

fountains prolonged themselves mournfully against the horizon, as though they regretted the life and gaiety of other days. A flight of crows, frightened by I know not what, rose from the dark marshes and alighted upon the tops of the poplars, beating their wings and cawing above the waste.

But Sandu saw and heard nothing; he walked absorbed in himself and communing with his own heart.

He entered the town as the lights were being lit. He took no side turnings but kept to the main street so that the dogs should not hinder him.

"Keep straight on," he said to himself, "past the Roumanian church, then I take the turning to the right till I get to the bridge and at the bridge I must ask my way."

And at the bridge he asked his way, but they explained it in such a manner that he lost himself, and it was late before he reached the hostel. He bade good evening and asked rather diffidently whether there were anywhere he could sleep, and if there were something to eat.

The innkeeper entered into conversation with him, and learnt that Sandu came from the Dobre district, had done three years' military service, and now was looking for a situation with some tanner.

"I have come," Sandu spoke with difficulty, "to see if I can find a place here, for you see----"

"Who knows, perhaps you may," the innkeeper interrupted him, and went out of the room.

"Should you say I shall find a place?" Sandu asked the innkeeper as he brought him some lard and a piece of bread.

"Oh, you may find one if you are good at your trade and hard-working."

Sandu said nothing; the only word he could have uttered would have been to say, as he could have said, how hard he meant to work, and what kind of a man he was. But as he could not say this to the innkeeper he told himself what a lot of work he meant to do, and how well he meant to behave himself, as well as if he were a young girl.

Absorbed in thought, he ate at long intervals, and the innkeeper, seeing how silent he was, bade him put out the lamp and wished him a good night.

But the night was not restful. He crossed himself and stretched himself out on the bench by the side of the wall, his bundle he placed at his head and carefully pushed his money and his papers underneath it. Although he was tired from his tramp, sleep would not visit his eyes. He grew excited, a sort of giddiness overcame him, and he broke into a cold sweat at his own thoughts. He tossed and turned on the narrow bench, and pressed his forehead against the cold wall as he sighed heavily.

When the day broke he was exhausted, his bones seemed weak, his feet could hardly support him, and his head felt queer. Water, and the freshness of the early morning, revived him, and he made his way to the market-place where, according to the innkeeper, he would find the booths of the master-tanners.

Although it was autumn, people were in no hurry to buy sandals, and only a few of the master-tanners, who did business here on Sundays, were walking about and moving their strips of leather according to the position of the sun so as to ensure them being in the shade.

Sandu stood still by the cross in the market-place, and it seemed as if a knife went through his heart; when he saw the empty booths he felt as though his last atom of will had been destroyed. He felt as though he must turn back, as though he could not ask. It seemed to him