

had kicked the kid! I put my hand quickly into the bag; the bag was empty. I had lost the kid on the road! The horse rose shaking its head as though it were giddy. It reared on to its hind legs, hurled itself on one side, and threw me to the other; finally he tore away like a thing possessed and disappeared into the darkness.

By the time I got up, much shaken, I could hear a rustle among the maize, and close by came the sound of a man's voice saying clearly:

"Hi! Hi! May Heaven remove you!"

"Who is there?" I called.

"An honest man."

"Who?"

"Gheorghe."

"Which Gheorghe?"

"Natrut--Gheorghe Natrut, who watches the maize-fields."

"Aren't you coming this way?"

"Yes, here I come."

And the figure of a man became visible among the maize.

"May I ask, brother Gheorghe, where we are at this moment? I have missed my way in the storm."

"Where do you want to go to?"

"To Upper Popeshti."

"Eh! To Pocovnicu Iordache."

"That's it."

"In that case you have not missed your road. You'll have some trouble to get to Popeshti--you are only at Haculeshti here."

"At Haculeshti?" I said joyfully. "Then I am close to Manjoala's Inn."

"Look there; we are at the back of the stables."

"Come and show me the way so that I don't just go and break my neck."

I had been wandering about for four hours. A few steps brought us to the inn. Mistress Marghioala's room was lit up and shadows moved across the curtain. Who knew what other, wiser traveller had enjoyed that bed! I should have to rest content with some bench by the kitchen fire. But what luck! As I knocked some one heard me. The old maidservant hurried to open to me. As I entered I stumbled over something soft on the threshold. The kid! Did you ever! It was my hostess' kid! It, too, entered the room and went and lay down comfortably under the bed.

What was I to say? Did the woman know I had returned, or had she got up very early? The bed was made.

"Mistress Marghioala!" So much I was able to say.

Wishing to thank God that I had escaped with my life, I started to raise my right hand to my head.

The lady quickly seized my hand and pulling it down, drew me with all her strength into her arms.

I can still see that room. What a bed! What curtains! What walls! What