

Jindrich S. Baar:
Jan Cimbura
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Cimbura’s farm was house 325 in Putim. See page 78. It likely is the same today. As I read along I have a feeling the author adds a lot of his own thoughts to this book.

Construction of Czech sentences is different than English. Czech authors also like writing very sad stories perhaps because as a nation they were oppressed for many centuries and dominated by other countries.

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I
Farmer Martin Kovanda in Hradiste by Pisek became mayor. The first committee meeting after the year 1840, which abolished “robota.” From then on the farmers were not obligated to give certain number of days free labor and produce from their farms. At the first faree election in Hradiste when a leader was to be elected everyone called out “Kovanda, no one else but Kovanda.” All liked him for his quickness and personality and who stood up against all untruths and crookedness. He was not quick to anger or didn’t get drunk, didn’t holler in the tavern or threaten but was a good adviser. He was as cool as steel but could also be hard as steel.

This will be work, he said to his wife. I will need to hire some farm help. But, where will you get him said his wife. Kovanda asked around and heard Cimburas had a son. They lived in Semice not far away. He had returned after seven years of battles in Hungary and Italy.” Seven years I served and received nothing, a piece of paper printed in German, a blackyellow ribbon on a piece of yellow tin. That’s all Cimbura brought back after serving his country and king.

Their farm was small and about four more children on it. Kovanda sent word to Cimburas in Semic and they replied their soldier would come if it was a good and lasting place, but he isn’t waiting for it. He has his own bread and bed at home.

Kovanda sent word again. He wants him to come, he will be like their own. He will sit at the table with the farmer and if he is good will be like their own.

Well, man, I welcome you under our roof. The mayor greeting him the next Sunday—what is your name? After my father I am called Jan. So you have a brother yet,

guessed the farmer since it was the custom to name the first son after the godfather and the second after the father, the third after grandpa and the rest named after the saints’ names on the calendar closest to the date of birth. Two boys yet and two sisters—five of us. And you know how to work? I do, I’m from a farm, but still don’t understand all since I was at war for seven years. Before that I did what father told me.

Kovanda liked that: He thought—he can take orders and will be good. Can you cut with a meadow and grain scythe? Cimbura taught his children to reply truthfully. I can cut with both, he replied, can put it together and when dull, can sharpen it and hammer its edge thinner. Do you know how to plow? I can plow a furrow straight and long without looking back. Do you know how to see grains? (broadcast by hand) I do, even flax, lentil, peas and others father plants at home. A straw twist to bind a sheaf? That I do. Strong enough to throw over the Pisek Tower and it won’t loosen? There was one more question: and with what did you drive at home, oxen or horses? Only oxen, and Cimbura lowered his eyes in shame. Well, here you will get acquainted with horses, the helpers to a farmer. You will get 20 gold pieces for a year’s work, shirts and aprons—and you’ll sit with me at the table. (The custom was for the help to sit separately.)

The hired girl carried a bowl of soup and set it near the bread on a table covered by a tablecloth. The children stood by the mother and Kovanda said the prayers loudly, just like Cimbura’s father did in Semice. Jan liked that and felt at home. The farmer sat first then the new haired man. After dinner Kovanda filled his pipe and handed bladder bag of tobacco to Cimbura. Thank the Lord (a way of saying thanks)—I don’t smoke. Kovanda’s eyes opened wide—but, you were a soldier—I was but sold my shares of tobacco. And what about whiskey? I don’t drink replied Jan. Kovanda was relieved. Those were his last questions. They went outside to look over the farm buildings, the yard and even the fields. As the farmer talked Cimbura listened attentively. By the time they turned back Cimbura had understood all the work required of him.

In the evening Kovanda talked about the horses, what a noble loving animal. He taught Cimbura how to feed them, water them, how to clean and brown the oats by heating, when to put hay in the manger, comb them, how to call them, harness them and how to nudge them. There were two beautiful horses—strong and stately. The gelding was called “Dobrak”, the mare “Divoke” (“good fellow” and “wild”). She scares easily but both reliable. As soon as they heard their name their ears snapped up. You don’t have to be afraid of them. If you don’t hurt them, they won’t hurt you. An animal soon recognizes a good man. Give them a piece of salted bread and they will be your friend. Their black eyes looked at their new man. Kovanda looked at Cimbura wondering if the horses would like him.

Jan broke the bread in three pieces. The smallest he ate himself. He patted each horse on their necks giving them each the bread. Dobrak turned to playfully nab at him. Divoka acted proud. Well, thanks be to God, we'll be friends. Kovanda said—some animals don't like the smell of some people, but you've won out. Divoka is a find lady and patted her. So Cimbura was like at home, with the help and animals, as though he had grown up here and was theirs. Kovanda couldn't believe that an old soldier didn't smoke or drink. O go, said his wife, he is the best we've ever had.

Kovanda replied—a wife by nature is light minded and trusting. Until he (Cimbura) eat “ten bakings of bread with us;” it isn't wise to close a lasting friendship. He hasn't gone through the fire yet. There hasn't been time yet to know him fully. He doesn't wander around, but probably only because he hasn't been here long enough to get acquainted. He's a good worker but “a new broom always sweeps well.” He is obedient, but maybe because he's inexperienced. He forgot much of farm life when he was in the army. It's best to wait out time. But Cimbura did all his work well. He smiled to himself, “The farmer is trying to trip me up.” And he worked steadily, and when evening came they all wondered at the work he had done. He felt satisfied and wasn't even lonesome for home.

