth Hall, which stands in the Rynek. It is a beautiful old building, graced by a delicately pinnacled roof, long colonnades, and quaint outside stairways. This being market day, peasant stands laden with produce were now arranged in the open square in front of the famous old building.

"Tadek," said his mother when she had found her stall, "you hold Bialek so that he does not get away, while Uncle Stach and I unload the cart."

As Tadek held his pet tightly in his arms he looked about him. There were many stalls already filled with peasants displaying and selling their wares. The gaily colored dresses and the bright kerchiefs of the women made patches of red, blue, and orange against the dark background of the building.

“Listen! The *Hejnal* (the trumpet call in honor of the Virgin),” breathed Tadek.

As he stood looking up toward the left tower of the church of Our Lady Mary, Tadek heard the trumpeter play the soft melody from each of the windows, announcing the hour of the day. Four times he played, first to the north, then east, then south, and then west. As he played each time, he ended the melody on a broken note.

“Uncle Stach,” said Tadek, coming over to the old man as the last note echoed away, “please tell me the story of the trumpeter again.”

Seeing the mother busy with a customer, the uncle began, “Many, many years ago a band of very fierce warriors called Tartars descended upon Poland. They robbed and burned farms, and even besieged the larger



“Listen!” breathed Tadek, “the *Hejnal*.”

villages until at length they came to the very walls of old Krakow.

“Of course the people of the city were very much afraid of these Tartars and everyone who could took refuge within the walls of the fort. But the trumpeters in the church of Our Lady Mary had taken a vow (they take the same vow still) to blow the *Hejnal* every hour of the day and night as long as they lived; so they stayed at their post in the tower of the church.

“Just as the fighting in the streets below was at its hottest, the hour arrived to sound the trumpet call and the trumpeter took his place in the tower. The melody rose high and clear, but as he was reaching its close a Tartar’s arrow struck him. The note he was playing faltered and broke—he had no strength to finish it. And ever since that day the trumpeters of Krakow, as a tribute to that brave youth, end the *Hejnal* on the note that was his last, and that is why the call always seems to us to be unfinished.”

As his uncle finished the tale, Tadek stood for some moments in silence, still thinking of the brave lad who lived in this same city so

long ago. Suddenly he was startled by a voice at his elbow.

“My, what a fine pig you have!” a young gentleman remarked. “Is he for sale?”

“No! No!” exclaimed Tadek, holding Bialek tighter.

“Come, my little fellow,” said the gentleman good-naturedly, “I was only joking. Has he a name?” he asked.

“Yes,” answered Tadek proudly. “His name is Bialek.”

“Little white one, it means!” laughed the gentleman.

“Yes,” smiled Tadek.

“Well, as long as I can’t buy the pig, I’ll buy some of those fresh eggs,” said the gentleman, as he looked at the mother’s table spread with round white cheese, eggs, and butter.

After the customer had gone the uncle said, “Tadek, if your mother says yes, I will take you to Kosciuszko’s Mound.”

“May I go, Mother?” asked Tadek eagerly.

“Of course you may. I’ll take care of Bialek,” she smiled, “and I’ll be sure not to sell him.”

Taking his uncle’s hand Tadek followed

through the throng and out to Castle Street and All Saints' Square. Here they got on the trolley ("To save time," said Uncle Stach) and began their ride. Through the gaps in the buildings to the left could be seen the Wawel, the fortified hill, topped by a palace, on the river bank, where of old the Kings of Poland dwelt before the capital was moved to Warsaw. At its highest point towered the cathedral spires, where those same kings had been crowned and where the greatest of them lie buried.

On went the trolley along the river bank; and then they got out and began to climb the long road lined with trees that leads to the soldiers' barracks on the hill. There they went through a gate and under an arch in the stone wall of the fort; then crossed the parade ground to the foot of the Mound.

As they climbed the spiral path to its top, the uncle said, "Tadek, do you know that this famous soldier, whose Mound we are climbing, is claimed by both America and Poland?"

"Please tell me all about him," pleaded Tadek.

"The soldier's name was Tadeusz Koscius-

zko," began Uncle Stach. "He was born in the eastern part of Poland, on the twelfth of February, 1746. As a young boy he spent his days on his father's lands, where he became a fine horseman.

"In 1769, when he entered the corps of cadets at Warsaw, he attracted the attention of Prince Czartoryski, through whose influence he was sent, it is said, to Germany, Italy, and France to finish his military training. He completed his course at Paris, where he learned fortification and naval tactics. He returned to Poland in 1774 but two years later went back to France.

"While Kosciuszko was in Paris he learned of the hard struggle being waged by the colonists in America for liberty and independence. He was so impressed that he decided to go to America to see what service he could render. In 1776 he entered the Colonial Army as a volunteer and won great honor. General Washington was so pleased with Kosciuszko that he made him a colonel. He served under the American flag for over six years.

"It was Kosciuszko who laid out the plans for his superior officer, General Gates, at Sara-

toga, in America, where the Colonists won their first great victory. But where he is even better known in America, so history tells us, is at West Point, now the United States Military Academy. There he was in charge of the first fortifications. Today there is little left of the original fort, but one may still walk through a little garden laid out by Kosciuszko himself where he spent many happy hours. There is a monument there too, raised in his honor by young Americans, on which are carved the words, '*To the Hero of Two Worlds*'."

"But, Uncle Stach," interrupted the inquisitive Tadek, "what did he do for Poland?"

"Kosciuszko," continued the uncle, "returned to Poland after the American Revolution was over. In 1791 a constitution was proclaimed here in Poland that brought on a war in which Kosciuszko distinguished himself as a divisional commander. Then three years later he formed an army and led them in a battle against the Russians.

"You already know of the tablet that is in the Rynek and marks the spot where Kosciuszko stood one March morning in the year 1794 and, with his army, took the oath to be

faithful and to fight for the independence of his countrymen.

