


*A story of the powerful witness of an
humble servant of Christ in Slovakia.*



Only a Servant

Kristina Roy

Only a Servant

by

Kristina Roy

of Stara Tura, Slovakia



Translated by Charles Lukesh
Missionary in Chile,
Czechoslovakia, and Austria



Mr. Lukesh is also the translator of the booklet called “Greasy” the story of a band of Russian bandits who were converted thru a stolen New Testament taken from a murdered Christian.

FAITH PUBLISHING HOUSE

Digitally Published by

THE GOSPEL TRUTH

www.churchofgodeveninglight.com

INTRODUCTION

Much is being said about the need of bringing Christ to the Jews. Few realize, that for genuine conversion, there must be also a genuine effort, an evidence of the reality of the Christ presented in the life of those who offer Him to the Jews, who have considered HIM to be their enemy, by the misrepresentation of many. The writer presents the real gospel, in a practical way, through the one fully consecrated to His service.

The writer of this story, Kristine Roy, died a few years ago in her native village, Stara Tura, Slovakia. She lived an exemplary life among the people as described in this, and many other of her stories. The visible results of her devotion to her poor compatriots is an orphanage, hospital with deaconess training institute, and "the home of hoary heads," the old people's home. —Charles Lukesh

ONLY A SERVANT

CHAPTER I

“The Son of man came not to be ministered unto, but to minister.” (Matt. 20:28).

Just when farmer Ondrasik needed help most and had no idea where to find someone, there came to his house a man, uninvited and unexpected.

It was on a Sunday evening in the middle of the harvest. Ondrasik sat under the fruit tree in front of the house resting his head, heavy with care, in the palms of his hands. Suddenly in the yard the dog, Fidel, began barking, and before the careworn husbandman stood a young healthy man, decently clothed. After an exchange of greeting, he said that he was looking for work.

Ondrasik was not one of those who would take just anyone at once to work for him; but this young man somehow appealed to him, and he needed a laborer urgently. His wife was sick in bed. His sons-in-law had left him—one last year, the other in the spring—to go to America, and their wives followed them; thus only the youngest daughter, about sixteen years old, remained with him at home. He had a cowboy, but he had been badly beaten up in a fight with some other fellows and was lying ill at his mother’s home, and a laborer was nowhere to be found. Therefore Ondrasik accepted this young fellow. “Anyway,” he thought, “it will not cost me anything to try him; I will take him at least until Andrew (the cowboy) gets well.” The daily pay that he was to get during the threshing season was agreed upon.

Ondrasik slept better that night than he had for a long time; and his wife, though she could not sleep, at least did not have to worry about how her husband would manage with all the work.

The Ondrasiks were quite satisfied with the new laborer, except for his curious name. He was called Methodius Ruzansky. It was the name of the former apostle to the Slovaks, who used to live in Nitra, where he preached the Word of God to the people. The farmers did not usually give their sons such names. Occasionally one of the Catholics did, but Ondrasik was an Evangelical.

But people will get used to most anything; thus, they became accustomed to the name Methodius in that vicinity. He was the only one of that name. The general concensus among the people was, as they were gathering the grain from the fields: "Ondrasik got hold of a good laborer!"

And how good a one, Ondrasik knew better than anyone else. This one did not drink; therefore, he would not be fighting with the other fellows. He did not smoke; therefore, there was no danger of setting fire to the barn. During the week he worked from morning till night, while Sundays he spent reading. He did not use bad language and was always good humored. When Dorka, the daughter, spoiled some food and her father was angry, he excused her and praised it.

All this pleased the Ondrasiks very much, and therefore, they arranged with him to take him as a full-time servant, beginning with "All Saints' Day."

"Very well," agreed Methodius, "I will stay with

you and serve you, if you will take me for a term of two years, and permit me to fix myself a room above the workshop." The farmer wondered what kind of a living room that would be.

"You will agree with me that it will be good. And whatever I shall spend on it, if it pleases you, and you can make use of it, when I shall leave you can repay me my cost. If it does not suit you, I shall take it apart and sell the materials."

Ondrasik agreed readily, and as soon as the rainy days came, Methodius brought in some boards and spent only two days, besides doing the regular chores, to build up his room. When it was finished, he brought in the farmer and his daughter to see it. Ondrasik laughed.

"Just look what a fine room he will have, better than ours! And how will you manage in the winter-time?"

"I can sleep just as well in a cold room, and during the day you will surely allow me to warm myself."

From the remaining boards Methodius made himself a small table, a cupboard in the corner, and a clothes closet. The bed and chair he bought ready made. The room was surprisingly cozy; especially when later he built in dormer windows, which gave him a beautiful view of the fields and meadows round about, the woods beyond, and the sometimes beautiful sky, now often obscured with the fog and clouds of the fall.

The Petrash family were the nearest neighbors to the Ondrasiks. They had a son twenty years old,

a good looking and decent young man, but he was lame. Therefore, though they were a fairly well-to-do family, he could neither read nor write. He moved slowly about the house, attending here and there to a little matter, but was not able to go farther about.

Mrs. Petrash loved her Sammy above all her children. His father was not very good to him; he was displeased that such a big son was of no use in the house and that he would always be a burden.

If it had not been for the mother's love, the young fellow would have fared rather badly in his parental home. A dreary future lay before him. And, as usual, in such a case, those who are not able to move freely want to achieve great things in this world. Thus he also had great plans.

One Sunday afternoon, as he was sitting all alone in the orchard, all the others having gone away—some to dance, some to the dram-shop or to the meadows—and as he was sitting thus, lost in thought, his head resting on the palms of his hands, suddenly the servant of his neighbor stopped before him, holding some kind of a book.

A mingled feeling of sadness and jealousy gripped the young fellow. "He is only a servant and knows how to read, and I am so ignorant." He barely responded to the friendly greeting.

"Since you are sitting here all alone, surely the time must be very long for you," spoke Methodius. "Therefore, I brought you a book." Sammy blushed deeply. "What good is a book to me, not knowing a single letter?" he frowned.

“Forgive me, I did not know,” kindly answered the servant. “It being thus, if you please, I will stay with you and we shall read together.”

Thus began the acquaintance of the new neighbors.

Leaning on the fence of the Petrash property was the hut of the Jew, David. Now he lived there all alone. He had two goats and spent the whole day taking care of them; and when he had no work with the goats, he was sorting old rags and bones and whatever else the house wives brought to him. He traded them for threads and needles. In his younger days he followed this business in all the surrounding territory, but now went only as far as was necessary for the care of the goats.

No one remembers ever having seen old David smile; otherwise he was a kind, gentle man. Many were the wrongs he had to suffer, but he bore them all quietly.

It was commonly known that he had a wife in his youth, before he came to the village Hradova, and that somebody took her away from him. Who knows whether it was true or not?

The neighbor on the upper side of the Ondrasik property was a shoemaker, by the name of Martin Podhajsky. This neighbor caused a great deal of annoyance, because he was such a drunkard, that everybody preferred to keep out of his way. Only his mother lived with him; his wife, when she could stand it no longer, preferred to work as a servant for strangers and was sending clothing and shoes for the children, because otherwise they would have to

freeze in winter. She also sent something to her mother-in-law for taking care of the children, and in the beginning, also some shirts to her husband at times. Since he wasted all, she was disgusted and stopped sending them.

If it happened that Ondrasik met Podhajsky on the way and he was drunk—he was never sober—he turned aside, so as not to meet him. Methodius once found him lying in a mud puddle dead drunk, just about to suffocate. His mouth, nose and ears were full of mud, and it was a hard job to pull him out. Just then a Gypsy passed by, and Methodius asked him to help.

They carried the wretched drunkard into the workshop of Ondrasik and laid him on the straw. Methodius warmed some water and washed him thoroughly—excuse the comparison—like a pig when it is already in the trough. In the beginning the drunkard tried to resist, but by and by he sobered up and stopped cursing; and when Methodius also cut his hair, shaved him, and cut his long fingernails, he appreciated it.

From that time on, the servant of Ondrasik had a great influence over the unfortunate drunkard and could do with him what he wanted. He gave him an order for a pair of shoes, and Podhajsky had to promise that he would not drink before he finished that pair of shoes, and he kept his promise. To help him pass the long evenings, Methodius visited him and read to him from the books of his mother, the Bible and the song book, and out of newspapers which he brought with him. Since it

was now November, the farmers did not have much to do in the evenings. Thus Methodius read out of these newspapers at home also, to the landlady, "Gazdina," and her daughter. Even Andrew loved to listen. Ondrasik was very glad that his servant took a newspaper; he never thought of such a thing in his life, and yet it was a good thing. It was a very good newspaper; it gave lessons about the Scriptures, as well as information about things happening in the world.

The sick landlady praised the servant, "He takes care of me like a son, and he is a wise man. He persuaded my husband to let him put up a stove in the kitchen. Since Dorka is cooking there, it is much easier for me, because the steam plagued very much. In order that my husband would not be angry because we would burn too much wood, he brought two wagonloads of fuel from the forest. Others barely do what they are told to; this one does the needed things without being told."

One evening just as they were reading, Podhajsky brought the boots. They invited him to sit down. He was not drunk—since that time Methodius did not go to Podhajsky to read, but he came to the Ondrasik's, and they were all benefited by it. In the twilight before supper, Methodius used to go to the neighbor, Petrash. It soon was known among the women that he was teaching Sammy to read. Once he asked if he could bring Sammy to their house.

"And why could you not?" agreed the landlady. "The time will pass better for the poor fellow."

In this manner, during the long winter evenings, the time passed very beautifully. They stripped a lot of feathers for featherbeds. Andrew, the cowboy, did not run around with the other fellows any more; Ondrasik also stopped going to the dram-shop, and instead whittled wooden implements and taught Sammy also.

Once, while they were thus sitting, Dorka mentioned that old David was ill and that it must be cold in his hut. Who knew if he had anything with which to make a fire? That evening Methodius just finished reading a book, told them "good night" and went away.

"Just watch and see—he will go to that Jew," said Andrew.

"Sure he goes there," said Sammy; "more than once I saw him bring in water."

"Just go, Andrew, and look through the window, if he's there," advised Dorka, "and see what he is doing there." Andrew went and it was quite a while before he returned.

"Have you seen him?" asked Sammy.

"Yes I saw him. The Jew was lying on the bed, and first he cooked some kind of tea for him, and now he reads to him out of a book."

"But how does he read to him? David understands only German and Jewish; he told me once when I asked him."

"What language he reads to him I do not know, only it is not Slovak. But the old man listens very attentively and does not take his eyes from him."

"He is a strange kind of a fellow. Nobody is too

repulsive for him to help," sighed Podhajsky, who was also present.

"Strange fellow indeed; but it is good that he came," nodded Gazdina. "Since he has been with us, we know how our children in America fare; before we had not heard for months. None of us like to write; however, he writes everything just as I tell him. The children are very happy that they hear so much from us and they write to us also. Only when I told him to write about himself, he did not want to. 'I will not speak about myself,' he told me."

Thus the spring came before the people realized it. One Sunday Ondrasik and his servant were standing at the end of the orchard. In front of them lay swamp and beyond a hill, sparsely overgrown with grass and a few bushes.

"Listen, Boss," said Methodius, "this is a disgrace to your whole prosperity. Why don't you buy this hill from the community?"