Haying and harvest were over, the last cutting of hay smelled nice in the hayloft. They dug potatoes and brought in cabbage. Winter wheat was planted and some plowing done. Time came for their Thanksgiving holiday.

This day the sun shown from a blue sky, looking down at their village and fish pond. Near its border was the chapel and blacksmith and all around it were the houses. Their roofs were all of clay tile. Some walls were lime covered, others of log chinked with clay. Whitened chimneys stuck out of the roofs with smoke spiraling out of each. Old Macek stood by the chapel and looked at the shadow it cast. From long experience as soon as the shadow fell on a certain root of the linden tree, he rang the chapel bell. He had his sheepskin cap on, his old pipe between his lips and the bell was calling the noon Angeles. Across all the village all heads bent in prayer. Macek kept his cap on because there was no place to hang it and pipe in his mouth otherwise it would go out and would have to again put in tobacco and relight it. During the ringing he quietly prayed.

The village quieted down like after a death. At Kovanda's also they all sat with bowed heads and ate what the maid had cooked. It was a good old Czech noodle soup. Kovanda had a chicken for this that was as fat as a duck and big as a rooster which didn't lay eggs any more. The wife scolded her at every feeding. “Just wait, you don't even lay an egg. I'll kill you for Thanksgiving and put the whole of you into the soup. That's why the soup was

smooth as oil and tasty as almonds. Then the maid brought creamed sweetened horseradish cooked with beaten eggs and fresh chopped nuts. Then was put on the table tender boiled beef and fresh bread (rye) and kolacky. They all ate quietly this God's food as though they were in church.

The first hunger was satisfied, but today unlike other Sundays a pan of nice white dumplings were brought on, then sour cabbage, finally a big pan of well browned pork. Everyone could take as much as they wanted, first the farmer, then his wife, Cimbura and the maid. Then the mother cut thin slices for the children because they weren't allowed to use a large knife. That was the last meal for the day. They expected some company might come, perhaps a storekeeper from Pisek or some gentleman with his lady and children from village Kolacky or a Pisek councilman. Kovanda used to haul all of these officials to Praba with his horses.

They all sat around the table making themselves at home. Their brows sweaty, their chins shining from grease. All had white ironed shirts. Kovanda ate slowly so everyone could finish before him when he laid his spoon down signaling the end of the meal as was the custom.

“We thank you Lord God Almighty” Kovanda prayed. Then everyone started to talk. You cooked well my wife, then he turned to Cimbura. It seems to me you weren't so happy after the harvest festival. I wasn't. I went home then and mother told me our father was sickly. But today you will be going to the music. He wanted to know what his hired man was like for when there is a celebration with a few drinks the true character comes out—good or bad. The maid brought out a dish of kolacky, some with jam, poppy see, cottage chees and gingerbread.

Cimbura wondered to himself to what poor person in the village he could take his portion. No, I'm not going to the festivities said Cimbura. And how old are you? I went to war at twenty so I am twenty-eight. Well boy, why don't you want to go among the young people? Are you shy of the Hradiste boys? I didn't go in Semice, even in the army. It's not wise said Kovanda to avoid people—you soon could get lost on a lone road and that is a bitter road. It's strange he doesn't associate with girls, doesn't like to talk about the war, sing religious songs to himself. Just so he wouldn't get strange, thought Kovanda. Old custom teaches us to be jolly, enjoy yourself among your brothers. I've never heard this said Cimbura. And when is this time of remembrances you speak of? That is at our harvest festival “Obsinky” when we go to church to thank God for our bounty. And then before Lent when celebrations end, and the farmer rests to regain strength for spring work. There is a time for everything, and a person shouldn't destroy an old custom. Our farm life is steady, by custom blessed. Don't be along and avoid people. Look at me—I go to church on Sunday. During Lent I go to confession but talking over old times I go to

the tavern on this one day, otherwise on Sundays I walk over my fields. I look at the ants, bees, butterflies. I listen to the birds, look over the woods, ponds and river. If it rains I go to the neighbors to see how they're doing but on this one day I celebrate and then I become like a lamb again.

Well, said Cimbura, I didn't learn to dance because as a soldier I didn't go to celebrations. How do you know you can't? Did you try sometimes? Kavanda made up his mind he has to break this defiance and straighten out this young man's head.

Farmers are born to dance. We don't have to learn it. When we hear a bagpipe or clarinet and see a circle dancing our feet normally start to lift, you toss your head, take off your hat, you'll tap your feet and you won't even know how it happened. It's like a catchy disease, the song enters my ear, my closed lips will part and I like a bird will sing and dance. Are you of a different blood? Here now is something to spend and go. Cimbura without a word got up and went to the tavern.

