

venture to look into each other's eyes; she would blush like a ripe apple, and Gardana's lips would tremble. Then there appeared upon the scene, from somewhere, a certain Dina, son of a rich somebody; the girl pleased him, and he sent her an offer of marriage. Her father did not think twice, her father gave her to him.

And Gardana--would you believe it--after he realized that it was hard fact, gnashed his teeth, beat his breast, and disappeared. Two days later he was on the mountains, and a gang with him.

Eh! love knows no bounds, love builds, but love also destroys many homes.

The girl's father was seized and murdered; not long after Dina was murdered too. Then Gardana spread terror for many years in succession.

For some time now, whatever he might have been doing, wherever he might be in hiding, nothing had been heard of him. But as soon as something happened, his name once again passed round the village: "Gardana, it is Gardana!"

Perhaps it was not he, perhaps he had left the mountains, perhaps even he was dead; but the people who knew something----

"How many did you say there were?" asked Mia.

"Two; both merchants. They came from abroad."

"And who can have murdered them?"

"No one but--Gardana."

"How is it? But is Gardana still alive?"

"Come, do you think he really is dead? No, no, they alone give this kind of tidings of themselves."

"And why?"

"They have to be on their guard, the bailiffs are after them, they might capture them."

"Perhaps----"

The spinning-wheel spun on. The spool wound the thread, the treadle hummed, filling the room with a soothing noise.

Doda Sili said wonderingly:

"Who knows what kind of man he is?"

"Gardana?"

"Gardana."

"Not a very big man, but large enough to terrify one, with a black beard--oh, so black!--and, when you least expect it, there he is on your road, just as though he had sprung out of the ground. Didn't our Toli once meet him!"

"How was that?"

The spinning-wheel stopped suddenly. A swarm of gnats came in through the windows, and buzzed round in the warmth of the sun; and Lena said quietly:

"It was on his way from the sheepfold; he came upon Gardana on the Padea-Murgu."

"Oh, it might have been somebody else."