"I? What good would it be to me?" The farmer wondered that his sensible servant could think and say something like that.

"Well, that hill could be leveled. Out of the clay you could make good bricks and with the balance fill in this swamp."

"I don't need any bricks and I also have sufficient land. What would I do with that hillock?"

"I'll tell you what to do; you buy it for me, but in your name, and I will then buy it from you. I like it very much here. I have a few hundred dollars in cash, and in the two years I will gradually build me a hut and will be your neighbor."

Ondrasik smiled at what he thought was a joke. But it was no joke; Methodius gave him no peace until his master was favorably inclined. Thus Ondrasik bought and sold to his servant the hillock and the swamp. They made an agreement—as long as there would not be much hard work he could use three hours, and when the work started he could use two hours a day to work his own land.

Well, when the planting was finished, Methodius said, “Listen Master, for two or three weeks we shall not have much work to do; let Andrew and me work these weeks on my property and I will work for you only a quarter of a year only for my food; will you agree to that?”

“Well, I don’t care; I will even help you myself because I would like to see just what you will achieve. But if you have some ready money, you should buy a hut for yourself somewhere.”

“But that would be only a hut, and I shall have a house!” laughed the young fellow. “You will see that my God, in whom I trust, will help me.”

Even the neighbors used to come to see what Ondrasik’s servant was doing. He hired Podhajsky and his mother. Besides these, he and Andrew, and off and on, Dorka, and even the master himself, helped to dig on the hillock and fill in the swamp. They dug down so much soil that the swamp was not only filled, but even raised above the level of the road and leveled off like a garden.

Methodius bought some dwarf fruit trees in a nursery and planted three nice rows, and to the wonder of all, when the summer came, it was seen

that all took root. Afterwards they began to make bricks, and when the urgent work called the others away, Podhajsky stayed and continued until the time of harvest.

“Who could have told that Ondrasik’s servant would give us such an opportunity to earn something!” said Mother Podhajsky, blessing the young fellow and saying, “God Himself sent him to us. Martin does not drink any more. It seems as if he is not the same old fellow—he is so quiet. He regrets his evil life and prays God to forgive his sins.”

CHAPTER II

It was a beautiful summer Sunday afternoon; many took the opportunity to walk in the fields to view the future harvest. Farmer Petrash was also among those who were getting ready to go out. Methodius entered just as he was putting on his coat.

Petrash was not indifferent, although he preferred to appear that way, to the fact that the servant of his neighbor showed so much kindness to his son, for during the winter he had taught him to read and write fairly well. He was a proud farmer and was sorely displeased that his son must remain so ignorant; therefore the visit of Methodius was very pleasing to him. He knew that the visit was intended for his son, but he wanted to have a talk with him also. He offered him a seat and seated himself.

“Sammy will come presently,” he said to excuse his son’s absence. “He went out somewhere and you know it takes him a long time before he returns.”

“It is better anyway,” smiled the young man. “It pleased me very much to find you alone, neighbor, and to see that he is not here. Let us have a consultation together about something that has been on my heart for a long time.”

The farmer wondered what kind of a consultation the young fellow might want to have with him.

“Well then, what do you want?”

“Have you considered what will become of your

only son in the future?" The man, surprised, shrugged his shoulders.

"A beggar!" he exclaimed dryly. "Can I help that? Well, I shall leave him his portion, but what will he do with that? He will never become a farmer."

"That is what I think myself. I have heard also that you want to take a son-in-law into the house. As long as Sammy has his mother and you, his life will be endurable, but after that, when you shall be gone, he will be left to the good and bad graces of the others, and they may not treat him well; and he is your firstborn son, your only son."

"Why do you tell me that?" the farmer leaned his head in the palms of both hands. "Do you think it does not torment me whenever I look at him? What is he in this world for, anyhow?"

"He did not ask to come into the world!" seriously answered the young man. "You, neighbor, as a father have the least right to speak thus. Since God gave him life, He surely has also some kind of work for him on this earth. But you also gave it to him; therefore it is your duty to help him do some work."

"For you it is easy to talk since you are healthy; but what shall I do with him?"

"If you want to do something for your son, I would like to give some advice."

"Gladly; just tell me." The man gripped the hand of the young fellow in his own.

"You live here on the highway. All the people from the surrounding territory pass by. Build an

addition on yonder room for him and let him start a small store. He can sell fat, flour, and the like. You go often to the city anyway; thus you can easily bring for him what he may need. Investing a few hundred dollars in this business, you will secure a future for your son. As long as you live, you can give him a home; in the meantime, he will grow to be a man. Being a comely lad and not otherwise sickly, some decent girl will gladly take him when she knows that he will be able to support her.

“By the help of God I have already taught him to read,” continued the young man, while the farmer, shaking his head was looking on, all surprised. “I have already spoken to old David concerning him; he is willing to teach him how to keep accounts and to sell, and you know that nobody can match a Jew in business. Consider this proposition; Sammy is returning, and I would not like to have him know what we talked about until you can decide. In the meantime, I shall take him into the woods for a walk.”

Before the farmer realized it, he was alone in the room. Through the window he saw how Methodius put his arm around Sammy, and in animated conversation, took him through the orchard until they disappeared from sight.

“What was it he told me? How he does speak! Just like a book! Who would have thought of anything like it? What things does the young man think of! It is just like that filled up swamp. Sammy says that he must have travelled over much of the world and had great experience. But he is right. I,

myself would be glad if something could be made out of my boy.”

The farmer hunted up his wife and asked her to go with him to the fields. That day they saw very little of the crops. They consulted regarding the proposition from all angles, and she fairly grew young in the hope that here was still a chance that her darling might get on in the world after all.

In the meantime those two, concerning whom they consulted, sat in the nearby oak grove, surrounded by a group of children, and Methodius kept their attention in a lively discourse.

Methodius, the servant of Ondrasik, was known by all the children in the village, as the saying goes, that the children and dogs soon find out who is their friend and follow him. He dug out a swimming hole in the creek behind his property, so they could bathe there. Farther down in the fields, he often helped the shepherd boys out of trouble, and he also dammed up the creek, so they had a better chance for fishing. In the spring, when he had a bit of time in the evening, he cut willow rods and made whistles out of them. Out of the elderberry branches he made squirt pipes and guns. Now he was making crickets out of nut shells; he always had his pockets full of things and divided them among the youngsters, who were always ready to receive gifts. They followed him everywhere like puppies, through the village or through the fields. You could always hear the call, “Uncle Method! Uncle Method!”

Often when the farmer’s wife gave him a lunch of bread and cheese to take to the fields, he would

divide it with the poor geese herder. The children had a royal time when, like today, they could gather around him, sit at his feet and listen. It seemed to the children that no one else in the world could tell such stories as Uncle Method could. That was the common concensus among them.

The goats and cows were feeding on a nearby meadow, tied to posts, and the children, quiet as mice, listened even now to a story. One of the boys had found a dead swallow.

"If you like, I will tell you something about swallows," said Uncle Method, and the children cried with joy, "Yes, yes, about swallows!"

"LISTEN THEN, HOW THE SWALLOWS RETURNING HOME. . . .

"Far, far away, where at Christmas time the trees bloom and the fruits ripen, where there is so much that is beautiful, and such flowers as we do not dream of—but also so many snakes, that horror grips a man; there in far away Africa, the swallows had a great gathering and council.

"And it was a beautiful gathering. All the swallows had previously washed in the dew and brushed up their coats like velvet, black eyes, rosy little vests, white breasts and skirts with a long train—like some great ladies.

"They flew together to this gathering from far and wide, by the hundreds, yes, by the thousands. As soon as they were all there, the meeting opened. They began with song and prayer. Whoever will not believe that the swallows pray, just let him ask them, and let him look it up in the Word of God. I

know for sure that they pray and obey their maker, God.

“Well then, they began with song and prayer. Thereupon, when all were quiet, they were told that since it was time to leave Africa and return to their old home, they would now have a consultation as to what day and hour the expedition should start, and that exact laws and directions would be given about how they should behave on the way.

“First of all, with one accord, the swallows selected elders and managers from among all, and then they were quiet again to listen to them.

“Tomorrow when people say it is the first of the month, all of you must come to the yearly place of gathering. All who are late, must stay in Africa.

“First we shall fly over beautiful landscapes till we come to the great water—that water is called The Sea. Let all keep exactly the place assigned to them, because all that will not keep together, will not be safe from birds of prey. Those robbers are afraid of thousands of swallows, but one or two are easily scooped up.

“While we are still flying over the beautiful countries, you must obediently watch every command and rest often and long together. And if there are ever so many flies all around you, you must not overeat, so that you will not get too fat, because then you would be too heavy.

“At the seashore we shall have another convention—there we shall commend ourselves into the hands of God, because there will begin the dangerous trip for us. For a long time you will see

around you only water—nothing but water—and you must not stop flying, because there will be no place to sit down.

“It is all thus arranged by our Maker; therefore, only those swallows will succeed in flying over the sea, that will best obey the laws given us by God and pray most. Let us pray now also.’

“Well then they prayed, sang, and the gathering ended.

“On the following day it was just black, because of all the swallows on the shores of a great and beautiful river. First came hundreds, then thousands, then five thousand, then ten thousand, then a hundred thousand, and then there were so many, that no man could count them. It looked like some army camp. Among these crowds flew gray swallows, keeping order—they were named the leaders. There were also white swallows, so white and clean, that it seemed as if no earthly dust came upon them. They flew among the divided groups and admonished them to pray and obey the Holy Creator, the living God.

“Because among the swallows there are boys and girls also, the boys played with each other, measuring their wings to see who had the longest and would be able to fly farthest. They calculated that to fly over the sea is nothing; they had no idea of the extent of the sea. They got acquainted with each other and even fought together, presumably to know how to fight the robbers.

“‘Don’t do that,’ admonished an old gray leader, ‘It is not for us to fight; you just have to ask Him,

believe, and fly. If you should fight with every bird of prey, you would never reach the goal.'

"The girls whispered among themselves about the kind of dress each had—which one had the smoothest combed head, whitest breast, and longest train of skirts.

"A white swallow flew among them and said gravely, 'You better think of God and the long trip ahead of you. Beauty will not keep you from perishing, and if any of you fall into the sea, she will perish with all her beauty.'

"The old swallows passing around, looked over their particular groups of boys and girls, and fixed up all, especially the boys—some were all disheveled—doing for all what was necessary. They had a prayer, a song, and then 'Good-bye Africa!' sounded from thousands and thousands of throats.

"The sun was darkened by the black cloud that rose from the shore. The people stopped working and looking at the cloud said, 'The swallows are returning home.'

"How beautiful was that trip over the beautiful countryside until they came to the sea. It was interesting because of the many new acquaintances which the swallows made amongst themselves. At the command of the leaders they had to rest often and long; therefore, almost none of the swallows felt tired. Finally, they came within view of the sea. Again the command to rest! Many would rather have gone ahead at once, but the leaders would not let them; they needed the rest for their wings and strengthening in united prayer.

