

She disappeared. One could only hear the soft stroke of the oars; then that, too, ceased, and perfect silence fell upon the silvery lake.

By my side I found a bouquet of carnations and sweet basil, the flowers of love.

At daybreak the old man came to take me off. When I turned towards the yard I once again bent my head in the direction of the old black building. Eyes watched me through the chink in the mill bridge.

That very day I went away. Many a time have I wanted to return to the old Zavu mill, but fate has willed it otherwise. At last, when I could have done so, other loves have held me in other places. Years have passed, but the bunch of dried carnations and basil reminds me of it all. And from time to time, my thoughts wander to the fairy of the lake.

THE EASTER TORCH

By I. L. CARAGIALE

Leiba Zibal, mine host of Podeni, was sitting lost in thought, by a table placed in the shadow in front of the inn; he was awaiting the arrival of the coach which should have come some time ago; it was already an hour behind time.

The story of Zibal's life is a long and cheerless one: when he is taken with one of his feverish attacks it is a diversion for him to analyse one by one the most important events in that life.

Huckster, seller of hardware, jobber, between whiles even rougher work perhaps, seller of old clothes, then tailor, and boot-black in a dingy alley in Jassy; all this had happened to him since the accident whereby he lost his situation as office boy in a big wine-shop. Two porters were carrying a barrel down to a cellar under the supervision of the lad Zibal. A difference arose between them as to the division of their earnings. One of them seized a piece of wood that lay at hand and struck his comrade on the forehead, who fell to the ground covered in blood. At the sight of the wild deed the boy gave a cry of alarm, but the wretch hurried through the yard, and in passing gave the lad a blow. Zibal fell to the ground fainting with fear. After several months in bed he returned to his master, only to find his place filled up. Then began a hard struggle for existence, which increased in difficulty after his marriage with Sura. Their hard lot was borne with patience. Sura's brother, the inn-keeper of Podeni, died; the inn passed into Zibal's hands, and he carried on the business on his own account.

Here he had been for the last five years. He had saved a good bit of money and collected good wine--a commodity that will always be worth good money--Leiba had escaped from poverty, but they were all three sickly, himself, his wife, and his child, all victims of malaria, and men are rough and quarrelsome in Podeni--slanderous, scoffers, revilers, accused of vitriol throwing. And the threats! A threat is very terrible to a character that bends easily beneath every blow. The thought of a threat worked more upon Leiba's nerves than did his attacks of fever.

"Oh, wretched Gentile!" he thought, sighing.

This "wretched" referred to Gheorghe--wherever he might be!--a man between whom and himself a most unpleasant affair had arisen.