“He led his army against the Russians in many successful battles, but during one conflict he was seriously wounded and taken to the city now called Leningrad in Russia and imprisoned.

“When the new Russian sovereign, Paul by name, came to the throne he set Kosciuszko free. Kosciuszko then went to America, where he remained for a year and a half. Then he returned to France. Napoleon, the famous French leader, wanted him to enlist under his banner, but the Polish soldier refused because Napoleon was not interested in making the restoration of Poland one of his chief aims. Instead Kosciuszko went to Switzerland to live, and there he died on October 26, 1817.

“The people of Poland were not allowed to bring Kosciuszko’s body back, as the authorities feared a patriotic outbreak. So they built in his memory this Mound,” said the uncle, as he and Tadek reached the top of the hill and entered the enclosure of the Mound itself.

“How did they make it?” asked Tadek.

“First,” answered the uncle, “people went

to all of the battlefields upon which Kosciuszko had fought and from them brought dirt in wagons. As the wagons passed through the countryside, the peasants formed in processions and threw flowers on the earth.

“It is said that in one place where they went to get some earth from a spot where Kosciuszko had fought, a potter’s hut stood. Upon hearing what they wanted, the potter knocked down his fireplace to let the soil be dug from beneath it. Even children brought handfuls of earth to help make the Mound in memory of our famous soldier, Tadeusz Kosciuszko.”

Resting by the great stone on the flat top of the mighty mound, Tadek and his uncle looked about them on the wide world below. There was the fair city of Krakow, with the marketplace in the center where the mother and Bialek were waiting for their return. Here below the hill ran the shining stream of the Vistula, full of twists and curves; beyond was the smaller mound of the Princess Wanda. All about were fields, meadows and factories, with the further reaches of dark forest in every direction.

“Why, Uncle Stach,” exclaimed the boy

after a while, pointing away to the south, "look at the pretty row of white clouds over there!"

"We're lucky!" smiled the uncle, "those are the snowtops of the high Carpathian mountains, that we call the Tatra. They can only be seen once in a long while from here. They are at least seventy miles from this spot. It would take Kary a long time to go that far, wouldn't it! But come, Tadek," he added, "we must go. It is getting late and we have come a very long way."

As Tadek and the uncle descended by the spiral path that had led them to the Mound, they amused themselves with a little Polish poem of questions and answers:

"Who are you, child?"

"A Polish mite."

"What is your sign?"

"The eagle white."

"Where do you dwell?"

"Not far from here."

"And in what land?"

"In Poland fair."

"You love that land?"

"With all my nature."

"Where is your trust?"

"In Poland's future."



TADEK AND ZOSIA MAKE A VISIT

CHAPTER VIII

MANY, many mornings later Zosia, passing by Tadek's garden, called, "Tadek, Tadek, the pansies are in bloom!"

"I'm coming! I'm coming!" shouted Tadek, running down the path.

"Oink! Oink!" squealed Bialek. "I'm coming too," he called, waddling as fast as his fat little legs would go after his master.

"Aren't they pretty!" exclaimed Tadek, as

he looked at the little rows of purple and yellow flowers that bloomed gaily around the outside of his garden. "And look, Zosia!" he added, "my late planting of radishes seems almost big enough to eat. They are big enough!"

"Tadek," said Zosia, "Mother is sending Old Jan some eggs. She doesn't need me in the kitchen today, so I am going to take them, and—"

"I'll take him some of my radishes too!" interrupted Tadek. "Some of these are just right to eat."

"You pull them," said Zosia, "while I get the basket of eggs."

It was not long before Tadek had pulled up his radishes and bunched them together.

"There's room in the corner of the basket," said Zosia when she returned with the eggs.

When the radishes were arranged neatly beside the eggs in the basket, Tadek and Zosia started down the path that led under the tall poplar trees. Bialek waddled closely behind them.

"I wonder," said Tadek, "if Old Jan has made any more new toys."

"I don't know, but we shall soon see," answered Zosia as they came on to the road.

Suddenly Bialek lay down in the dirt road as if to say, "I'm tired and want to be picked up."

"Well, Bialek," laughed Zosia when she saw him, "you have walked pretty far for a little pig."

Tadek picked up his pet and tucked him safely under his arm.

As they walked along, Zosia began humming softly to herself.

"Oh, let's sing the crab song," suggested Tadek, and together they began:

"Crab is what they call me,
'Poor beggar' too;
It's just my misfortune
To do backward
All I do.

"Instead of a tail
I have a neck;
I never go ahead
But always back

"That is the way
Crabs have always gone—
Every last single
Mother's son.

“No use to grumble!
I just hold my tongue
And keep humble.

Crab I am, and I don't love it;
But I'll bite you—just to prove it!”

When they reached Old Jan's little white-washed hut with its thatched roof, they saw the door open and heard the old toy maker whistling softly.

“Old Jan,” called Tadek as he entered the house, still carrying Bialek, “I brought you some radishes from my garden!”

“And Mother sent these eggs,” said Zosia, as she followed closely behind Tadek.

“My! what beautiful new radishes!” smiled the old man. “I shall eat them for my dinner. Is this Bialek?” he asked, stroking the little pig's ears. “My! how big and fat he has grown!”

After the eggs had been placed carefully in a crock and the radishes in a bowl, the old toy maker said, “Come, Tadek, I have something for you.” He crossed over to a shelf and reached behind a box and pulled out a toy.

“It looks like Bialek,” exclaimed Tadek,



“How big and fat he has grown.”

examining with delight the little pig carved out of wood.

“Watch this,” said Old Jan, putting the toy pig on the table. “When you pull his tail, his ears will move.”

“Let me try it!” cried the delighted Tadek.

It was great fun to pull the tail of the little pig and see its stiff wooden ears move back and forth.

“Oink! Oink!” squealed Bialek, as if to say, “What a queer looking pig!”

The old toy maker turned to Zosia. “I have something for you, too,” he said.