“The leaders looked over the whole assembly. Anyone that had ever so small a scratch or some feathers damaged, or was in any way sickly was to confess it, and the assembly would wait for him until he became quite well. Some of them acknowledged it, but others did not ascribe great importance to a little scratch, thinking it would heal on the way. Others—the disobedient ones—did not refrain from just gulping and gulping up the many flies that were buzzing around. The admonishings of the white swallows, that only those who knew how to deny themselves and control their desires, would be able to fly over the ocean, they let in by one ear and out by the other. Those grew so fat in the few days that the assembly rested by the sea, that they slumbered wherever they sat down, and when they did not slumber, they just chased after the flies again. They also slumbered during the great prayer meeting, and when they all prayed, one could not hear their voice and even when they sang with the others, their thoughts were on the flies.

“ ‘Now then, in the name of our Creator, let us go!’ sounded through the whole assembly.

“ ‘Good-bye Africa! Good-bye Africa!’ sounded from thousands of throats. ‘Over the sea, over the sea, we are going home!’ and the echo sounded: ‘Home!’

“Now the boys who yonder at the river said, ‘Never mind the sea,’ began to be convinced how great the sea was—how great! For a long time they flew and nothing was to be seen but water, water—

their wings were weary, their heads drooping with faintness, and their eyes looked out longingly for a place of rest; but the leaders just commanded: 'Fly on, fly on!'

"Those that on the shore did not take care of their bruises and damaged wings, fell one after the other into that green water. If one of the healthy ones fell, the water carried her for a while, and then, with renewed strength, she arose again.

"But the disobedient ones could not rise again, so drowned and perished.

"Those that fattened themselves on the flies began to stay behind, one after the other, first just a little, then more and more as their strength was leaving them. 'Wait for us! Wait for us!' they cried and begged—but in vain!

"The command of the leaders was: 'Fly on, fly on!' It was the command of God. For God Himself had given each obedient swallow sufficient strength in their wings needed to fly over the sea, but with each moment that strength diminished, therefore one must not drag behind.

"The poor disobedient swallows! Yonder on the shore they did not know how to restrain their fleshly desires, and now they were too heavy for the flying and the result of their greediness was, that the weight drew them into the sea. Suddenly there came also a storm, wind and rain, hundreds and hundreds of swallows fell into the sea. But those that were obedient and knew how to pray, were renewed with courage. But of the disobedient ones, not a single one rose up again; for their disobedi-

ence they died in those terrible depths. They will not see their home nests again. Never, never will they come home!

“When their plight was at its worst, they saw a ship in the distance. They lighted on it wherever they could find a place. Oh that was joy! The sailors of the ship did not like it very much, but the passengers, especially the children, rejoiced greatly to hear their friendly twittering, and by them, sent greetings to their home countries. When one party had rested on the ship, others sat down, and then the third party; thus, they were all relieved.

“Still another storm and wind thinned out the lines of the migrating multitudes. It seemed as though the swallows said, ‘It is impossible, we shall all perish!’

“ ‘We shall not perish!’ cried the white leaders. ‘Just believe, obey, and God will strengthen us!’

“ ‘Land, land!’ cried the first thousands. The whole company rejoiced. The birds gathered their remaining strength with the exception of those who in the last moment lost confidence in God’s sustaining grace, and thus the strength left them and they fell and perished at the very shores of Europe. The remaining swallows all reached land safely and spread around for a long joyful rest.

“After being rested and refreshed, they again held an assembly. They started with prayer and jubilant singing of praise to the kind Creator who had helped them so marvelously.

“Then important work and council awaited them.

“Thus far they had been flying jointly, but now the dividing up started. Each one had to announce their birthplace.

“Some were English, some French, Russian, German, Italian, Austrian, Hungarian, and among them also Bohemian and Slovak. Thus they were sorted, first according to countries, then by the districts, finally by the names of cities and villages.

“The whole assembly thanked the brave leaders; they also received the admonition, that as soon as they arrived at home, they should announce the return of the summer. With a final greeting they parted, each to his particular part of the continent. Even while flying, they were calling to each other:

“ ‘Where are you headed?’

“ ‘To Leningrad, to Moscow.’

“ ‘And you, where are you going?’

“ ‘To Paris!’

“ ‘We are going to Prague!’

“ ‘We are heading for Vienna!’

“ ‘We will stop at Rome!’

“ ‘God be with you!’

“When they were more separated, those that belonged to closer districts drew more together; and the swallows from Bohemia began conversing with those from Slovakia.

“ ‘Where are you going?’

“ ‘We are going to Vienna!’

“ ‘And where do you live there?’

“ ‘We build our nests on the memorial church, which was built in commemoration of an incident, when a bad man wanted to kill the emperor, but

God did not permit it. It is true the people didn't like to see us build there, but we asked the Lord God if we might and He agreed—thus we live there. And those yonder live on the very top of Stephen's dome. And you, where are you from?'

" 'We are from Prague and live on Hradshin, that is the old castle where formerly kings of Bohemia lived, on the Vites dome. Often we considered whether we should not help the people to finish it because they have been more than a hundred years in building it.'

" 'We again are going to Trenchin.'

" 'Where is that?'

" 'In the valley of the river Vah.'

" 'And we are going to Budapest; it is good to live there, because it is full of mosquitoes.'

" 'Maybe you are living in the castle there?'

" 'Oh no, we would be too lonesome there.'

" 'And you, where are you from?'

" 'We are from the villages, living close to each other; we just have to fly over the hill to visit one another.'

" 'Well, here are the boundaries; here we must take leave one from another. Remember us; God be with you!'

" 'God be with you!'

"Thus the swallows came from far off Africa, across the distant sea, each to his own country, particular town and village, yes, even each one to his own particular nest. They came also to our village and to our houses. They came with great jubilation. We also welcomed them gladly.

“ ‘Look, the swallows come, the summer is nigh.’

“Thus the swallows returned home,” ended Method,” and how will you reach home, some day? Or do you think that you are already home, that you will live here forever?”

“We will not,” said the children thoughtfully, “since we have to die.”

“And where do we go then?”

“To heaven!” Called others.

“Yes, heaven is our true home. But what do you think, will you surely go to heaven? What did those swallows do on the way?”

“They prayed, they obeyed,” said one little fellow; “and did not eat too many flies.”

“Well, thus you see, if you want to go to heaven, you also have to obey what the Lord God says, and must not do that which He hath forbidden. Now, repeat the verse which I taught you.”

“ ‘THE SON OF MAN CAME TO SEEK AND SAVE THAT WHICH WAS LOST.’ ”

“Do you still remember who is this Son of man?”

“The Lord Jesus Christ!” cried the children.

“And whom did He come to seek?”

“All of us.”

“Yes, for us He came, as I told you, to die on the cross for your and my sins, and He is seeking us. Whosoever believeth on Him, follows Him, does not have to die for his sins; such a one does not need anything, but like those swallows, just to obey. Thus the Lord Jesus will lead him to His home in heaven; there will be great joy; each one will fly

there to his own house, just like a swallow to his own nest.

“But now it is time you were going, your cattle are restless, and do not forget, since the swallows came home from the far away countries, love them, honor them, because they accomplished the large voyage, for these are the obedient ones, the disobedient drowned at sea and perished.”

The children scattered over the meadows to look after their animals, and the young men remained alone in deep meditation.

“Listen, Method,” presently said Sammy, “That is such an unusual story. It is just the picture of our journey to heaven, and we in this village Hradova have not even gotten started yet.”

“Do you think so, and why?” the lips of the young man formed in a lovely smile.

“Well, those swallows began everything with prayer, and they got ready to go; but we live just as if we were to live here, forever, and yet we have a cemetery in the village. And we don’t start anything with prayer.”

“And why don’t you begin thus? Isn’t God good? Isn’t He worthy to be praised by you? Isn’t He almighty that you could ask Him for anything?”

“Sammy, those swallows had their convocation and prayer meeting before they started home. It would be but the right thing to do if your whole village would come together with this intention, to give themselves to God in prayer and ask Him to take you safely over the great sea to the shores of eternal salvation. Well, since they will not do it all

at once, why could not we two begin, and do it here just now?"

"Just now and right here? Perhaps that should be done in the church!"

"We are now in a church built by God Himself and He is in every place, don't you think so?"

"That is true, but I don't know how to pray."

"Do you want the birdies to put you to shame? The swallows know how to tell their Creator what they need, why not you? He is like a father, a good father. Thank Him for what He hath given you today; ask His forgiveness because you have not been thinking about Him, and ask Him to help you from this day to live so that you may some day go Home."

It was quite late that evening when the two friends returned.

Sammy, deeply wrapped in thought, did not notice how joyful his parents were and how kind they were to him; he noticed above the gateway the nest and the beautiful birds flying to and fro; it continued to sound in his mind: "Thus the swallows came home."

"Oh", he sighed from the depth of his soul, "there, I had them every year and I did not know that the Lord was sending them to me as a living reminder, that even I ought to go Home one day and should prepare for the way."

"Read the Word of God in your houses and you will find Christ; He will save you and teach you how you should be going Home by the help of His Spirit!" said Method, as they parted.

Sammy wanted to obey and read for himself because he did not know yet how to read very well. Later when he had learned, others would listen to him also.

CHAPTER III

In front of his house, under the spreading nut tree, sat the old Jew, David, and with thin fingers, crumbled bread for his tame chickens. The moon shone on the uncovered head of the lonely man—a man, who in the whole wide world did not have any relatives.

It is true he had his little house, a small orchard beside it; also this nut tree and the bench beside it was his, but this was not his homeland. He was a stranger among strangers, with whom he could never speak in his native language. He grew old in this village but did not get accustomed here. There was nothing to bind him. The people got used to him and he got used to the people, but the acquaintance never brought any bonds of love.

In the winter when he was sick, the neighbors knew that he was ill but did not go to see him. Who would be going to a Jew? Only one went; only one and he was going faithfully, and took care of him. He did not shun him.

The aged man had to think of this one continually: he was thinking of him now. To this aged man, near the grave, something unexpected happened. His heart, which he considered buried long ago, began to be warmed up in love to this strange young fellow, and that young fellow was a Christian.

In the beginning, the aged man looked with the suspicion of a real Jew, who had suffered snubs among the (so-called) Christians, at the uncommon behavior of the stranger, who so suddenly

appeared as a sunbeam that suddenly shines out.

None of the neighbors had yet noticed a difference between himself and the servant of Ondrasik, but the Jew saw it long ago. He saw it from the moment the strange young man brought him water from the well the first time and sat down in the miserable kitchen and chatted so kindly as if he loved old David—him, whom nobody loved, and whom even the nearest ones forsook. Suspiciously the old man watched the young fellow to see if he would not disclose some weakness and live in those sins in which the “Christians” usually lived. But in vain, up to this day he saw no spot in his straightforward actions. He did not drink, he did not curse, he knew God’s commands given to the Jews on Mount Sinai and fulfilled them day by day. The Jew noticed that this young Christian loved God, and that he really loved people.

He inquired about him secretly; well, in the whole surrounding country there was not a neighbor—neighbor to him in house or field, whom Method had not helped somehow. The old night watchman told him that while he was carrying a bundle of wood in the wintertime, he was overtaken by the Ondrasik’s servant with a load of dried leaves. Method stopped at once, relieved the old man of his bundle of brush, laid it on the wagon and offered him his own seat, walked beside the wagon, the whole distance, till they came to his hut.

In the spring again, as they were digging a ditch around the field of Ondrasik, he also spaded the

adjacent field of the old unfriendly widow, Hlinarka. Everybody, till that very day, was afraid of the old woman. She was very free with many nasty words; nobody gave her a good turn, but this young stranger.