III

Towards evening Cimbura returned. It wasn't even time to feed the horses yet. You're here already? Said Cimbura. Yes, I thought if you had guests and needed to take them somewhere I should be here. Did you like it? I liked it. Did you dance? No, I sat with the older hired help. But I heard the music in my whole body. As a child he always felt shy to make friends. Even the army didn't break him of this. Today I talked of the war, watched the dancing circle and after the third beer I thought I'll toss my coin to the musicians after all are dancing so they wouldn't notice him, but when I got up I couldn't make up my mind so I headed for the door and went home. He heard the others make a joke and laughing at him. He even heard the girls laugh and that much more hurried home.

The group from Hradiste thought what kind of hired man is that he won't come among us. Does he think he's better? He's from Semice—his father has a farm—he was a soldier. Fracek, Pepik and I were there too. I suppose he can't dance—so he shouldn't come here—we'll play a joke on him—and so the conversation went.

When Cimbura was feeding the horses he met MarJanka in the yard. He was carrying hay and she was going milking. She had been a Kovanda's quite awhile and felt sorry for Cimbura. Are you going to the dance again tonight? I will—and was amazed at his reply. Don't go—she said. The boys will be waiting for you. Cimbura really didn't want to go. He already had a headache from the beer and smoke. Now he felt he must go so he wouldn't lose respect among the young people, and make fun of him.

What can they do to me? He tossed his head dressed—opened the door to the tavern and entered. What a stately boy a true south Bohemian man, of medium build, ideal and beautifully grown. Small as a lady at the waist—but broad in the shoulders, strong chest and straight as a board. On a muscled neck a small curly haired head and a nicely shaved face. In the army he learned the measured step and straight forward face. One thing spoiled his looks—long and wide feet, so that his kneehigh boots caught everyone's attention.

The music had already started and dancing was in full swing. Cimbura was dressed in leather goat pants and vest, starched white shirt whose sleeves stood out like wings from his shoulders, a roun black hit tipped towards his left ear. God, how nice he looks thought MarJanka, but I wish he wouldn't have come here after I warned him. She knew his child's heart well. Cimbura entered with innocent good will. He went for a beer and sat in his old place among the poorest and oldest. After about four dances Cimbura was emptying his second beer and was getting ready to leave. Nothing had interested him. "I showed them I wasn't avoiding them." Then all became quiet and Jira who worked in Hradiste at Porazils, stepped up to Cimbura and behind him all the other boys. "The Lord God greet you Cimbura said Jire. "Give to the Lord God" replied Cimbura. It seems you work in the village like we do but we think you are ashamed of us and avoid us. You didn't go among us last night under the linden tree, even Sunday to the tavern for pool, or the sermon at the cemetery or leaving church so we take this as an affront from you. Today you showed us you weren't ashamed of us so we the Hradist boys will give you a solo dance—we picked out a partner for you—Anyzka a retarded beggar, lame and bent from age, dressed in rags. We'll dance, we'll danced lisping. Everyone laughed, Bartik a hired man at Chmelicek's nearby Kovanda's came up to him. Cimbura only looked at him and stepped up to Anyzka—dear Anyzka, he said gently "I know you are good and lovely but we won't dance and handed her his glass of beer. And here is a twenty piece, go to the old lady at the store and buy yourself a giner cookie heart and tomorrow come to see me a Kovanda's. I will gaive you a bundle with Kolacky, and a kerchief. Cimbura walked her out of the tavern. "Give her a kiss" they all called. He turned at the door and slammed it shut till the tavern shook, it was like a shot. Nobody recognized him. A moment ago the face of a lamb, now a lion. There will be trouble and blood will run all the old ones said to themselves.

"Be ashamed" hollered Cimbura in a hard voice. Who should be ashamed? Jira stepped up to Cimbura "you, and all of you." Hey! Boys did you hear that he's going to preach to us. Throw him out! And they all moved towards him. Do you want to fight? He eyed them up. Yes! They all put their hands up around him surrounding him completely, but like the crack of a garnet stone they all flew and in the center stood Cimbura. In one hand he held

Jira and in the other Bartik as in a vice, their shirt collars tightening around their necks, he lifted them up, twirled around and let them fly. He remembered the blood in Custozzo Italy. He didn't hear or see. Laugh at me! Do you understand shaking the two, but not a retarded Anyzka. You wanted a kiss—so here—kiss each other putting their faces together until their noses bled and heads cracked. All looked in wonder. None of the old ones ever remembered such strength. Not even the clown who came to the tavern and could lift a weight of iron with one hand. There—pigheads, now laugh at me. You're as light as two sacks stuffed with hay. He threw them towards the door and said—now they can throw water on you so you would come to. Who else wants some? No one moved. Now I will have my solo—I from Semice—Jan Cimbura. He threw a coin to the musicians and twirled like a wolf and sang "Protivin castle, among the mountains—don't forget what you gave me—a nice handkerchief I gave you—embroidered finely. The music stopped, the bagpipe quieted, the clarinet trilled. Cimbura stomped his feet and gave a cheer. The first girl he laid his eyes on he pulled into the circle even if it would have been the prince's daughter from the castle Hluboka or from Vraze. It happened to be Josefka Kubel of Putimac who worked for Porazils. He twirled her like a feather across the floor and when the musicians finished he threw them another twenty piece Cimbura sang "under our window in the clover they caught a cock quail with a lady quail. They caught them in a net hung upon the gate." When the music stopped Cimbura threw the girl into the air, caught her with his right hand and on his palm carried her like a princess off the floor and set her on the bench and without a word left the tavern.