“I wonder what it is,” whispered Tadek, as the old man opened a long chest.

“It’s for your beads,” explained the toy maker, handing Zosia a small carved box.

“Thank you! Thank you!” said Zosia gratefully. “It’s beautiful!”

“You must have something, too, Bialek,” said Old Jan, “I know!” he exclaimed. “I have just the thing—a little wooden bowl that can be used for your food.”

“It’s just Bialek’s size,” smiled Zosia, when Old Jan handed Tadek a small wooden bowl.

“Now,” said the old toy maker, “how would

you like to see some of the toys that I have made to send to Krakow?"

Both Tadek and Zosia were delighted, as they loved the unusual toys that Old Jan made. "They are all here on this shelf," he added, as the three stood looking at the handmade toys.

"Look, Zosia, look at the dog! Look at the goat! Look at the bear! And there's even a little horse and wagon!" called Tadek excitedly, as he went from one toy to another.

"Yes, and the wheels move on the wagon," said Old Jan.

"Will the horse's ears move, too, if you pull his tail?" asked the fascinated Tadek.

"No," laughed the old toy maker good-naturedly, pulling the horse's tail, "just the legs."

Finally, after they had admired every single toy, Zosia said, "Come, Tadek, we must go home. I have to help Mother."

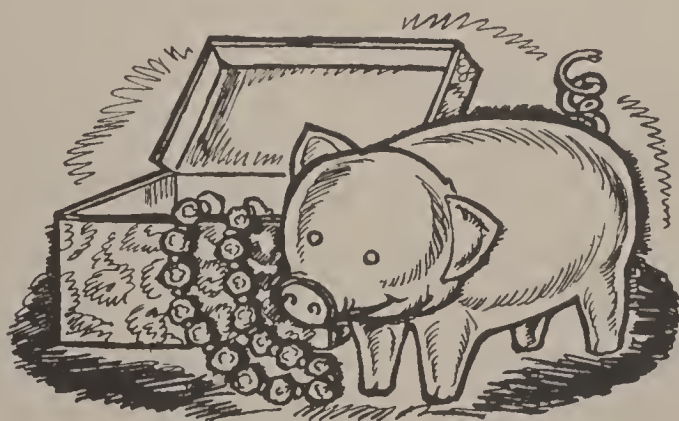
"Please thank your mother for the eggs," smiled the old man, as Zosia placed Bialek's new bowl and her new bead box carefully in the basket. "Tadek," he said, as he watched the little boy tuck Bialek safely under his arm and then pick up the wooden pig in his other

hand, "I know that I shall enjoy my radishes too."

When Zosia and Tadek had thanked the old toy maker for the lovely gifts, they started back home.

"Zosia," laughed Tadek, looking at his new toy, "I think I can keep this pig on the foot of my bed."

"I don't think that Mother will object," she smiled.





TO WIELICZKA

CHAPTER IX

MOTHER, are we really going to Wieliczka today?" asked Tadek eagerly one bright July morning, as he stood beside his mother. He was holding Bialek in his arms and watching his father and Antek putting the new carved chest for Kasia carefully into the wagon.

"Yes; you, Zosia, and I are going on the train early this afternoon. Your father and Uncle Stach are going in the wagon and—"

“But, Mother!” interrupted the anxious Tadek, “who will take care of Bialek?”

“I’m afraid,” said the father, overhearing Tadek, “that he will have to stay at home with Antek.”

“Poor little Bialek,” said Tadek, stroking his pet’s soft ears. “You always have to stay at home.”

“Mmp! Mmp!” squealed Bialek, as if to say, “Weddings are no place for pigs who are no longer very small.”

At last, after what had seemed to Tadek the longest morning that he had ever known, he, Zosia, and their mother arrived at the little railroad station. There were many others in line in front of the ticket window. The mother took her place, moving up slowly until she was at the head of the line.

Tadek saw the ticket man hand his mother some slips of thick paper.

“Come,” said the mother, as Tadek and Zosia still stood watching the people moving about. “The train will soon be here.”

Before long the three were seated in one of the compartments on the train. As it moved along Tadek sat by the open window and

watched the passing fields, now rich with crops and gay with working peasants. The white-washed cottages with their thatched roofs, shining in the afternoon sun, looked smaller than ever before to him as the train passed quickly by them.

“Mother,” asked Tadek, turning around, “do you think that Father and Uncle Stach will get there before we do?”

“They should, if the roads are not too crowded,” she assured him. “Remember, they left home early this morning.”

“Yes, and Kary can go very fast when he wants to,” agreed Tadek, as he turned again to the open window, still thinking of the black horse that seldom liked to walk.

Finally the train stopped at the station in Wieliczka and the three got off.

“There’s Uncle Michael,” shouted Tadek as he saw his uncle coming toward them.

“Uncle Michael,” asked Tadek anxiously, as they started from the station to the wagon, “has Father come?”

“Yes, both your father and Uncle Stach are already at the house,” smiled his uncle.

It was not long before they were again on

their way, Tadek sitting up front in the wagon with his uncle, while Zosia and her mother rode behind them.

As they drove along they saw the wooden church of St. Sebastian, which stands on a hill near the town and is adorned with new polychrome pictures telling of the country life of the Polish people. Farther along they saw the bastion which is all that is left of the old Castle of Casimir the Great; and nearby they passed the Mining Museum.

“How pretty the gardens look!” smiled the mother, attracted by the neat little flower and vegetable gardens separating the clean white-washed cottages from one another.

“Here we are,” said the uncle, bringing the horse and wagon to a stop in front of one of the cottages.

“Is that Tadek’s voice I hear?” called his father as he came to the doorway.

“Yes, and Mother and Zosia, and Uncle Michael are here too,” cried Tadek from the wagon.

What a happy family they were as they sat around the supper table that evening, chatting with one another about Kasia’s wedding.