It was nothing great which he did for the people, nor could he, since he was only a servant, but one thing is sure: whatever he saw that somebody lacked, if it was in his power, he helped him out of pure love. Yes, he did it as if he could not help but do it.

The aged Jew watched to see what kind of servant the young fellow would be, if he would not be spoiled after a while. It was more than a year since he came, and it was noticeable that nobody could take as good care of the property of Ondrasik as his servant. Whatever he could, he improved, whether in the house or on the farm, giving the master advice in everything. Not even Eleazar could have been more faithful to Abraham than Method was to this ignorant farmer.

The Jew considered Ondrasik ignorant; often he noticed that instead of prospering, the farm was going to ruin, but no, he would not give him advice. Why should he, to that heathen? He despised him, just as the farmer despised the Jew. The Jew noticed that Method was wiser than his master, but he never heard the young man speak otherwise, than with great respect and love for him.

Everything in that young man's life was clean. He was young and the Ondrasik's had a daughter and Petrash's two. The village well was in front of

the Jew's windows. The Jew watched to see if he would not notice something similar to what other young fellows did. The people jokingly called it, "the weakness of youth." Often the old man saw all three girls at the well and how Method drew water for them and talked with them in a friendly way. They smiled to him and he to them, just as if he were a brother to all three.

The Jew could not help but to compare him with Joseph in Egypt. Though Petrash's girls were quite naughty, they were always decent in behavior towards him; they even seemed, since he was visiting their brother Sammy, somewhat more orderly (restrained).

Last week the Jew rejoiced when Method called on him; he felt that he was his debtor and for a long time desired to repay his service of love somehow, and now the young man came to ask him for some service.

He spoke about the lame Sammy, how his future could be improved if he, David, would take interest in him and not only teach him to figure, but also advise him how to start a business.

Perhaps for nobody in the world would David do that favor, but when Method asked, he agreed readily and said, "Why do you care about that neighbor? Is he not altogether a stranger to you? Why don't you let him alone? He has parents and family, let them take care of him." At the same time, the aged man watched whether Method would make some evil remark about the Petrash family.

"Do you know, neighbor," said the young man,

“Thou shalt love the Lord thy God out of a whole heart, and thy neighbor as thyself. If I were lame, it would suit me very well, if someone would take care of me in this way. The parents love Sammy, but up to this date they have not planned anything for him. It behooves me to do it, because God gave me that thought and I believe it will be very agreeable to them.”

Ah, for all this, the aged Jew had to admire and love the young Christian, but for one thing he almost hated him, because he did not give him any peace about that Christ of his. He was continually finding references concerning Christ. In almost every chapter in the Old Testament he found something about Him, and every discussion ended with: “He loves you.”

Old David would not have been thinking about those discussions if he could have forgotten them. Even now he would have put them out of his mind, but he could not. Just why did he allow him to read the history of that One of whom he claimed that He was the seed of the woman, who will crush the head of the serpent—that He was that seed of Abraham in whom all the generations of the earth would be blessed; that He was the son of David, the Messiah? His teaching was very, very good, also. It was the teaching of love, and stole into the heart of the aged man, tormented by injustices, healing it as oil heals the wounds.

Up to this very day, if he had known the teachings of Christ, David would have just smiled coldly; of all those who lived around him and called

themselves Christians, according to the teaching of Christ, not a single one lived by those teachings. They cursed, they bore false witness, they fought, and did not forgive each other. At the same time, they went to the churches but did not do as they were told to do in the sermons.

In the village were two churches, two confessions: Catholic and Evangelical. They hated each other; spoke contemptuously about the faith and teaching of the other, and at the same time pretended to believe and worship Him who commanded love and mercy. If any one of them would have come to him with an offer of this teaching of Christ, it would have raised only an ugly laugh in the heart of the aged Jew. He would have compelled the offerer to compare his life with the teaching he was presenting. However, this good, strange young man lived, really lived, as Christ commanded. He loved and obeyed his Christ. Yes, he could do that. But since he could, why could not the others? Why was there such a difference between them?

The old man ceased his thoughts; there was no one to answer his questions.

“Good evening,” sounded from nearby. Facing him stood the very one of whom he had to think so much that day and whom he was impatiently awaiting.

“I almost despaired of being able to come to see you.”

“I too had given up hope that you were coming.”

Over the wrinkled face of the aged man passed a gleam of joy. When one has had nobody for a long

time, and then begins to love somebody, there is usually a deep strong feeling.

“Sit down!” Readily the man moved over, making room for him on the bench. “I am waiting to hear what message you are bringing; how did you manage at Petrash’s?”

Methodius sat down and told him all about it.

“I am not sure, I am not sure,” the Jew shook his head doubtfully, “whether he will not finally change his mind.”

“I am hoping for the best. Just now I prayed that this matter may be successfully carried out, and I believe that my prayer will be granted.”

Thus they counseled awhile, and even the aged man made plans to show how the Petrash’s could get started. The heart of the old businessman warmed up.

“Neighbor,” suddenly said Method, “when you knew how favorable this place is, why have you not started a business yourself? Why did you bother with these old rags?”

The young man grasped the aged man’s hands in his own and with a friendly smile looked into that face, which suddenly was covered with a shadow of a deep sorrow.

“Of what benefit would the business have been to me? Who would have taken care of the other things? I am all alone in the world, like a post in the wilderness. I had to do something. I had to make a living somehow, because without work I would have died in sorrow and loneliness; thus I did what I could. But why do you remind me of this?”

Almost roughly the old man pulled his hands away, covered his face with them, and rested his elbows on his knees.

For a while he sat there, crumpled up, wholly overcome with the pain of his recollections. The young man looked at him with noticeable interest and heartfelt sympathy. Then suddenly he put his arms around the aged man and drew that wrinkled grey head to his young breast. It had been a long time since the aged man had been embraced by anyone. Long ago he had felt the joy of being hugged. Long ago, when he was still young, he also knew, oh, he knew the bliss of such an expression of love. Later, when it all passed and passed forever, when he passionately but vainly opened his arms to the emptiness, when his heart almost died with longing, in vain he had mortified his heart so long that it seemed to him that he had cast out of it all human feelings, that it was now only a rock. However, now it was proven that it was not so, that it had only lain dormant. The ice melted when the sun shone upon it.

The aged man trembled in the arms of the young fellow, as when the wind shakes an old tree. Wild sobbing burst from his bosom—the first time in years, tears ran over the wrinkled face.

The youth did not try to stop the crying of the aged man, he leaned his young head against the old grey one, his eyes moist with tears, and because the dropped hands covered the face of the crying one no more, he wiped the tears from his eyes and cheeks.

“Let me alone,” with broken sobs uttered the aged one; “Why do you bother with an old Jew? Everybody shuns me, why don’t you leave me alone?”

“Because I love you, my dear neighbor.”

“Why should you love me?” with new sobs cried the Jew, “It is a long time since anyone loved me—once it was my mother, then I thought that she—but it was deceit!”

“What was deceit?”

“Let me go,” the man struggled to get away. “Do not ask me.” The young man let him go.

“Believe me, neighbor, it would be much easier for you if you would confide in someone what is oppressing you these years. I am a stranger here and have nobody to whom I could betray you. If you have confidence in me, tell me. I love you and will feel with you.”

“Well, I don’t care.” The Jew straightened up. New light sparkled in his eyes. “You have done me very much good, even now, because you did not shun this old man. You are good and the world is evil; perhaps I may be able to warn you of some misfortune, so that you may be more careful than I and save yourself from harm.

“If you just look at me, my bent over form, the wrinkled old face and the half-blind eyes, perhaps you would not be able to believe that I have been, once upon a time, young and comely like a tree in the grove, as you are today,” began the aged one. He rested his emaciated form against the tree but held the hand of the young fellow in his feeble one.

“I inherited a good business from my parents, though I was not rich, but I believed that if the God of my fathers would bless me I would prosper. Nevertheless, I was a very rich man; I had a wife like a flower on Mount Lebanon, and a child, oh, a child! Even Moses could not have been more beautiful when the daughter of Pharaoh took pity on his loveliness. When I think of that happiness, the bliss of long ago, I know, I know that even Adam in Paradise could not have been happier; and that all passed away.

“How am I to tell you all? I used to be much away from home. That unfortunate business kept taking me away, and I did not know that somebody else had eyes also.

“Once I was coming home, full of joy and hope. I came; the house was empty.”

The old man drew his hand through his hair. “Another came and took the treasure of my eyes and the joy of my heart. If it had been an unbeliever—but it was one of our own—our own!

“I despaired; I ran like a crazy man; went to the courts; did everything, but in vain. I had to give her a bill of divorce, and the law gave her the child also.

“He was in a higher position than I—a government official. They pushed me, the poor Jew, away everywhere. Nowhere could I find justice, not even with God. They fared just as they pleased themselves, until they left. Afterwards they disappeared from this country and I never heard from them any more, nor where my child is and what has become of it.

“Oh, Method, oh, Method, when I think of it, I would ask, like Job, ‘Where is God, that I may go till I stand before Him and there present my charge? He only knows what became of my daughter, Esther; what has become of her and my wife. She left me, and betrayed me; but I just cannot believe that she was guilty. She was very, very young when we married. He was a good-looking fellow, a great lord; he misled her. If she would have come back, I would have forgiven all, would have received her—oh, how gladly! But they did not let me see her, and perhaps they told her that I would be cruel and hard. She was afraid and believed them, and so all was lost, all lost.

“I fled from that town and buried myself and my sorrow in this country, and just waited, hoping that in winter, death would come and deliver me from this suffering, and that I would take my sorrow with me to the grave. Then you came and compelled me to tell you, and all has been brought back to me—the loss, the yearning, the sorrow—everything. Now what have you gained by it?”

“Very much, dear one! Now I know better what to pray about; and some time the moment will come when you will not be sorry that you gave me your confidence.”

The young man arose; also the Jew, involuntarily. They entered the hut.

There, when the elder one had made a light, the youth noticed the empty vessels. He took them and brought fresh water. Thereupon, he arranged the man’s poor couch, just as he used to do during his

sickness, then he sat beside him on the table; opened the big, old book and began to read.

The Jew covered his grey head with a cap, and Method also put his hat on his young head, so as not to insult him, since the Jews consider it disrespectful toward the Word of God when a man reads with an uncovered head.

Today though, they read the fifty-third chapter of Isaiah, and the young man, during the reading, explained about whom it was talking. The aged Jew did not contradict, and they parted in grave silence.

CHAPTER IV

Sometimes week after week passes, month after month, and one hardly realizes where those days have gone. Thus it seemed to the Ondrasik family. It is true they had much work to do, yet at no previous year had they finished everything as easily as this year.

“Perhaps it may be,” thought Gazdina, “because we begin with the reading of the Word of God and prayer, and that we conclude the day the same way.”

Her health had improved so much that she could cook now; so Dorka did not have to stay away from the work in the fields. Only in the morning they brought everything for her, either Method, Andrew, or Dorka. Whether she needed wood or water, they supplied her with everything that they could, and when they worked nearby, one or the other ran in to see if she needed anything. It seemed to Mrs. Ondrasik that she never had it so easy in the world.

Her husband had often been of an ugly, hard disposition, but she also had a hard head. When he had been drinking, though he was not a drunkard, he made a fuss around the house, and she scolded. After that they sometimes did not talk together for a whole week.