In all of the Pisek nothing else was talked about but the strong man, Jan Cimbura. How they all had goose pimples on their backs. They told their friends in Smrkovice, Putim, Razice, and the next Sunday at the Putim Cemetery they pointed out Jan Cimbura to everyone. He has strength like a bear and hands of steel. The most happiness had farmer Kovanda. MarJanka had told everything in the morning. You should have seen our hired man. Kovanda was proud. He had the best and strongest man in the village. Cimbura had given him honor. He went to the barn to commend him but Cimbura like nothing happened kept on combing the two horses. I didn't fight, only defended Anyzka, but if they wanted to fight me I only defended myself. Tell the maid if I'm in the field to give my share of Kolacky to Anyzka and one of my scarves which I have several in my trunk.

Today you don't have to go in the field. There is a celebration and you can come with me. No, I've already had mine. I will go plowing. Wife, we have the best man. Well, you've finally recognized that! That day they moved Cimbura's things and bed from the barn to a room in the house where the children slept. He became a family member. All in the village noticed him and the farmers spoke with him on an equal level and recognized his

noble character. Even Jira and Bartik made up with him when they saw he didn't brag about the event. Cimbura went back to talk about the old times with the men and like a counselor corrected them. The bartender breathed a sigh of relief when Cimbura sat at the table and knew there would be no trouble. Cimbura knew he was strong only when he needed to be and didn't brag around about it. He wouldn't harm anything. To the little bugs he would say "crawl away little bug so I don't step on you with my big feet." He had never even killed a fly. "Fly away before I give you a swat." He liked children best and spent many winter evenings and Sundays telling them stories of far away places, but never spoke to them of war or displayed his medal. That killing should stop. He carved wooden toys for them and taught them how to build little mills and farm machinery and at Christmas time a Bethlehem.

He read newspapers and books. Kovanda was a writer of Scripture, so for the first time Cimbura read the Bible—the life of Jesus and the Saints. The Chronicles of the Czech country. The farmer showed him where the key was to his books. They discussed many things together. He remembered everything he read. He read Havlicek's works. "Narodni Noviny—Sotka—Kutnohorske epistoly." He didn't agree with many things but for all his life remembered what he read. He was not ashamed of any work, even stripping feathers on winter evenings. Kovanda said "That's old women's work" but he replied. "To waste time is a sin if there isn't man's work to be done." He had brought wood and water in the started?? In the feathers. The women laughed at his big boots, his big hairy hands, his old-fashioned clothes, and the part in his hair. He never though joked with the girls. Kovanda once asked him "Why don't you like girls?" Surely you must have a girlfriend at home or when you were in the army. Old soldiers, old sinners, Kovanda shook his finger at him. Ach no—farmer—not for that but why should I have a girlfriend when I cannot marry. Just to want someone for sin? I like it here and someday have my own place. "Will father give you the land?" No, my younger brother will, so I must look at least marry into a cottage. Save then and think to the future.

At that time there were many like him. The boys had to leave home to work and saved many years to buy their own place. Today there are different ways. The father will divide the farm among his children. A piece of field to a daughter, a piece of meadow to a son, soon the land is divided into bits. The acreage is dwindling, here a half, there a fourth, a cottage, soon it disappears like in sand. (He's speaking in the time the book was written.) In the old times children didn't request a share but sought other crafts and beginnings in other places. Svarcenberk (a nobility) has much more and doesn't divide, said the old farmers. They guarded their farm as though it was a fiefdom.

Cimbura was religious—he prayed each night with the children and Kovanda thought he should lead prayers at the table but decided since they have many helpers during the summer it would undermine his standing in the family so everything stayed as it was.

Cimbura went to church every Sunday regardless of weather. When he didn't get to Putim, he went to Pisek where there were several masses. We went early to Pudim to the St. Vavrinec Church where he had his special place. He prayed from his prayer book but loved to sing in the old gothic church. When they started to sing "Hospodine Pomiluvny" or "Svaty Vaclav" he closed his prayer book and his voice could be recognized above all. He sang religious songs in fall when he plowed and it was quiet. In spring he only listened. The birds sang--the lark, titmouse, starling, finch and blackbirds. Once a year he went on a pilgrimage either to Sepekov or Podsrpenske Matce Bozi begging for bread and water along the way and laughed that drove along in wagons or carried food in bundles. He refused a lift or other foods. He wouldn't work on Sundays for all the world except at harvest to gather God's gift whenever necessary. He was a good repairman fixing clocks, spinning wheel, weave baskets, roofing, cut out an ax handle. This is how he spent the winter. So in Hradiste the man grew, a good honest Christian, strong in body and spirit—Jan Cimbura.