KASIA'S WEDDING

CHAPTER X

EVERYONE was up early the next morning, scurrying around, attending to all kinds of duties. The mother and aunt were busy in the kitchen putting things in order. Tadek and Zosia were in the living room pasting designs cut from colored paper on the freshly white-washed walls.

“Doesn't the pine smell good?” said Tadek breathing in the sweet fragrance of a pine branch that was hanging gracefully from the

thatched roof. He was pasting a colored paper figure near the open window.

"It certainly does," said Zosia, coming over to him with a paper cut-out in her hand.

"How gay the room looks!" exclaimed the father, as he and Uncle Stach carried a long bench into the brightly decorated room.

Finally, when the room was cleared, except for the benches and chairs which were lined up against the walls, the mother called, "Tadek, come. It is time for you to dress. The guests will be arriving soon."

"My, what large cakes!" exclaimed Tadek, as he stopped and gazed at the flat cakes piled on top of one another.

"Yes, they are large," smiled his aunt. "And Kasia has sent out many more that size to her friends as wedding invitations."

"Mother!" said Jendrek, coming into the room, dressed in gay holiday attire. "I must hurry for it is time for me to join the bridesmen!"

"Come," said the aunt, as she glanced around the room to see that nothing had been left undone. "It is time that all of us were ready."

It was not long before everyone was dressed

and the guests began to arrive. Some brought gifts of loaves of wheat bread, pieces of bacon, cakes, flour, lard, salt, fat fowls, and even a piece of money wrapped in a paper or in a flower.

"I hear music!" said Tadek, going to the door.

"It's the musicians and the bridesmen," explained his mother, coming over to Tadek. "First they go from door to door of the people in the village, singing in verse, inviting them to come to the wedding. Then the guests hasten and join them. After that, the whole procession goes to the homes of the bridesmaids, stopping in front of their windows. The bridesmen sing in unison, bidding them come forth."

"Here they come! Here they come!" shouted Tadek excitedly, as he saw and heard the musicians coming toward the house and playing lively tunes. There were fiddles, flutes, bass viols, and accordions, all trimmed with flying ribbons. Behind the players walked the bridesmen in twos, then the guests in their best bright holiday costumes, followed by the pretty bridesmaids.

"Where are the bridesmen going?" asked

Tadek eagerly, as he watched them leave the guests at the house, then start off again.

"They're going for the bridegroom," smiled the mother.

"But where is Zosia?" asked the puzzled Tadek, looking around for his sister.

"She's in Kasia's room," answered his mother, "helping her to dress. Listen, Tadek!" his mother added as she gazed up the road. "The musicians are returning with the bridegroom."

As the bridegroom was being ushered into the house, the musicians continued to play lively tunes while the bridesmen sang.

Soon a door opened. There stood Kasia in her wedding dress. Her tall headdress of artificial flowers fitted neatly to her head and blended with the bright silk shawl that hung gracefully across her shoulders. Beneath the shawl the white neck of her blouse showed through strings of coral and amber beads. They reached the top of her velvet bodice that was embroidered with silver. Her beautiful silk flowered apron all but covered her white skirt with its gay colored flowers, that hung over the tops of her high black shoes.

As Kasia walked into the room the bridesmaids formed a circle around her. Then the bridesmen sang their little song bidding her to ask pardon of her parents and brother for any wrong that she had done.

Quiet came over the room as the bridesmen's song ended. The bridegroom came forward. Taking Kasia's hand, he knelt with her before her father and mother. As the father made the sign of the cross, he sprinkled them lightly with Holy Water.

"Dear Mother, Father, and Jendrek," said Kasia, kneeling, "I ask your forgiveness and your blessing."

When Kasia was forgiven, she rose. Her parents embraced her, as did many of the wedding guests.

"Come, Tadek," said his mother, as the music began. "Now we are going to the church."

What a gay procession the bridal party was! The bridegroom and his best men were on horseback. The mother, father, relatives, and friends rode in their carts behind the musicians. All were in their colorful holiday costumes, singing happily to the sprightly tunes.



What a gay procession it was!

When they reached the church, everyone formed in line and proceeded to the altar, two by two.

"Mother," said Zosia, as she stood by her mother and Tadek outside of the church after the wedding service, "let's go back together."

"I didn't realize that there were so many people there," remarked the mother, as they walked toward a cart. She glanced around at the many guests who were now chatting with one another in groups of twos, threes, and fours.

"Why, Mother! Aunt Hanka is home already!" exclaimed the surprised Tadek, when he saw Kasia's mother standing in the doorway, as they neared the cottage.

"It is our custom," explained his mother, "that the mother of the bride returns to her home before the bride and guests arrive, so that she may be the first to welcome the bridal couple."

As they entered the cottage, they heard the musicians playing and saw the men taking the women for their partners as they crossed the threshold.

"There goes Zosia," laughed Tadek, as a

young peasant lad danced gracefully by with his sister. It was not long before the whole room was filled with dancing couples.

“Mother, look at Kasia,” exclaimed Tadek excitedly, as he stood between his mother and Zosia against the wall. “Look! She’s dancing alone with them!” he called.

“It’s the dance that belongs to the bride,” answered his mother, as the men guests and bridegroom formed a large circle around Kasia. The music began. Kasia danced within the circle. Then, taking each man, leaving the bridegroom until the last, she danced happily with each in turn.

When she had danced a few figures with her new husband, everyone joined in the dancing. Such dancing! The full, colorful skirts of the women swayed to the rhythm of the music, as their partners twirled them around happily from one step to another. Even the men as they danced, stamping their heavy boots on the floor, seemed to add to the lively tunes that were coming from the corner in which the musicians were playing.

Finally when the music stopped, tables were brought into the room. The guests sat down

to a hearty meal of soup, pork, chicken, boiled and pickled cabbage, light wine, and the large, flat wedding cake that appeared on each table. As they ate, the musicians once more played lively tunes.

When the wedding meal was over, Kasia was led away to her room by some of the women guests.