Their daughters married, the sons-in-law did not want to obey, the farm did not prosper. Today the farmer's wife felt that there had not been God's blessing on the whole house. They had not prayed the whole year long, only when they went to the

communion, only in the morning as each one arose and muttered something, without even thinking what he was saying.

Were they not all evil, completely fallen away from God? How could they expect Him to help them?

The woman realized that the first thing to do was to turn to God, and she turned with her whole heart. She felt that if anyone in the world needed a Saviour, it was she. She opened her heart to the Son of God, and He accepted her.

Later in the evening, when she sat alone with her husband, she testified to him and asked his forgiveness, because she had not been as good a wife as she ought to have been, but now, since God had granted her a further lease on life, she wanted to live from now on, according to the will God, and be better towards those of her family.

Ondrasik felt ashamed; tears filled his eyes.

“Well, let us forgive each other,” he said. “You have been a better wife to me than I was a husband to you, but Method is correct, we cannot go thus till death, because what will be the result? We must begin to live differently.”

“Really, we have lived contrary to God.”

“I have not told anybody yet, but will tell you, every time I see that young fellow, how he lives, and think of how I have lived as a young fellow, and even to this day, I am ashamed. We had the Word of God, but did not read it the whole year long. We might as well admit that we lived worse than animals. They eat, sleep, and work, eat, sleep and work, but at

least they sin not. We also have been eating, sleeping, and working, but at the same time abusing each other and cursing God and man, and thus we raised our children. I don't wonder now that they ran away into the world, since they had such an example at home."

Thus talked the man with his wife. It was the same day—on a Catholic holiday—when Sammy Petrash and Dorka talked with each other in the orchard. He sat on the bench which Method had made for the "Gazdina," while she stood leaning on the old pear tree and listened to him telling the nice story about how the swallows came home. In telling her this, he confessed that he already was on that way Home, beginning and ending each day with prayer and that he was careful not to trespass the commandments of God. At the same time he related to her that he was learning from old David to write better and to figure, and that his father would open a store for him. The addition they were building just now was to be his dwelling.

The girl rejoiced sincerely with him. From her childhood she pitied him, and later, often thought about what would become of him. Then, it was true he was not able to walk at all, but now he could already walk some, though very slowly, yet in spite of it he had grown to be a comely youth. Now he would no longer just uselessly sit in front of the house or in the orchard. Dorka knew long ago, having heard from his sisters, what they were building, but she pretended not to know, in order not to spoil his joy.

Andrew joined them just as Sammy was relating about the swallows; he had heard it from him once before. They started to discuss with each other what a beautiful and proper thing it would be if they would join together, just like the swallows, and also hold prayer meetings together.

“You know,” said Dorka, “that every day in our lives is just another bit of the way Home, and thus every day should be started that way. Those swallows prayed and sang together always before they flew farther.”

Later in the evening, the whole Ondrasik family came to supper, and when after supper Gazdina told Method to read the Bible, Dorka looked at Andrew, and he at her, and then she looked at the parents, and in her mind rose the question: “I suppose that they also want to go with those swallows.”

In the meantime, while the world round about continued to sleep in their sins, the family of Ondrasik and their neighbors began to wake up. The Holy Spirit began to open their eyes also in understanding the Word. They began to seek God and to realize that they themselves were in their sins; but they also came to know Christ and started together with the swallows on their way Home—only, too bad, not all of them.

That fall there was a great harvest of prunes. So many hung on those beautiful trees till the branches were breaking under their weight.

“What do you think?” Petrash said one afternoon to his son, “I will ask the mayor for permission

to distill liquor; from those prunes we will make liquor. I will buy from others also. I will ask for a license and you can sell liquor; and when you give the people a sample to taste, they will come to the store.”

Those words cut the young fellow. He said nothing to his father, but when his father went to the barn, he started out to look for Method. He found him digging on his property. Not far away the Podhajsky's were digging also.

“Welcome, Sammy! What are you coming for?”
“Oh, just because, I have to tell you something.”

The comrades shook hands and Sammy began to tell what his father had said.

Method grew sad. Angry, his eyes flashed fire. Sammy had never seen him thus before.

“Look here, that is purely the Devil's thought. Sammy, what would you say if your father would command you to take this pick and kill yonder neighbor Podhajsky?”

“But Method, what are you talking about? My father would never command me to do such a thing,” exclaimed the young fellow. “And I would never do a thing like that.”

“Oh, you will just open a dram-shop; either a public or a secret one. You remember what a terrible drunkard Podhajsky used to be; how it ruined his body so that he was like an animal. Now the grace of God has changed him, so that he is among those swallows that are on the way Home. You may have noticed, that aside from coming to you and to us, he does not dare go anywhere, so

that he will not be drawn to the dram-shop again. He is still very weak against temptation. You know very well that as soon as you begin with that liquor, he will have it before his eyes in the nearest neighborhood, and when the stench fills his nose, do you suppose he will be able to resist? Let's say that he will come to buy flour or salt; that he will have the best intentions not to let himself be tempted to sin. He will come just as the sheep comes to the slaughterhouse, and your father will drink his health, or you yourself will drink his health. From old friendship, he will just taste it, but it will arouse his old habit and awaken the desire in him. He will not be able to resist. First he may drink only one glass, but on the morrow two. But then as if you had poured fire into him, he must drink again, and he will become a drunkard again, worse than before. He will become a beast. The light of God's grace will die in him, the body will get sick, will be weakened, and he will perish somewhere like an animal. He will be like a swallow on the way home, but did not get there—perished, and whose fault will it be? Yours, Sammy, yours!"

"Stop, Method!" the young fellow clutched at his head. "I don't want to be the cause, not I, not to him nor to anybody else; sooner let me be killed."

Sammy went away. Method, very much saddened, continued his digging.

That day in the Petrash home was a real hell. The farmer had it nicely figured out how they would sell liquor, and how his son would be getting ahead. If the Jews could get rich that way, why

could he not also, by selling the drink? And now the son did not want to hear about it. You could sooner move a mountain than him. He was so pale—like a whitened wall. His Father's raging made him tremble all over, but he could not yield a step.

His father called him all the terrible names he could think of. He threw it up at him that he was a beggar; what care he had spent on him all these years; that he would not keep him any longer, such a beggar, and if he did not want to obey, let him be gone quickly.

The words of the enraged father wounded the soul of the son unto death, as only human words can hurt.

The mother was also drawn into this dispute and tried to beg first the one, then the other. She might have moved her husband, but her son she could neither convince nor persuade; he just sat there like a rock, then she also got very angry at him.

His two sisters entered the room, also the bridegroom of the older one, who had come with his comrade to visit them; they were from the neighboring village. They began to confirm Petrash in his intention and put Sammy to scorn. "Since he does not want to," said the future son-in-law, "You just get everything ready, Father, and I will gladly leave my trade. It doesn't have to be exactly a store; just open a dram-shop and sell mutton, this is not to be had here anyway, and let me and my wife have it. I will gladly invest a few hundred in it, and the balance of the expense you can cover from the

dowry you promised to give Eva. Thus we shall all nicely stay together, and Sammy can go again into the orchard and lie around as before.”

In the beginning this talk was started as a joke, the bridegroom just wanted to compel his future brother-in-law, but just as it happens sometimes, he finally took a fancy to the proposition. It appealed also to Eva that she would not have to leave her mother and go to her mother-in-law, since her husband would come to them. And what mother would not be glad when her daughter marries if she could still have her in the house? Thus the affair blinded even the mother.

It occurred to Petrash also, that in this manner his property could remain intact and he would not have to give anything away with his daughter.

By evening the matter was all arranged.

“Well then,” the brother-in-law asked Sammy before leaving, though he did not mean it, “will you do what your father wants you to, or do I have to come?”

“You said that I am a beggar,” said the young man, his voice shaking with heartfelt pain. “That is true; I am lame in both feet; but I would sooner choose to be lame in both arms also and go about begging than to make my living in such a devilish business. But you are not here yet, and God is almighty and He will surely prevent it, so that you will not be able to carry out your will.”

“We shall see, our dear prophet,” said the young man, and left.

The following day, Petrash went to see Method.

He was digging again, the Podhajsky's also, and on the remaining grass and bushes, old David pastured his goats.

The anger of Petrash had passed, and now he was sorry he had done evil to his son without a cause, and wanted to take vengeance on the one, whom he supposed to be the cause of Sammy's obstinacy. He knew Method's view about drinking, as he had persuaded not only Podhajsky, but also Ondrasik, his cowboy, Sammy, and even had tried to get him also to leave off drinking intoxicating liquors. He insisted, not only that it is a loss, but also a shame and a sin.

That whole night Petrash could not sleep. He did not want to take back his word that he would drive Sammy out of the house if he did not obey his wishes—but to drive him away—his farmer's pride rebelled against that. What would the people say, and what of his own heart? Yesterday in his anger he did not feel that he had one; today, however, it showed itself. "I could have been spared all of that," he was thinking bitterly, "if it had not been for Ondrasik's servant. But I will tell him a thing or two."

The farmer grew more and more bitter as he went on his way, and when he came to the parcel of ground and beheld the one whom he blamed as being the cause of the hellish disturbance in his home, joyfully digging on the hillock, his anger was fully aroused.

"What did you put into the head of my son?" he began when they had barely exchanged greetings.

“You come here and who knows what kind of a tramp you are or where you came from, and you start to make a quarrel and disturbance in the house. Is it any of your business if I want to have a dram-shop in my house? Why do you incite my son to be disobedient?”

The Jew heard the yelling, looked around, rose, drew nearer, and watched the young Christian. He was anxious to see how this one would react when somebody wronged him. Now was his chance.

The aged Jew knew best of all what kindness this young fellow had shown to the man. He taught his son to read and write and all else that he knew. He even persuaded old David to teach him how to figure and do business. As a neighbor, he did him all the good he could, now he was getting “hot” pay for his trouble. One hard word after another poured out of the mouth of the farmer.

With amazement the Jew watched the face of the bitterly censured one. He stood calmly, leisurely resting on his spade, looking on the ground as if these words did not concern him at all.

The anger of the old Jew was being aroused. He would like to have jumped on that farmer and given him a good calling down; he would have shown him “where to get off” but it was not his place to speak.

Finally, Petrash started at Method, their eyes met and the farmer ceased.

“Well then; have you told me all that the Devil commanded you to?” kindly, almost joyfully, spoke the young man. “He was owing me this in this valley. I already wondered that he had left me in

peace so long. I almost feared that I was not serving my Lord Jesus Christ well. But now, all is well again. Now when you have told me all that the Devil told you to, neighbor Petrash, speak for yourself. What kind of injustice has been done to you, or what evil have I ever done to your son?"

Joyfully the Jew rubbed his hands and in his soul he blessed the young man. Podhajsky also had dropped his pick and stood nearby, stunned and surprised, not knowing what to think of this man, Petrash.

"Well then, what do you really have against me?"

The farmer was taken back by the frank, yet kind question; nevertheless he did not want to give up. But the cruel words stuck in his throat and the explanation as to why he had to be angry, was given more mildly.

Finally, turning to the Jew, the farmer ended saying, "Sammy does not want to yield, just because yonder Podhajsky also might be coming to us, and might go back again to his old ways; as if a fellow would have to fill himself right away and could not drink with moderation. But Podhajsky must not come to us, I will not let him!"