Tomorrow, with the Lord God, we'll start cutting hay said Kovanda. This was before St. John the Baptist Day. The new hammered and sharpened scythes hung in the shed and hand rakes nearby. Cimbura could have whooped with joy. This work was among his best liked. He could have spent all day there because it was along a river. The right bank of the Otav. He liked sitting on its banks Sunday afternoons and bathe in it. A good fishing place. The water was so clear one could see its golden sand. He liked the spring when the water would churn and run its banks. The river cleaned itself of all people threw into it. Then returned to its quiet bed. The river spoke to him as though alive. That's why he liked working near it. He even learned to smoke here, to rid himself of mosquitoes. Kovanda would say "The Lord God didn't put tobacco on earth for nothing. Cimbura would say "This is the river's fault, that's what she taught me." The next morning when the sleepy sun arose, four scythers were already at work--the farmer, Cimbura behind, then two helpers. The meadow was full of aroma. The dew sparkled like precious stones. Behind the cutters lay rows of cut grass.

It'll rain said Kovanda worryingly when he looked at the sun. It will, the mosquitoes are wild. Their pipes were letting out clouds of smoke. The smoke is falling towards the ground and the frogs don't even answer. They were right. They still cut the next day and towards evening a light rain began to fall. The clouds thickened and soon rained like out of a sieve. They kept on cutting since the grass cut so well and were hoping when the sun came out the Lord God would give them a nice drying day. But the

fourth day they all stayed at home. It rained on and on. The river began to rise. Others said the parish meadows at Putim are under water. Well, the River Blanice goes wild first. She has narrow banks and little fall and no place to run. It the rivers flood our hay will wash all the way to Pisek. It was seen that up river by Strakonice and Susice nothing bad was happening but if only it would quit raining. It lasted a week and finally the started to peek out. The meadow was under water but as soon as the river goes down the water will seep into the ground, but the hay would have to be carried out on higher ground to dry. In the afternoon the wagons started out for the meadows. The women with their skirts tucked up, the men with pants rolled all barefoot. They were finishing up the last load, then went to the river to wash their feet. Cimbura jumped on the wagon, touched the lines to the horses but the wagon wouldn't move. He wouldn't use the switch on them.

The horses buckled against the harness, the leather squeaking but their hoves sank deeper and deeper. Stop! The farmer but the horses were up to their bellies as did the wagon up to the axles. The horses struggled against all odds trying to free themselves. Kovanda called "They'll break their legs." Kovanda thought of the thousand gold pieces he paid. Everyone came running hollering "unhook them, cut the straps etc." Cimbura stood for a while like in unconsciousness. This had never happened to him. Then his inner voice said "Pull them out." With one jump he was by Divoka. He talked to them quietly and they soon settled down. They stretched their necks toward him filled with trust. Kovanda and MarJanka cut the harness straps. Cimbura laid on the pole between the horses and talked gently then took her by the collar, pulled and she with all her strength lifted her front, then the rear and happily ran towards Hradiste. Right away Dobrak, I'll help you. They all jumped in to help, one by the head, the mane, the tail and helped lift him out. He shook himself and like an arrow took after Divoka. They all said Cimbura lifted the horse all by himself, and he as though nothing happened went to look after the wagon. Leave it, boy, you saved me a thousand pieces. Lord God will repay you, shaking his hand. Kovanda admired him that much more, but not only he, but the horses as well. As soon as he'd call they'd run to him and when he clicked his tongue at them. They worked better than when the farmer used the switch. They became Cimbura's best friends and missed him when Kovanda had to drive someone to Praha.

VI

The strength of Jan Cimbura was spread all across the Pisek area. All wanted to see him, the one who pulled the horses out of the mud. When they saw him though they couldn't believe he was that strong. Kovanda talked about wherever he went. He is a friend of horses and we love him above all. I showed him about horses. At home in Semice they had only exen, even in the army he had no

knowledge of them. The horses are as tame as sheep with him.

It's so said a neighbor. I bought a horse at auction in Netolice. He was tame for everything but as soon as I took him to the blacksmith for shoeing we couldn't control him. Cimbura came. With his bare hands, stood before him, looked on the ground then at him, grabbed him by nostrils, flipped his hand and the horse was on his knees and Cimbura brought him back to the blacksmith.

Porazil, a farmer spoke up "One time my hired man Jiara when he was driving a load of grain, caught a pillar with the wheel. What to do, he started to tug at the horses back and forth till the horses were sitting on their rumps and hit them angrily with the strap. I'm walking home with a fork on my shoulder and could see from far what is happening. I knew we had to unhitch the horses, put a chain on the wagon and the horses, pull the wagon backwards to the road. Then I see Cimbura, like a wind he jumped across Kovanda's fence." "Learn how to drive and don't punish the horses," he cried. He picked up the back of the load moved and like nothing said "There, now it will go." He did that? Yes, like a toy. Yes, he is a kind man with all little animals even the mice in the field. He is of God's heart.

The councilman wants to go to Praha and this time you will drive him said Kovanda to Cimbura. "That I will." Why, you say that like you're going with me to the next village. This the councilman and Praha. Well, said Cimbura if it was the emperor I would drive him the same as you or your wife. Dvorak drove the Russian Czar from Hluboka to Trebon and did it. My worry is the horses, wagon and road, not the one who sits.