"Come, Tadek," said his father. "You can help us clear the things away."

After the room was cleared again, the guests amused themselves by playing games and chatting with one another.

"Here comes Kasia!" said Zosia.

How different Kasia looked as she followed the women into the room! Her head was covered now by a white cloth, instead of the coronal of flowers.

"Watch this, Tadek," said his mother, as Kasia sat down in the middle of the floor.

It was great fun to watch the bridesmaids try to snatch the cloth from Kasia's head, while some of the women and men defended her, singing in doleful tones all through the mimic battle.

"Some one's taken it!" shouted Tadek ex-

citedly, as he saw Kasia still sitting on the floor. Now her hair was tightly plaited around her head and in place of her wedding headdress was a small white cap.

Tadek's mother explained, "Kasia's hair is now done in the fashion to show that she is married, that, from now on, she will be busy with the care of the house, and will have no time to dress her hair prettily—so it must be worn in this way under a cap."

"Mother! what are they doing?" asked Tadek eagerly, as he now saw the bridesmaids grouped about Kasia. The men were drawing a circle of unthreshed wheat around the bride.

"Any man," answered the mother, "who wants to dance with the bride must make his way through the wheat so that he may reach her."

"I see," laughed Tadek, looking eagerly at the struggling men.

Finally when the wheat was broken through and Kasia was reached, everyone joined in the dancing.

"Tadek," said his mother when the music had stopped, "Kasia will now go to her new

home. All her gifts and belongings will be carried before her."

"May I carry the bowl that I made for her?" asked Tadek eagerly, when he saw the men putting the wedding gifts into the cart.

"Yes," smiled his mother. "But keep close to your father."

As Tadek walked closely by his father behind the aunt and uncle, he beat time to the music with the palm of his hand on the small carved wooden bowl that he carried.

"Here we are," said his father, as they came to a small white cottage with a thatched roof. In the doorway were the bridesmen and the husband waiting for the bride.

"Mother, what do you think is in that bundle?" asked Tadek inquisitively, seeing the aunt entering the cottage before Kasia with a small package under her arm.

"In that bundle," answered the mother, who had now joined Tadek and his father, "is a pinch of salt, a morsel of bread, a coal, the wax of a blessed candle, and a small knot of grain from the wreath that you have so often seen blessed in September. The bread is a sign of plenty; the salt signifies thrift. The coal

expresses a good wish for the housekeeping; the grain and the wax are blessings, both having been declared sacred by the Church."

As Kasia entered her new home, the women flung after her thread and stalks of hemp.

"They do this," said the father, as he, Tadek, and the mother went into the cottage, "to ward off any evil, in order for everything that Kasia undertakes shall have a happy ending."

When Kasia had changed from her wedding dress into one that she wore every day, she came into the room to begin her duties as the mistress of the house. Before very long everyone was caught in the spirit of the music that had begun to play and was dancing the national dances, the *krakowiak* and *oberek*.

"Come Tadek," said his mother, looking at the weary lad, "it is time for you to go to bed. You've had a very full and happy day."

When Tadek and his mother had bade Kasia happy wishes and good-bye, they started toward the aunt's cottage. As they walked home in the late evening, the sound of music and happy voices singing still floated through the open windows and doorway.



INTO THE SALT MINES

CHAPTER XI

EARLY the next afternoon Uncle Michael said, "Tadek, how would you and Zosia like to pay a visit to our famous salt mines?"

The two children were delighted, so the wagon was soon ready and they were all on their way.

"Our salt mines," said the uncle, as they entered a low building, "are the most famous in the world. They were begun during the

thirteenth century. The mine is deep down in the earth and is divided into three distinct fields. Each field is made up of seven stories and each story has several chambers. But only the three upper stories, which are lighted by electricity, are open to visitors."

They took the tickets and joined the party of waiting visitors. Soon the bell rang and they entered the elevators. Down, down they went, until they stopped far below the earth. Then they began climbing stairways made out of solid salt.

"It's really quite simple," explained Uncle Michael when Tadek asked him how the stairs were made. "When any building or anything is being made within the mine, masses of salt are piled one upon another. Then water is dashed upon it. The water dissolves part of the salt, which runs into the crevices and fills them up. Then when the water has evaporated a solid mass of salt remains, just as if it were molded. The dry air preserves it."

The little party went farther into the mine and stopped before what looked like a crystal palace. "This is the Chapel of St. Anthony," said the guide.

"And it's all made out of salt?" asked Tadek, looking wonderingly at the altar and pulpit that were sculptured from salt in 1691.

"Yes," smiled his uncle, "but wait until you see what else there is." He led the way with Tadek and Zosia close at his heels.

"This room is the Chapel of St. Cunegonde. It is considered the finest in the mine," explained the guide. Tadek and Zosia looked about at a fairy-like church with beautiful statues and bas-reliefs, all cut out of salt in 1920 by Joseph Markowski, one of the miners.

"Look, Zosia!" exclaimed Tadek, pointing to the beautiful candelabra made of salt crystals strung together by wire. In its light the salt walls glistened in prismatic colors.

"Isn't it beautiful!" marveled Zosia.

"Once a year," said the uncle, "on the 24th of December a service is held in this chapel for the miners."

"How lovely it must be," said Zosia.

"It is lovely," agreed her uncle. "Now the guide is going to show us something else. He's taking us down this corridor. Look, here's a room with a beautiful stained glass window."

"Who is it supposed to be, Uncle Michael?"

asked Zosia eagerly, as they stood before a beautiful colored window.

"It represents Saint Cunegonde. It was made by a famous artist named Tetmajer," answered the uncle.

"My! How large this room is!" exclaimed Tadek, as they entered another chamber.

"Yes," smiled her uncle proudly. "This is the largest room in the mine."

"And what is this one called?" asked Zosia, as she stood admiring the beautiful carvings.

"It is called the Room of Michalowice. But come," said the uncle, starting toward the door.