The last words the farmer pronounced with a strong disdain. This aroused Podhajsky, who had been standing there as in a daze.

"You do not have to fear, Petrash," he said, stepping nearer, "I shall not enter your house when you make a Devil's trap out of it, in which you will catch the people, to strip them naked and kill

them. You do not need to forbid me to come there; I shall not cross your threshold, even if you beg me. But ever, ever remember, that I shall not forget that your son had so much mercy towards me that he wanted to save me from eternal damnation. I will bless his every step wherever he walks.”

The words choked in his throat as he threw himself on the ground, crying bitterly. It was a heart-breaking cry, realizing how despised he was; anyone could close the doors before him, or give him a kick. Petrash stood there looking at the crying one, and he felt as if scalding water had been poured over him.

“Well then, neighbor, is it such a great injustice to you,” began Mrs. Podhajsky, “that you have such a good child, and is it an injustice to you that Method instructed him not to look indifferently on a perishing human being? I had only one son; he was a good son to me until he began to go about in the dram-shops. You know what trouble I had with him after that. Many times you yourself have hid me and defended me, also his wife. Today, when the good God had mercy and sent us a good man here to save him, you are cursing that man and giving him ‘a calling down’? Look here at my son, hear him lament, and if you have a heart of stone, just go and open your dram-shop; and when Sammy does not want to kill the people, chase your good child away. But remember the words of a mother, whose son the dram-sellers ruined; remember what the Word of God says; **‘WOE UNTO HIM THAT GIVETH HIS NEIGHBOUR DRINK, THAT**

PUTTEST THY BOTTLE TO HIM, AND MAKETH HIM DRUNKEN ALSO, THAT THOU MAKEST LOOK ON THEIR NAKEDNESS!' Hab. 2:15. The curse of God will surely come upon you."

"Don't cry, my son," said Mrs. Podhajsky going to him, "God will help you. You are still young, and all is not lost yet, as you are no longer under the displeasure of God. Don't cry; let us go back to our work!"

The son obeyed and rose; they took up their picks and continued digging. Method also dug his spade deep into the ground.

What else could Petrash do, but leave? He knew well that what he had done now was not good, and these people had put him to shame, but he would not admit it.

He went to the mayor's office for the permission to make liquor, but did not get it. "I don't care," he said to himself, "I will arrange it with somebody else, and we will make it together."

He soon found a comrade, and they started making liquor. Thousands of the beautiful plums, created for good, were put into the boilers to make poison to be the curse of the people.

If one needs a bit of poison to kill the mice that ruin everything in the house, he has to secure the prescription from a doctor, a certificate from a notary public, a mission of the police; but anyone mean enough to poison the people, needs but to pay for the license, and everything is permitted—some physician will be glad to get more patients. Thus it goes in this world.

CHAPTER V

Winter came, and also the carnival. In the home of Petrash there were great preparations in progress for a grand wedding. The mother had her hands full of work; the father, his head full of troubles; Eva, her heart full of joy and hope. Since autumn, nobody spoke to Sammy, just as if he were not there. They barely responded to his greeting. Only the youngest sister spoke to him once in a while, secretly.

She had her own individual sorrow. The one she cared for asked for her, but her parents were not pleased with him. He had gone and taken another. The girl felt forsaken, so it drew her to her brother who had been kicked aside. She often went to him in his little room where he spent most of his time now.

From Ondrasik he had learned to make wooden implements, and thus, he kept busy whittling. What he earned, he gave to his mother to pay for salt and light.

He still continued to go to old David. "Just you keep on learning," he said to him. "You will have a store yet, and then it will be of some use to you." Every evening he was at Ondrasik's, and there he was able to forget that he was all alone in the world. It seemed to him like paradise to be in that house.

There they understood the Word of God better and better. Now they appreciated with what joy her heart burned, when Mary sang, "MY SOUL DOTH MAGNIFY THE LORD, AND MY SPIRIT HATH REJOICED IN GOD MY SAVIOUR." (Luke 1:46-47.) In

their hearts also Christ was born. This was the first time in their lives they celebrated Christmas, the birth of the Saviour.

That winter the wife of Podhajsky came back to him. He had asked her in a letter. She came, yes, she came! He was so glad he hardly knew what to do to please her in everything. She just cried and could hardly grasp it, that such happiness could exist for a wife on this earth.

She found her husband orderly, more so than he had ever been before, because he was already a drunkard when she married him. The mother-in-law was very kind, the children darling, healthy, the house clean, the pantry filled for the winter.

The Podhajsky's had earned their bread. She brought a nice sum of money from her earnings. She gladly paid the few small debts they still owed. She bought some clothing for her mother-in-law, her husband and the children; for herself she had plenty. For the kitchen she bought some utensils. How cozy home was now!

And the main thing was, that she came with a hungry heart. If anyone did, it was she who loved to hear the Word of God. She caught up with some and even exceeded others in her zeal to know the Word. Oh, how easy it was for her to believe God, and His Son, Jesus Christ, who brought about such a change in her life. And once she had tasted the grace of God in her heart, she could not keep silent about it. She was concerned about her family, former friends, and cousins. Each Sunday their small room was full, and Method had to read

to them. They began to call the young man into other homes also.

“Method, it seems to me that the swallows begin to gather!” said Sammy once. “Yonder in the grove, you said that the whole village should come together for a prayer meeting and that we should begin. I hope it will come to that yet.”

“Hardly, Sammy, ‘STRAIT IS THE GATE, AND NARROW IS THE WAY, WHICH LEADETH UNTO LIFE, AND FEW THERE BE THAT FIND IT.’ (Matt. 7:14). At least we will show people the way; and if none of them will follow the Lord Jesus, we will follow Him, for He said, ‘Follow thou me.’ ”

“Yes, Method, follow Him, Him alone!”

During the winter, the Ondrasik’s hauled lumber for the house of Method. They wanted to start on the building in the spring. All that was possible was prepared now, so as to be able to finish it in a short time.

The hillock was all leveled off. A sufficient supply of bricks was ready, also rocks for the foundation. In spare time they brought in slate also for the roof, and stacked them at Ondrasik’s. From the forest they brought some wood, and when he had time, he made posts out of it; because he wanted to fence the whole property.

Suddenly sad news came to the Ondrasik’s. Their daughter, Anna, wrote that her husband had sore eyes and the doctor told them he had better return home if he did not want to go blind. Therefore, they would start on the journey as soon as he returned from the hospital. That was sad news.

Formerly it would have crushed them; today, they knew how to pray and only said, "The will of the Lord be done; we have to bear what He has laid upon us."

Just that week the Petrash's were getting the wedding ready, and for the sake of appearance, they invited Ondrasik's also, but that very week the sick son-in-law returned, and the daughter was so ill from the journey. Thus Dorka was unable to be Eva's bridesmaid; they had plenty of work at home. If it had not been for Method and his help and advice, they could not have managed to get along.

Daughter Anna wondered who it was that so faithfully helped her parents. Dorka and her mother, even the father, did not get tired of telling what a servant God had sent into their house. She was very much surprised about it, and her husband, Joseph, also said, "His voice seems to be familiar to me, as if I had heard it somewhere."

"Who knows whether you have met somewhere. None of us here knows from what place he comes. He never tells anything concerning himself, but from all that he talks about, he must have seen a good bit of the world."

Again it was Sunday. Old David sat by his warm tile oven, lost in thought. In spite of the closed doors and windows, the music and shouting at neighbor Petrash's could be heard. They celebrated the wedding. They had it on Sunday because the Gypsy was hired by so many that they could not secure music for Tuesday. They succeeded in getting his music band for this day and the next.

Suddenly, silently, the door was opened and Method entering, sat down beside the Jew.

“Welcome to you,” joyfully said the old man. “Are you coming nevertheless? Well how is it at your house?”

“Praise God, it is getting better. The doctor said the young farmer may recover by spring, and his wife has been up since this morning, but she is weak yet.”

“Listen, Method, while I have been sitting here without anything to do, I could not but think about what will become of you. Since Ondrasik has his children at home, and they will get well, he will no longer need both a servant and a cowboy.”

“That’s true, the three of them will be able to do the work,” responded the youth. “I shall be there only until the spring. Really they could spare me now; I could leave at once, if it were not for that house that I started and one more thing.”

It was as if a knife had been plunged into the old man’s heart.

“To go away, where to?” he asked sadly. “What shall we do here without you? Well, the others, but old David! What could he do without you?”

“Do you love me?” The youth drew the old man into his embrace, just the same way as that day when he had related to him about his misfortune.

“Don’t ask me. If you were of my own blood, my heart could not love you more!”

Silence reigned in the room.

“Do you remember what I promised you once in the fall?”

“That you would tell me something? Oh yes, I remember!” nodded the aged man.

“Well, I want to tell you why I love you.”

“Me?” exclaimed the Jew surprised. “I thought that you loved me as you love all the people, since Christ commands you to do so.”

“Yes, because the Lord Jesus tells me so—He that said ‘SALVATION IS OF THE JEWS.’ However, I love you not only as a man, but also as a Jew. Especially as a Jew, because it was a Jew to whom I owe most on this earth.”

“What, you don’t say!” said the old man amazed. “Well, then, say on!”

“For long years I lived without God, without Christ in the world. I did not know that I had an undying soul, nor where I would go after death. I lived just as you all here do, and it was a Jew who was the first to point the Truth out to me, to show me Christ. He taught me to love the Son of God; He lived on the earth just like Enoch, always walking with God and today He is not seen any more with the people, because God took Him.

“Once you wondered how I came to know the Yiddish language. I will tell you. He taught me.”

“You say,” said the aged man raising his bowed head, “that it was a Jew who taught you to know and love Christ?”

“Yes, he was a Jew of the Jews, he was a Jewish missionary. He lived only to proclaim to his people that the Messiah had come and redeemed His people from their sins, that He lived, died, and rose again, and that He will come again.”

“Then he was not a Jew,” frowned the old man; “then he was a Christian.”

“He was a very happy man; he had only one sorrow, only one desire which he was not able to see fulfilled. It was hard for him to die because of that sorrow, and I was so happy to relieve him of it. I took upon myself a certain message and promised him that what he wanted to do, but was not able, having been stopped by death, I would try to fulfill, even though it would cost me my life. He believed me, and praise the Lord, I have not disappointed him, neither shall I.”

“And what kind of a message was it?” the aged man asked with profound interest, looking surprised at his young friend. Why, he was talking today as he never did before, as if he were not just the servant of Ondrasik, raised among the ignorant farmers and being one of them.

“‘What kind of a message was it,’ you asked me? He had someone very dear to him whom he loved very much, though he had never seen him, and to whom he wanted, but could not, bring the message of salvation, because he could not find him.”

“And you have found him?”

“Yes, I found him and, —————”

At that moment a strange light flashed through the room, and a terrifying sound of a wild cry reached them. Both men jumped up.

“Something happened there,” said the Jew, pointing to the other house.

“Yes, it is burning inside; good-bye, I have to hurry.”

“Where to—in that fire?”

“Yes, surely they are all drunk. Perhaps they threw over a lamp, and Sammy is there.”

“Don’t go!” groaned the Jew, but in vain, for the young fellow, having torn his hand from the old man’s grasp, disappeared in the darkness.

