

"Ana, Miss Ana----"

Ana drew back her hand, and looking at him in a way I cannot describe, she said:

"Are you warmer now?"

Sandu's eyes were too eloquent, the peaceful isolation was too tempting, the stillness of the atmosphere was too intense, their hearts were too attuned for them not to understand each other.

She went up to him with an eager movement, and he put his arm about her waist and clasped her to his heart.

They neither of them said a word, but to them both it seemed that no words were needed.

"Sandu, I must go, I must really go, for Mother might come," and gently she disengaged herself from his arms, took a few slow steps, turned round, and then fled like a little kid towards the house.

While Sandu was watching her, Costa came along; he, too, was a master-tanner.

"Ha, ha! Talpoane's hands live well. What a moment for me to arrive," murmured Costa in his beard, smiling as he thought of the story he would be able to tell. "Sandu," he shouted, "I was going to see you, but as you are at the rinsing I have come down to ask you whether the hides which I have been waiting for these three days have come from Pesta."

"No, they have not come."

"Not? Why the devil haven't they sent them? Have you much work?"

"A great deal."

"How many hides?"

Sandu looked at him.

"We have a lot."

"A lot. Yes, I know you have a lot, but how many?"

"I have not counted them."

"Have you got business at Hunedoar fair?"

"I believe so; the drying is difficult, though."

"You have got some heavy skins, haven't you?"

"Some heavy, some light; you know how it is with the work."

Costa bit his lips and would like to have given Sandu a cuff or two, so angry was he that he would not tell him what he was longing to know.

"But, it's cold!"

"It's cold."

"Come, you ought not to feel it much when Talpoane's daughter brings you drink."

The blood rushed to Sandu's face, and he did not know why he did not strike Costa to the ground as he smiled at him.

"But what of it, haven't we all done the same kind of thing? Only look out that nobody sees you and nobody hears you. That's all right, I won't keep you from your work!"