"There is something different to show you."

"What is it?" asked the excited Tadek.

"You shall see in a very little while," laughed his uncle. He led them into another room where they saw before them various wooden tools. "These," he explained, "are the old wooden tools which were once used to dig out the salt. This room, which is called Drozdowice, is a sort of museum."

"My!" sighed Tadek, looking at the sparkling blocks of salt. "How I wish that I could take Mother a piece of this!"

"We'll get her some," promised his uncle.



“Isn’t it beautiful!” breathed Zosia.

“A lake!” breathed Tadek, as they entered the room named for Pilsudski, the famous Pole who fought during the World War.

“Yes, a real lake,” laughed the uncle, “and one can cross over it on a raft.”

“What do they call it?” asked Zosia, looking into the briny water.

“Its name is Prazykos, and it is five miles deep. Five miles deep—just think of that!” repeated the uncle.

“Now, Tadek,” smiled Uncle Michael, handing the small boy a coin. “Did I hear you say that you would like to take your mother something made from salt?”

“Yes, I did say so,” beamed Tadek.

As they came into the room called Sienkiewicz in honor of a famous novelist, Zosia, looking down at the floor, exclaimed, “Why, it’s wooden!”

“Yes,” answered her uncle, “and it is quite often used as a ballroom. But come, Tadek must spend that money of his,” laughed the uncle, watching Tadek fingering the coin.

“What shall it be?” asked a kind gentleman, when he saw Tadek looking at the little models made from salt crystals.

"There are albums and picture postcards too," called Zosia softly, looking at the neatly displayed books and pictures of the many things that they had already seen.

"I don't know," said Tadek, as he looked from one souvenir to another. "Oh! I know," he exclaimed, spying a little crucifix carved out of salt. "I'll take that; Mother can use it before her picture of the Holy Mother."

With his gift clutched in his hand, Tadek followed his uncle and Zosia into the elevator, which took them up to the entrance.

"Did we see all of the rooms?" asked Zosia as they came out into the daylight.

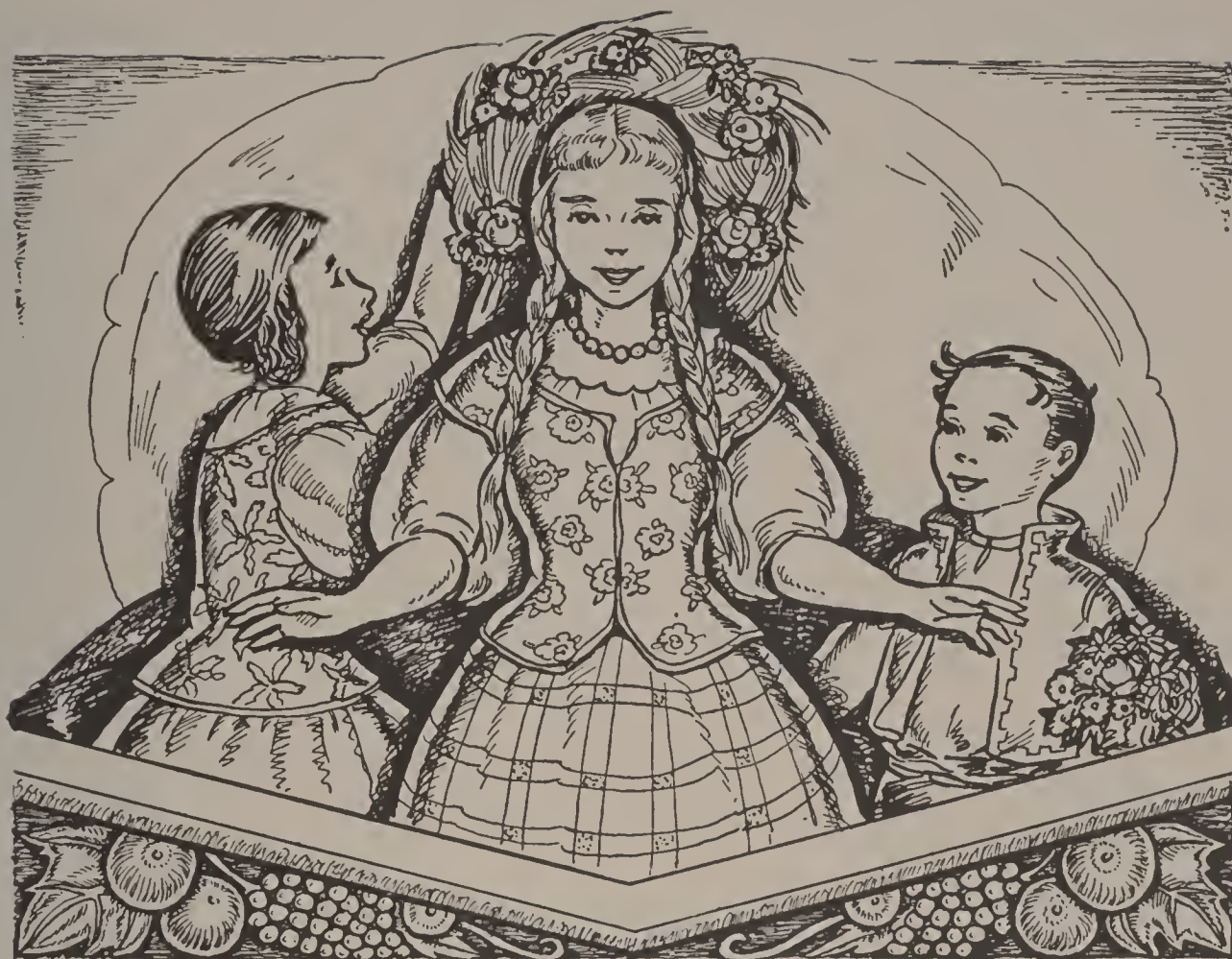
"No," smiled the uncle. "There are seventy in all. But we saw the most important ones."