Do you know the way to Praha? I do, twice I marched there as a soldier. You go from Pisek to Mirovice, Mirovice, Milin towards Dobris. Dobris is quite a ways. There you have to stay overnight or let the horses rest at least two hours and feed them well. From Doris you then go across Mnisek, Zbraslav and Zlichov to Praha. And Praha do you know your way around? And why not. We the army spend a whole year in waiting at Oujezd (not now Ujezd a suburb of Praha). And do you know where the tavern Zlata Husa (golden goose) is? That I wouldn't know. Is it at the horse market (sales) or as they say not "St. Vaclav Square." It's a large tavern and home of former Pisek people. Kovanda said, I used to go there to talk with friends from Pisek. Do you know where the gubernium is? No—well it's in the Mala Strana Section. You drive across the stone bridge (St. Charles) there is a statue on it of your patron (St. Jan). There any child can tell you the way. There you'll take the gentleman that is with you, wait for him 'till his meeting is over. Then drive him around Praha wherever he tells you. Praha, my boy, isn't Hradiste compare Hradist to Pisek, that is Pisek compared to Praha. The way St. Elizabeth's market day in

Pisek. That's the way it is each day in Praha. I know you're a good driver so I trust you.

Cimbura listened quietly and remembered everything. Tomorrow the horses will rest then you will leave. Take enough feed along for the horses to last a week. In Praha feed is unChristianly expensive. The gentleman will pay all of your expenses although whenever you take Priroda, don't go without money. Do you have any other questions? Yes, farmer, you talked of everything but wagon am I to take? Or the carriage? I don't think the councilman would like our carriage. He would be ashamed of it in Pisek and Dobris and Praha where he is known. Why? I will grease it, scrub it at the river just like I do when I go to Putim for the priest carrying the blessed host of our Lord. Yes, there are proud people like that. The councilman has a beautiful carriage, polished like our cupboard which holds the statue of our Blessed Virgin Mary of the Holy Mountain. You will take just the horses to Pisek and hitch up there. Forgive me but I don't think I'll go to Praha. I don't know the carriage, where its brake is, what condition the wheels are in, where to shorten or lengthen the harness straps. Hovanda himself remembered he had to change those things—sometimes look for a wheelwright or blacksmith. Then go today and look over the carriage. It's in the village hall in the rear shed covered with a canvas. No, farmer, the carriage must come here to our yard so I can take it apart, grease it. I will load the hay and oats on and the grease. I will need your advice on all of this. Well, then put the harness on Dobrak. He went to put his boots on, sat on the horse, lit his pipe and slowly went towards Pisek. He brought the carriage back towards evening. The empty carriage made so much racket along the way that Dobrak kept looking back wondering what he was dragging. The people along the way became frightened, Lord God guard us, thinking there was a fire and the fire hose wagon was coming. Cimbura clasped his hands together "What a funny shed this is! I've seen newer, smaller carriages in the cities. This was an old-fashioned emperor's carriage. Between the front and rear wheels were hung enormous leather straps (used as springs) on that hung the glassed in carriage, with comfortable soft seats. On its top a decorated trunk and in the rear a board for the coachman.

The carriage (want to or not) had to spend the night in Kovanda's shed among the old wagons. In the morning pulled it out for inspection. He tried each wheel and their rims, the axel. He didn't miss a bolt or nail, put new candles into the lanterns. He tied bundles of hay on and a sack of oats. He cleaned and polished the Sunday harnesses, rubbed the leathers with grease. He then led out the horses and gave them the run of the yard. Kovanda said: There isn't a pari like them in the whole village. The wife and children looked on with pride. Cimbura examined the horses, their mouths, hooves, then braided their manes. They snorted like fools with their nostrils wide and ears straight up. Kovanda said to his wife—they're like deer. He called to Divoka and she came running to

the window. She has a good mind, obeys like a dog and his wife gave her a piece of bread through the opened window. Cimbura had Dobrak already hitched and called for Divoka. She ran to the carriage and stood at the side of Dobrak. Kovanda stepped up on the carriage and make three turns around the yard. Good, towards evening take them to the blacksmith for new shoes, then to the river to roll around. By night everything was ready. They all had a good night's sleep.

Note: This is evidently the man Mitner is going to Praha earlier the author used the word Rada something like a councilman. Now in Chapter VII he uses the word district executive sometimes given as justice of peace.

VII

The National Gubernium in 1849 was eliminated, but only on paper. It was several years before a new institution came into being. The "Czech Crown Mistodrzitelstvi" (note these are likely appeals courts).

Frantisek Karel Miltner, a district executive from Pisek, was a historian well loved by all who knew him. He collected antiques, old coins, guns, books, magazines to donate to the national museum. He always looked forward to going to Praha. This time he took along his wife, and oldest son Jindrich Otakar who had a love of archaeology. He became an assistant Jan Erazimus Vocel at the museum. Everyone was still sleeping when Cimbura arose before four o'clock using the lantern he fed oats to the horses. He unbraided their tails and manes brushing them well. He watered them and fed them hay at the same time humming his morning song instead of his prayers. He then went to the pump and pumped on his head the crystal clear water. He splashed it on his face and chest. He wiped himself, combed his hair and respectfully made the sign of the cross. It was after five when he entered the kitchen where the farmer's wife was making breakfast. He went to his room and dressed in his best Sunday clothes. The stars were fading, birds singing and the first fall front settling on the ground. It'll be a beautiful day said Kovanda. There is steam over the river and fog is falling now. The chimney smoke is rising like a string. Cimbura glanced over the village roofs as though saying goodbye. Remember, said Kovanda, wash the horses feet every night and check their shoes and if one should wiggle right away hammer the nail down. Then one after the other led the horses out to be hitched.