Something terrible happened in the house of Petrash. One of the best men, who had been doing all kinds of foolishness, and cooked the liquor with sugar, and carried a large bowl full of burning liquor; he wanted to set it before the newlyweds on the table, but his feet slipped. He stumbled and poured out the burning contents over the table, and also over the bridegroom. In a moment the clothing of the unfortunate one burned like a torch and the tablecloth burned all over. The guests jumped about; a terrible cry arose. Some ran to the door; others jumped out of the window. The bridegroom, wild with pain, jumped desperately on the table and down again, rolled over on the ground, hoping to put out the fire enveloping him. The bridesmaids could barely hold back the young bride, who wanted to throw herself upon him and put out the fire with her hands. Some began to pour water on the table to put out the fire, and one of the drunken guests, supposing it was water poured out half a bottle of liquor, and then the fire broke out worse than ever with a real explosion. It was at that moment that Method broke through the door, in his hand he carried an old wet cloth and threw himself upon the poor burning fellow. He wrapped him up completely and thus put out

that terrible fire. By that time flames spread everywhere, causing the people to run, crying. Stifling smoke and stench made breathing difficult. Barely all succeeded in getting away.

Some carried out the bride who fainted, while Method carried out the groom. Outside he turned him over to the men. He, himself, went once more into the midst of that destruction. He jumped to the windows and closed them, pulled down the curtains and stamping on them quenched the fire that was shooting up all around him and set him on fire too. In spite of all, he succeeded in grabbing two large demijohns full of liquor and a third one half-full, from the table and jumped out and slammed the door behind him.

“Where do you want to go with that water?” he shouted to Petrash and some older men, who carried water in buckets and tubs. “Water will not put out that fire. While the liquor burns you will have to let it burn out and then you can extinguish the rest. You laughed that you will bathe in liquor, and now you can warm yourself by it also. If God had not permitted me to carry these out and the fire had exploded these demijohns, it is horrible to imagine what would have happened!”

Oh, that was a terrible wedding and a horrible time. Hardly a single one of the guests got home free from injury. Almost everyone had his clothing torn and ruined. And the groom! The poor groom! He was burned so that it was terrible to look at him. It was fortunate that the flames could not break out.

Though all that was in the room was either burned or ruined, the house at least was saved. It would not have been saved, all agreed to that, even the groom would have burned to death had it not been for the servant of Ondrasik. A long time they had been preparing for that wedding, but it will be remembered still longer.

The previous week Mrs. Petrash said to the neighbors, "The Ondrasik's are so holy, yet they have the house full of sickness. Why is God permitting all this to come upon them?" Now they had the house full of sickness and could not say that God had sent it on them. They had . . . called the Devil . . . drunken guests; they cooked his kind of soup . . . and it was hot.

Oh, through what torment the young groom had to pass. On account of the great pain, he cried day and night. They did most everything for him that the doctor ordered, and also, what he did not command. Thus the good that the doctor tried to do was ruined by the advice of the old women.

"I beg of you, 'Gazda'," said Method the third day, "let me go for a few days. I was at the Petrash home; the young fellow will surely die if they do not treat him differently, or he will go crazy. I'll go to take care of him."

"Go, yes go, you will surely take better care of him. It is a pity to let such a young life perish."

Methodius went. The whole Petrash family was glad when he said why he was coming. The doctor, whom he just found there, rejoiced above all. He realized that here was a sensible and practical

young man. He forbade the family to do anything except what Ruzansky would let them do. From that hour on, all went better.

Even the sick one realized that some other hands were touching him now, and not only sought to relieve him, but also succeeded in doing so.

The few days that Method intended to stay at the Petrash home became weeks. Mrs. Petrash, herself, went to Ondrasik's to beg, for God's sake, that they might let them have their servant a longer time, and that they would gladly pay for someone to take his place for that time.

Well, they let them have him, without a substitute. They knew that Method, out of pure love, was taking care of the sick one day and night, and they wanted to have a share in this work of love. Besides, the son-in-law of Ondrasik did not have to be in bed any longer. His eyes were getting better, and the headaches ceased. He was glad to be able to do something.

Sammy used to long for the opportunity of having Method at their house in order that they also might begin the day like the swallows, with a united prayer. Now he had that desire fulfilled. Method stayed with them, and they began each day like the swallows, but at what a price!

The winter had passed, the spring came, but it was like some beautiful bird; he flies and sings, makes the heart happy, yet before you realize it, it's gone. The pleasant spring had to make place for a hot summer, just like the one two years ago, when Methodius Ruzansky came the first time to the

house of the Ondrasik's. One afternoon, young Ondrasik, for thus he was called by the family name of his wife, though his name was Rasho, stood looking around in front of their house.

He was getting well. He directed his gaze in the direction where, before his going to America, was an ugly hillock. That was gone, and instead, in the midst of a young beautiful orchard stood a house, not very big, but so comely and good-looking that there was none like it in the whole village. It had large fine windows, to the rear a yard and gate, and toward the village a great door, like the door of a store.

"Who would have thought of something like that?" said the young man. "There that hillock was, lying in front of us, but we did not buy it. It stood there so uselessly, and he obtained a fine house so cheaply. Nobody in the whole village has a house so thoroughly and cheaply built. If I could just remember of whom he reminds me, not so much his face, but his voice. I must have seen that fellow somewhere, but where?"

Young Rasho was not the only one who admired the house; everybody in the village did.

The spring had but begun when they started building. Method hired the bricklayers from the village, but he directed the building himself, like an experienced builder. Every bit of the space had to be well used. The timbers for the roof he had cut altogether different from that to which they were accustomed. In this way he made rooms in the attic, and there was plenty of room below. Though

the building was erected from sundried bricks, it was as firm as if it had been of burnt bricks. Daily the people stopped, looking on, and many a one nodding his head said, "Verily, I will have mine also done that way."

All that time Method was staying with the Ondrasik's, but did not serve any more, rather paid for his board. But the bricklayers and other workman, he hired Mrs. Podhajsky to cook for, because he did not want to add this work to the Ondrasik women, since they had a big household anyway.

Mr. Petrash did not open a dram-shop, nor will he open one, nor a store. For one reason, that terrible wedding cost them too much, then the very long illness of the son-in-law required much, and the front room had to be renewed completely. They were glad to have that money which they intended to use in the dram-shop. In the room they had to put in new doors, windows, and floor. Then the neighbors found out that Petrash's had made arrangement with Method to make a store and dwelling in his house for Sammy. This he did, and for two weeks they had been arranging the store that was to be opened next week.

It was as if old David was rejuvenated. He arranged and advised about everything; even for his own son he could not have done better. The people wondered also because the Jew was completely changed. Formerly, except for a greeting, a "yes" or "no," one could not get a word out of him, and he was frowning continually. Now he was even willing to enter into conversation and had such a

friendly face, just as if he had grown young, though his head was completely white.

The women attributed much of the change to the fact that now he had a clean shirt and clothing, whereas formerly he went about ragged and dirty. They could not understand how Mrs. Podhajsky would take the trouble to wash for a Jew, and how she did everything for him. A while ago she white-washed his room and renovated his featherbed. He bought new covers. Now his room was quite nice. Thus the women gossiped and wondered! "Everyone who has aught to do with the servant of Ondrasik is being changed, only he remains his old self. Let us watch and see how he will turn out when he lives in his new house. Perhaps the Ondrasik's will even give him their daughter since they think so much of him."

"Oh, yes, even Petrash would be glad to give him one, but he does not seem to care for any of them."

But young Mrs. Rasho let the cat out of the bag, saying that Method had spoken to Ondrasik on behalf of Sammy Petrash to give him Dorka. "Though he is lame, he is otherwise sound; and when he starts in business, with the help of God he will be able to take care of a wife. They both" said he, "love God and will walk together on the pathway that leads to eternal glory." Thus far, spoke Method, Sammy said the balance himself, and with Dorka he surely was already of one mind. Dorka had not dreamt as she was helping to dig on that hillock, that some day she herself would be living there.

“Strange things happen in this world,” the woman said surprised. And truly, thus it really is!

CHAPTER VI

Again there was a very beautiful summer evening. The light of the moon covered the village as with liquid silver. Everything was blooming in the orchards, meadows, and groves. Some of the rays fell also on the hut of old David; they lit up the rustic bench and the aged man sitting upon it. He was in holiday attire, and it seemed as if a holiday spirit rested upon his face.

In his thought he wondered why he should have such joy today. Was he so pleased that Sammy could finally open his store and that he was instrumental in helping him? The old man could not understand himself, how love for other people came to his heart, to him, who formerly did not love other people, did not feel with them. If they had sorrow, it did not hurt him, if they had joy, it was nothing to him. But today, he could have cried for joy when Dorka came to him in the store and full of rejoicing as she was, said, "The Lord Jesus repay you all for what you have done for Sammy."

It pleased him much that these two young people loved each other, and that they were so good that they would be happy together, and that he was able to help them in a measure.

Sammy and Method also thanked him and that pleased his old heart so much.

"Until lately I have been living in vain in this world," thought the old man. "I lived only for myself, but now, since I started to do good to others, I realize that it is the duty of man in this world and that God commands us to love our

neighbor as ourself. THEREIN IS THE HAPPINESS. People lived all around me with many a care, and I could have advised and helped them—but I did not do it— What then could have made me rejoice?

“I saw that they despised me, that they didn’t love me; well, why should they have loved old David? I did not harm anybody; my heart was very much stuck on that fact, that I was better than those all around me, but I was not. Why should anybody love me?

“ ‘The Son of man came, not to be ministered unto, but to minister,’ said Christ. O, Adonai, do not cast me away, if I say, My Christ! I cannot help myself, I am a sinful man. Jerusalem we have not, no temple, no Ark of the Covenant, no sacrifice, and without the shedding of blood there is no remission of sin. I must have a lamb. I believe that Jesus Christ is your LAMB. If it is a sin and treachery before thee, O God of Jacob, slay me at once, but if not, O let that blood of Jesus Christ cleanse me from my sins and guilt. I am placing my hands on that Lamb, slain for me. ‘All we like sheep have gone astray; we have turned every one to his own way; and the Lord hath laid on him the iniquity of us all. He was oppressed, and he was afflicted, yet he opened not his mouth: he is brought as a lamb to slaughter, and as a sheep before her shearers is dumb, so he openeth not his mouth.’ Isa. 53:6-7. Thus He took upon Himself death for me, my Messiah, my Immanuel. ‘He shall prolong his days, and the pleasure of the Lord shall prosper

in his hand.’ (Isa. 53: 10).

“I have resisted, but I can no longer; I believe that He lives, that He rose from the grave, that He lives with thee; yes, He even lives in the heart of old David.”

The old man pressed his hands on his heart, and such a light covered his face, that he looked like one of the elders before the throne of God.

“I used to pray like David: ‘Open thou mine eyes, that I may behold wondrous things out of thy law.’ Ps. 119:18. God of my fathers, Abraham, Isaac, and Jacob, thou hast heard me; hast given me light on thy Word.

“I resisted, did not understand, did not want to understand; but now I can no longer, I will not resist, like Saul. Yes, I believe that Jesus of Nazareth is Christ, the Messiah, thy Son, and that you gave Him to me also.”

The voice of the old man ceased, only his lips moved. What more he said remains between him and his God, covered up. Out of eyes, turned toward heaven, flowed abundant tears of genuine sorrow for the lost opportunities. They were tears of a child who has found his Father, who was not angry, did not threaten or punish—but forgave, because He loved—and that eternally.