"Are there any more lakes?" asked the interested Tadek.

"There are fifteen more. But the one we saw is the largest," answered the uncle.

"Uncle Michael," said Tadek seriously, as they drove home, "do you think when I grow up that I can be a miner and build rooms like those?"

"Perhaps," answered the uncle. "We'll see!" he said as the three went into the house.



THE HARVEST FESTIVAL

CHAPTER XII

IT WAS late autumn and the end of the harvest season. All the crops had been gathered into the barn, which was filled to overflowing with all sorts of things for use in the coming winter.

In the rye field Tadek watched Zosia and a group of her friends making a wreath of grain and flowers. This was the day when everyone was to go to the Manor House. The boys would

carry bouquets of flowers to the mistress, and the girls wreaths to the master of the Manor. It was to be a real occasion with dancing, singing, and much merry-making; and at the height of the festivities the mistress and master would dance with the boy and girl chosen as the best reapers for that year.

"It's pretty," admired Tadek, as he watched his sister twine the grain and flowers together.

"Have you gathered us some flowers, Tadek?" asked one of his neighbors.

"Yes, here they are," he indicated his bouquet of late fall blossoms.

"It's almost time to 'dress the partridge'," observed Zosia, as she wove the last flower into the wreath. "Does anyone know who's been selected for the 'plowing'?"

While the girls had been working on the wreath, the young men of the neighborhood had brought the last two sheaves to an open place in the field.

"They're going to make the 'partridge' from those sheaves, Tadek," said his sister. "Let's help them."

"What do we do?" asked Tadek.

"Everybody will help stand the sheaves up

to make a sort of archway. Then they'll decorate it," said Zosia. "See, they have a stone to put under it."

"Oh, what's that they're putting on the stone?" Tadek was almost in the way in his eagerness to see and help.

"They'll put a slice of bread on it," said Zosia, "and some salt and a penny, as a sign of richness and of plenty."

When the "partridge" had been "dressed," the next event was to "plow" around it. The girls and boys seized the girl who had used a sickle that year for the first time and dragged her around over the stubble in a sort of Maypole dance accompanied by a song.

"That's what they call 'plowing the stubble'," explained Zosia.

"Come on, Zosia, your turn next! You're the champion reaper for this year," shouted some one. The merriment ran riot while Zosia, as the best girl reaper, and Stashek, a neighbor who was considered the best boy reaper, were also made to "plow the partridge."

"Zosia's chosen! Zosia's chosen!" Tadek shouted to his father and mother as they came across the field. He danced up and down in his

excitement when he saw the wreaths of grain and flowers put on Zosia's head. Then the rest of the merry-makers took up their garlands, and everyone started for the Manor House. As they walked they sang:

“Mummy look, and Daddy!
See the gate is open;
'Tis the sheaf they carry
From the fields all golden.

“Right from our fair acres,
What a gift they're bringing!
All bedecked with ribbons,
On they come a-singing!

“Give your hand to greet them!
Welcome is their coming.
Smiling let us meet them.
'Tis the Harvest Homing.”

“Look out for the water, Zosia!” shouted Tadek as the procession entered the yard, where some boys were waiting in ambush to throw water on the champions. “What do they do that for?” he asked his father.

“Oh, that's to show the importance of rain for good crops,” was the reply.

As they neared a large, low, white stucco house with a tiled roof, they heard lively tunes



“Zosia’s chosen! Zosia’s chosen!”

coming from the violins and bass viols. On the porch stood the master and mistress greeting the peasants. They took the wreath from Zosia's head and the garland from Stashek, thanked them, and gave them each a coin.

"What's he going to do with the wreath?" whispered Tadek.

"The master will hang it in the hall and keep it there until next harvest," answered his mother.

"Oh, the master's going to dance with Zosia!" breathed Tadek when the wreath and garland had been hung in the hall of the Manor. With Zosia's hand in his, the master led the procession to a large barn that had been cleared for the occasion.

"Yes, the Manor people always dance the first number with the champion reapers," Tadek's mother told him.

When the dance was ended the peasants sang melodies in praise of the folk of the Manor while the musicians played a soft accompaniment. The master, his house and family, every child he had were praised in verses composed by the peasants themselves especially for the occasion. Then the master thanked his guests

for their kind wishes and invited them all to dance and enjoy the supper he had provided.

Such dancing and merry-making Tadek had never seen before. He was still watching in the late evening, and as he watched he beat time with his feet and sang softly to himself:

“Raindrops do not fall today,
Just be good and go away!
Go away, nor come again
Till we get the harvest in.

“Over there the clouds go by,
Sailing careless in the sky;
We shall get the harvest in
Safe, before the storm begin.

“Crack the whip, the horses pull,
Dust is rising on the way;
Look, the skies are no more dull,
All the clouds have flown away.”



CHRISTMAS EVE

CHAPTER XIII

COME, Bialek," said Tadek one bright sunshiny afternoon as he closed the stable door and started down the path, now covered with snow. "We must hurry. There is plenty of work to do. You know," he said, "this is Christmas Eve Day."

"Mmp! Mmp!" called Bialek, as he waddled slowly behind Tadek's heavy black boots that crunched over the ground. "Mmp! Mmp!"

Bialek cried again. "Of course I know it's Christmas Eve Day. You've been telling me about the Star-man for weeks."

When Tadek reached the house, he stopped. Turning to the pig he said, "Bialek, go back now. You can't come in the house any more, you know. You're too big." Tadek looked across his garden and the fields and saw them covered over by a huge white blanket of snow.

"Is that you, Tadek?" asked his mother as he came into the kitchen.

"Yes, it is," he answered, taking off his cap and heavy sheepskin coat. "Bialek wanted to come in too, but I told him he was too big."

"I should say so," laughed his mother, then she added, "when you've warmed yourself you may help me lay the hay on the table."

When Tadek's hands and feet were warmed, he joined his mother. On the floor was a box filled with hay, from which he brought her an armful and watched her lay it neatly over the table.