The sun jumped above the woods like a bright smile of a child, the sky filled with fiery rays thin as hairs, the gray frost melted on a damp black earth. Cimbura lastly greased and blackened the horses hooves, washed his hands at the pump, took off his blue apron, replaced his cap with a hat then going over to the linden tree broke off a twig, a part for his hat, the other for the horses. Don't forget the switch, but Cimbura hadn't. It was stuck solidly into the leather pouch on the right side. An ordinary

leather strap split at the end, a strong handle bound with iron. Well, are you ready said Kovanda, Cimbura doffed his hat. The farmer took a slice of bread, broke it in three, one to Cimbura the other for the horses, saying "be careful Cimbura that you return in good health. Thank the Lord God said Cimbura and ate his bread. The farmer made three crosses in the dirt with the whip. Cimbura jumped up Divoka neighed and Dobrak pawed with his foot. Cimbura clicked his tongue, tightened on the reins and the horses stepped off. "The Lord God go with you" called MarJanka from the cow shed as did the wife and children from the door step. The shepherd blew his horn and all the people left their livestock out to be taken to pasture. "Greet Praha—he called, and the Turk on the bridge (a statue)—and Brunelik—bring us a picture they called, good health—Cimbura twirled his hat and was on his way among the fields. The scythes were already out. The crickets were chirping their one song. On a tree by the road a titmouse sat singing—Cimbura, Cimbura, where do you go? A crow cried full throat where? Where? (kam, kam) and the frogs kampak? Kampak (where to, where to) why to Praha, said Cimbura. He then talked to the horses—wait up, not so fast, easy from the start so you can stand this. It'll be worse than in the field. We can't be in Pisek before seven. When the clock on the Pisek Town Hall beat out seven, Cimbura was under the councilman's window.

Old soldier I am, said the councilman to himself. He had graying hair and thought of all the meetings he had attended. The hired girls were carrying down suitcases and boxes which Cimbura tied down on the carriage roof. Soon the other travelers came. Cimbura jumped off the carriage but didn't kiss the hand of Miltner as was the custom, but only greeted them with a "good morning." Were you ever in Praha? He asked—his wife was already making a nest with her big basket loaded with different food for the journey. Her son sat in back of her. Miltner was speaking with several other businessmen through the open window.

Pisek was soon behind them and finally the church steeple was gone and they were on their way to Praha. They decided to stop until at Milin and let the horses have a short rest, feed and water them so they would last to Dobris where their stopover would be, then on to Praha where they should arrive late in the evening, hopefully before nine o'clock when the Ujezd gate would close. Cimbura agreed to himself knowing that Miltner must be an experienced man. In Mirotice and Cimelice or where ever there was a clock on a tower, Cimbura noted the time. Cimbura also watched the sun or the shadow it cast. He watched the horses carefully, braking carefully downhill and let the horses have the rein uphill, but on the level he showed the party what Kovanda's horses could do. He never used the whip, that was there only for show. They soon learned to measure their steps and sailed along like on water over the Emperor's road smooth as a thresher's floor. In Milin they arrived just at noon and

Miltner holding out his watch called “You know how to drive.” You made six miles in five hours and the horses aren’t even sweated. *Note: There must an error of timing here. A person can walk this in two hours. Perhaps the mile had a different measure then as I read further on I realized this.) Miltner had been a clerical official in Smecne for the Prince Martin and understood farming and animal husbandry. I bet they could still run to Dobris. Cimbura examined the horses, put his hand on their heart all without a word only Miltner talked. It’s probably two miles. We could spend an hour there with my friends. Why didn’t he ask sooner, I would have used the horses differently. I’ll at least water the horses. Well, water them then. We’ll walk for awhile, we won’t even go into the tavern.

Without bread a farmer won’t take to the road, even Cimbura wouldn’t. He pulled a big slice out of the handkerchief and stood before the horses. He took a jackknife from his pocket and cut off pieces for the horses. “That’s just for now, later in Dobris I’ll feed you.”

“From where and where?” Asked a man. Fine horses—just cut their tails and they could stand in the prince’s barn at Dobris, but Cimbura didn’t wait. After the horses drank he knew it wouldn’t hurt them if they ran again. So as soon as they drank he paid a tip from his own pocket, and a good one.

Soon the carriage was on its way, but the horses weren’t comfortable. Going Dobrak would look back. Well, you’re wondering I suppose. It’s noon and no hay, and you Divoka, shame on you with your head hanging down. The horses soon forgot and soon were flying like the wind. Soon on the horizon they could see Dobris with its tower and castle then the whole town lay before them. A large three cornered square opened up before them and the prince’s tavern, large, where the carriage stopped. Miltner tapped on Cimbura’s sleeve. I’ll tell all of Pisek and Praha—from Pisek to Dobris in six hours—a tribute to your horses. Mainly to the horses sir and quickly unhitched the horses, took their harnesses off, walked them twice around the yard and put them in a stable. The stable man wanted to take care of the horses, but no, Cimbura himself took care of them. I don’t trust a new place—suppose someone came and took a few handful of oats for the pigeons so he sat and smoked while the horses ate, then went to eat and drink. He was really hungry and thirsty. Miltner came and said at three o’clock hitch up the horses, not any sooner. Miltner was full of excitement. He had met a director, a lawyer, a doctor and all told him what new diggings they found. In the mines at StaraHuta and other places miners had dug up old coins, they sent home quickly for them to show Miltner and have him evaluate the articles. If I wouldn’t have meetings tomorrow, from the bottom of my heart I would stay here, but on my way back we will stay overnight to visit. Cimbura was anxious to start out. The stableman drew a map for him showing the hills and woods and the best way to go. It is five miles to Praha and at least five