In the quietness of that Friday evening, old David started with the swallows on the way home. Just before the twelfth hour of his sad forsaken life, God resurrected his soul and gave to his heart the light of imperishable eternal life: Jesus, the Saviour of sinners.

The old man sat thus about an hour, and was so lost in those God-exalting thoughts, that he had not heard the steps, nor seen him, for whom even now his happy soul prayed, though inaudibly. However, the youth who was drawing nigh, saw, and for a long while could not take his eyes from the shining face of the aged man.

Sudden shrieks pierced the quietness of the evening; somewhere in the village a drunkard was staggering along and was angry that the street was not wide enough, thus was old David disturbed in his thoughts. He turned his head; he noticed that he was no longer alone and soon they sat together on the bench. The aged Jew told Method that today he would, and really could, say with Ruth, the grandmother of David: "Thy God, my God."

"Praise the Lord!" cried the young man, after they had talked together for a long, long time and given glory to the living God for the grace He had manifested in old David. "Praise God! His promises are eternally true; I trusted in Him and He did not disappoint me."

"Thee?" wondered old David.

"Yes, me! Today, dear aged one, since Christ is already thine, I can and finally will tell you, that this village would never have seen me, if it had not been for you. Do not let this overwhelm you; it was for you that I came, just because of you. You told me a while ago that I led you to the Messiah as Philip did Nathaniel. Yes, Philip went to look for Nathaniel and I searched for you also; but it cost me much before I found where you lived."

“You say you have searched for me, for me, even before we met each other? That is not possible, and why?”

“Why did Philip look for Nathaniel? Just to lead him to Jesus.”

“But he knew Nathaniel, but how about you?” The old man gripped his hand firmly.

“I again have known someone, of whose life you have never known, and who loved you to his last hour.

“I told you once that a Jew brought me to the knowledge of the truth. This, my benefactor, to whom I am indebted for everything on this earth and eternally, was named Ruben Sokolov. He was the son of a rich Russian Jew Sokolov, and his mother was that child, as beautiful as Moses, for whom you sorrow up to this day, your daughter Esther.”

“Method!” cried the aged man; he rose and sank back again. Who can describe the storm of feelings manifested in his face? “Method, you have known her, my daughter, my daughter, my child? Have you seen her? Are you sure it was she?”

“Surely, it was she; though I have seen her only in photographs, both as a bride and shortly before her death.”

“Her death, then she died, lives no more?”

“She died, but she will live forever. She died praying for you, and had her son promise her, since she could not find you by correspondence, that he would personally go to search for you as soon as he had finished his preparation in the schools.”

“Then she knew about me?” He shook his head in sad amazement.

“Her mother had told her all, and she loved you dearly. She imbued her son with this love also.”

“And my wife?” groaned the aged one.

“Your wife was really more deceived than guilty, she regretted her transgression at once, and wanted to return; but they would not let her. They told her how angry you were. And when the bill of divorce came she believed them and married him who deceived her, but she never was happy again, and died before the wedding of her daughter, who at once left for Canada.

“It was there that Sokolov first found grace and the Saviour, then she followed him, and together they had the pleasure of leading their son to Christ. They spent much for his education, and had only one desire, that he might bring the message of salvation to his people.

“They saw their desire fulfilled. At least the father lived to hear the son preach and died shortly afterward. I came to the knowledge of the Saviour, and your grandson became my friend. I owe him everything. And he loved me as only he could love!

“Because he was a Slovak he confided in me that perhaps somewhere in Hungary his grandfather was living, whom he was bound by a promise to his departed mother, to find. Whenever we prayed together, he always prayed about that, and about the possibility of reaching that one.

“Once he paid the way for me to go to Pennsylvania. We knew that there were many Slovaks

there and hoped that I might be able to find out something about you from my countrymen.

“By God’s direction and after much hunting, the Lord granted me contact with the young Rasho. It was just when he had come from the old country. From him I heard about old David, whose wife had left him. After that we searched by mail, and found out everything. Ruben was very glad, and prayed constantly to his heavenly Father that he might be able to save the soul of his grandfather.

“But the Lord of life and death had decreed otherwise. Ruben was so occupied in the ministry that he could not free himself at once. The Lord let him see great results, and many people were blessed through his ministry; then came the sickness—a cold. The angel of death came also and took his pure soul home—he had to go.

“I knew of his sorrow, that he would not be able to bring the light to his grandfather. But what would hinder me from doing it for him? In his dying hour I gave him the promise—believing in God, who would not leave so many prayers of the daughter and grandson unanswered—that I would endeavor to bring his grandfather to the Lord, so that they might some day meet in eternity and be finally united there. They buried him and cried over him, and I came to Hradova as his substitute.

“I knew that it would not be easy to win the hardened man at once, and if I would come to him as the messenger of his grandson, he either would not believe me or would harden himself against the deceased also. The fact was that old David was a

Jew, and his grandson died as a Christian; thus I realized that it would take some time. In order to be as close as possible to him, I offered myself to Ondrasik as a servant and asked God to grant me to win first the heart of that man. He granted that prayer. A simple servant would not have aroused the suspicion of old David, neither did he. But I had to be very careful in his presence not to betray the fact that I had not always lived in these circumstances.

“I also feared the return of the young Rasha, but the Lord granted that he did not recognize me. The first time I met him I had a beard. Clothing also changes a man considerably.

“The evening of the Petrash wedding I wanted to tell you the whole truth, but the Lord did not let it be told; thus I made up my mind to stay in Hradova until I should hear from the lips of the grandfather of my friend that he also found and received Christ Jesus as his Messiah.

“Now I have told you everything, and I praise my Lord that He enabled me to keep my promise, and also, that I have not been here among you in vain. Now I can leave with satisfaction because my mission is completed.”

The young man rose and the aged one, stunned by the news he heard, followed him into the hut. Method closed the door, locked it, and made a light. Out of inner pockets he drew treasures precious to the aged Jew. They were the photographs of his daughter for whom he had cried so bitterly, her husband Sokolov, and a nice picture of his grand-

son. Looking at his face one would be reminded of the words: "The Lord took delight in his soul, therefore, he hastened to deliver him from the midst of iniquity."

"Well then, dear neighbor, there you have your treasures, and here you have something else, Ruben's New Testament. Enjoy everything and tomorrow, if the Lord grants that we should live, I will come again to answer all your questions that may come to you in the meantime."

The young man went, and the aged one remained with his treasures and with his God whose great love he just now began to fully appreciate.

Very early the next morning Andrew and Method went to the woods for timber. They cut down a large oak and did not return until evening.

Being very tired, they partook heartily of their supper and went to sleep. Neither of them noticed that the home folks looked somewhat curiously at Method.

In the morning before they were called to breakfast, 'Gazda' and the servant met in the orchard.

"If you please, Method, come this way!" called Ondrasik.

"What do you wish, Gazda?"

"Old David called at our house last night and related such strange things that we can hardly believe them."

The young man smiled sincerely and lovingly looked at the man.

"Is it true that you came to Hradova just because of the old Jew?"

“Yes, I came just for his sake.”

“Is it really so?” Rasho exclaimed from behind him.

The young man looked around and joyfully exclaimed, “and you have not recognized me?”

“Why should I?”

“Well, don’t you remember that young fellow in Braddock to whom you spoke about your native village and old David?”

“Oh yes, now I remember,” the young farmer smote his forehead with the palm of his hand, “that is the reason you seemed to me somewhat familiar. But then you had a beard and were clothed like a gentleman—and today?”

“I hope you like me this way also,” smiled Method.

Ondrasik interposed, “If what David says is true, then you have never been a servant before, nor were you born to be a farmhand.”

“That may not be true, since I inherited from my parents a larger farm than yours here!”

“Oh, how could you live among us!” they both exclaimed surprised. “How could you lower yourself so because of the Jew?”

“I know a King’s Son; you know Him too, who left His royal throne and crown, and served thirty-three years for me, the unworthy one. Could not I, wretched one, serve two years for the sake of that man whom He loved? Besides, I had a good time here with you. I hope you like me and that I was not among you in vain. Who knows what else is awaiting me in this life? It is not very likely that I shall

be a farmer's servant again; but I can say that those were the two happiest years of my life, where I could at least resemble my Lord in some way, while I was privileged to be Ondrasik's servant."

The pleasant face of the youth grew serious. They could not continue their conversation, as they were called into the house.

It is certain that much more was spoken about it, not only at breakfast, but especially that afternoon when they all gathered in Sammy's new house.

CHAPTER VII

It was on another beautiful Sunday afternoon, the haze of the fall spread over the woods and valleys, and the trees were bare of their leaves. In the oak grove on the very spot where once Method related how the swallows came home, then being surrounded by a group of children and Sammy Petrash, there sat this same Sammy, but he was alone. Method was no longer there. He was no longer in Hradova; in vain one would have looked around for that friendly youthful figure. No longer could you hear the children crying along the streets, "Uncle Method!, Uncle Method!" Though they kept on pointing out the gifts and keepsakes which he had distributed among them before leaving.

Method finished his term of service with Ondrasik and he finished the house, which it was now revealed, he had never intended for himself, only to show to the people in Hradova how to appreciate their homeland. As suddenly as he came, just as suddenly he left. Nobody could keep him there, he was just not one of them.

Sammy rested his head in the palms of his hands, and nobody being able to see him there, he cried. Oh how many times he had cried already for that good comrade. He knew that he would never have another one like him.

Who would have thought so many things would change in those two years? How happy and orderly everything was now at the Petrash home with the parents, sister, brother-in-law, and he with Dorka in that beautiful house Method had built, and

when he thought of the happy family of the Podhajsky's and especially the Ondrasik family, how they now lived for God, he could not give enough thanks to Him, because He sent Method to seek old David, and at the same time grace to find even them. Oh, how good God was to them all.

The young man looked around. He seemed to see him once more and hear him tell the story about how the swallows came home. Well, he also flew to a better warmer country and would not live in that nest that he had built. The neighbors found out that he had built that house, 'on the swamp,' for old David, from the money that the grandson entrusted to him for David. And that David could have lived there like a rich man because he had inherited much from his grandson.

Method had planned very nicely, that they both together, Dorka and he, would take care of the aged man, who really loved them, and thus he need be no longer alone. But the aged one would not stay. A mighty desire possessed him to go and see the graves of his daughter, son-in-law, and grandson, and be buried there beside them, that he might be united with them at least in death, if not in this life.

This is what was commonly known in the village, but Sammy knew that old David would have died, surely died, if he should have had to be separated from Method. He was not surprised, because he understood him; often he himself would have fled to him, but that he had good parents and a loving wife.

Thus Ondrasik, together with Petrash, bought

the house for their children. Old David sold it to them for half the cost, and his own hut he presented to old Mother Podhajsky, so she could make room for the young family, since it was large. Thus even after he was gone they continued to bless the old Jew, David.

For years he had lived in that small village, the people had become used to him; toward the end of that time he was changed into a very good man. They will remember him.

Will they forget him who had been among them such a short time, living there only two years? Can they forget Method?

They will forget him, because people have very brief remembrance of kindness shown to them, but for a long time yet, the neighbors will speak among themselves about the time when Ondrasik's servant lived in Hradova.

He disappeared from sight; but the light and love which he had sown those years have taken root and are increasing constantly.