"When I was just your age, Tadek," she smiled, "I helped my mother just as you are helping me. I can still remember her telling me that the hay or straw that is spread on the table

and in the corner of the room is used in memory of Our Saviour's birth in the manger."

"Did she tell you about the Star-man too?" he asked, as he watched her finish the table and pile what was left of the hay in a corner.

"Many times," she replied. "She would begin long before Christmas, just as I have so often with you. And she would tell me that the Star-man would always come, but if I was not a good child he would not bring me gifts, and—"

"But, Mother, I've been good, haven't I?" asked Tadek anxiously, as his mother laid a long white cloth over the hay on the table.

"We'll have to see what the Star-man thinks about that when he comes tonight after supper. Now come," she said. "You might get me more wood. I must help Zosia finish with the cooking."

When at last everything was ready the father, mother, Zosia, Tadek, Antek, and Jòsef stood at the window watching for the evening star.

"I see it! I see it!" exclaimed Tadek, as he watched the first star twinkle in the sky. "Now is it time to light the tree?"

“Yes, I think it is,” his father smiled indulgently. “You can help fasten the candles on it but be sure you put them where they won’t set fire to anything.”

When the last candle was in place and lighted the family gathered around the tree by the window and sang together their beautiful carols.

“We’ll sing some more later,” said the mother at last, “but now let’s have our supper.”

As they sat down to the table in the room now lighted with many lights, the father said, “Let us all be at peace with God and man.”

He took up an *oplatek* (a little wafer which had been blessed by the priest and which had some sacred picture stamped upon it, or the three letters that stand for the Holy Name I.H.S.). This he held out to the mother, who also took hold of it, and between them they broke it. The mother then passed her piece of the wafer to each person at the table in turn, and each one broke off and ate a piece of it. Then more wafers were passed around, each one breaking his with everyone else.

After everyone’s wafer had been broken and happy Christmas wishes had been exchanged,

they turned their attention to the loaded table and ate heartily of almond soup, beet soup, baked pike, cabbage, mushrooms followed by more fish, conserved fruit and *pirogi* (a little dumpling stuffed with layers of plum marmalade, poppy seeds, or cheese).

“Zosia,” whispered Tadek, as another fat little dumpling was put on his plate, “it’s nearly time for the Star-man to come.”

“Yes,” smiled Zosia. “He’ll soon be here!”

Finally, when everyone had had all they could eat, they said thanks and gathered at the door. Antek and Jòsef set about getting the hay from beneath the table to take to the animals in the stable.

“Here he comes,” breathed Tadek, as the front door of the cottage opened and Father Christmas, whose name in Poland is the Star-man, came into the room.

Turning to Tadek, the Star-man asked, “Have you learned and said your prayers? Have you been a good boy?”

“Yes,” said Tadek.

“And you, Zosia?” asked the Star-man.

“Yes,” smiled Zosia.

“Well, that’s good,” said the Star-man. “I

have brought you good things from Star-land and my fairy helpers have been arranging them under the tree for you.”

What a colorful scene as the happy family was grouped about the Christmas tree, lighted with its merry candles. Gifts were found for Tadek and Zosia and even for Bialek.

“Look, Zosia, what I have!” called the excited and happy Tadek, as he opened his box. “It’s a horse and wagon like the one Old Jan made.”

“And see what I have!” said Zosia, opening up a bright red kerchief.

“Listen!” said the father going to the window.

He pointed to a group of young men from the neighboring farms, who were gathered before the cottage. They carried a large paper star that was lighted up, and they were singing:

“To the manger came the shepherds joyfully,
Bearing gifts and singing hymns in ecstasy:

“Glory to Highest Heaven, glory to God be
given!

And on earth Charity!

Thus they came with loyal homage to their Lord,
Seeing here fulfilled the promise of His word:



“Look, Zosia, what I have!”

Glory to Highest Heaven, Glory to God be
given!
And on earth Charity!"

They were the manger men who make visits at Christmas time, and with them they had the *Szopka*, a model in bright colors of the stable where the Christ Child was born.

"Come right in!" said Tadek's mother, opening the door. "It is too cold to stay out there."

So the whole party came in, and the family sat down or stood near the tree, while the visitors sang and recited their little play, telling of the birth of Jesus. When they finished the mother and Zosia brought them good things to eat. With a hearty "God reward you!" they slipped out of the door to go to the next cottage.

It was now very late. Tadek was tired, so he said "Good night" to everyone. He took one more look at the tree and, after kneeling for a moment in silent prayer, before the picture of the Holy Mother, he picked up his new horse and wagon and started for the bedroom he shared with Antek and Jòsef.

But before climbing into bed he stood a minute by the window to gaze at the starry sky. From the road came happy voices singing:

“While the world in darkness
Waited for the morning,
Came the Babe to Mary,
Bethlehem’s name adorning!

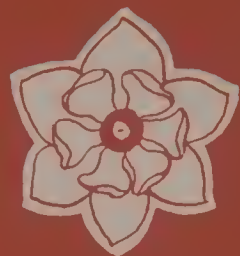
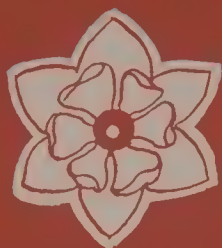
Here the Angel chorus swelling,
Joy to all the nations telling;
Gloria, gloria, gloria,
In excelsis Deo!

“Shepherds from the hillside
Came to seek the manger,
Where in sweetest slumber
Lay the wondrous Stranger.

Hear the Angel chorus swelling,
Joy to all the nations telling;
Gloria, gloria, gloria,
In excelsis Deo!”





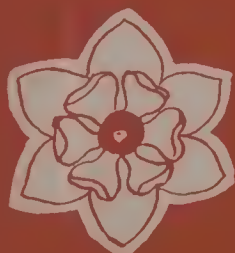


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