hours of good trotting. It was quite after three with much parting before they left. Even the castle or church or park interested Cimbura—of which the stableman told him. He was only interested to get to Praha.

VIII

Throughout hi life Cimbura remembered Miltner—what an honorable man he was. Always talks so nicely to everyone even though he is upper class. He compliments everyone gives good advice.

With the Miltner family, Cimbura criss crossed all of Praha, and how he knew Praha. He didn’t have to ask like Kovanda did or turn back and retrace. The old-fashioned carriage and beautiful horses caused a sensation across Praha. Everyone turned to look and Miltner liked this. Cimbura didn’t have much time for himself. He had to take care of the horses and carriage—haul Miltner wherever he wanted—to the museum to his meeting place—in the evening to the theater—to various palaces and homes. His own time was till about ten o’clock in the morning. On those mornings he strolled around Praha, visited, after several years, the mausoleum of St. Vitus, went to the museum with young Miltner. Mr. Vocel, the museum director, himself gave them a tour.

One fault had councilman Miltner which made Cimbura frown. Everywhere he was leaving was like sparrows leaving the Czech country. He had to stop to talk to everyone he knew, sometimes leaving the carriage again, “I’ll be right back.” His right back would last an hour. Ach! Father when he sees Praha. His wife would have to remind him—and that in German. Cimbura sometime would like to have taken the whip out and snap it to all the onlookers, but knew he mustn’t. “Lord, how those Praha people are foolish. At home even the dog doesn’t look at him but here half of Praha does. Even the horses were jumpy, knowing they’ll soon be on their way home to Hradiste.--to its soft roads, to its peace and quiet, their warm, fresh air and good drinking water. They stomped their feet until their shoes rang. Don’t those people have anything to do that they can nose around here like that. Cimbura remembered that even at their children stand around. “Go do this--that.”

In the meantime Miltners were parting with their son. They were supposed to leave at one o’clock and here the steeple clocks were striking two. “We won’t get there till night.” And thought of the forests they had to go through. Eventually they came out and the son still rode with them a ways—to the Zlichov district. Miltner forgot about Dobris and the friends who would be waiting. It seemed they couldn’t part—they stood and waved their handkerchiefs—the mother with tears in her eyes. Until from Zlichov we drove fast. Clouds had built up and rain threatened after Zbraslav it started to get dark. When they neared Mnisek they couldn’t recognize buildings. Going up the hill Cimbura lit the candles in the lanterns. After

Mnisek they drove past the Holy Mountain—Cimbura could still recognize the area but then darkness fell and the lanterns only shown under the horses' feet and to the sides. They passed several heavy wagons and met several, then everything became quiet. Only the woods howled as though breathing heavily. The stars closed their eyes and all was black. The carriage echoed in the woods. Cimbura's inner voice said "Blow the lanterns out. You can be seen from far. Anyone could shoot the horses or passengers. I'm a reliable person, what if we should meet someone? Everyone would have a right to suspect us. Put the light out" said the voice again. I won't be finally decided. He could still see the gray road and tall black woods. The horses trotted along confidently, keeping the same tempo. Praha hadn't hurt them a bit. He could feel everything about the horses. If only he could see a deer grazing—time would go by faster. He could tell they were going downhill. He used the brake a little. Miltner woke up to the sound of the brake. He had been dozing along with his wife. He wasn't used to the bustle of Praha. Where are we? Behind Vosnice, Sir. We should have started earlier. Cimbura kept his hand on the brake handle just in case. All of a sudden he heard like the call of a wild pigeon—hen again. He turned his ear towards the sound. Then the sound came a third time—closer. That isn't a pigeon he said to himself and stiffened. A short ways down the road he heard a jay, then a magpie but it all seemed false. That is a person's throat, but they do it well—they must be illegally hunting he thought. Then like a bolt of lightning hit him. If they aren't hunters then who? The hill is behind us and here in this valley—anything could happen. Again the voice "blow out the lanterns." I won't no matter what. Someone is running along the woods—a deer—when he heard a twig crack—no—it's a person. He recognized the footsteps. I'll prepare for the worst he said to himself. He crossed himself three times and reached for the whip. He made three crosses over the horses with the whip. Then he grabbed the handle out like a club. Now they don't dare but farther below the hill they'll be waiting. They know horses don't like going uphill but they don't know my horses—smiling. He depended entirely on them. They snorted and twitched their ears. They could smell something was up. As soon as I'm down the hill, I'll let the horses go and gallop up the hill like "general Vindisgrec." Suddenly from the left side a man like a mountain arose—hollered "prrr" (a sound for horses to stop) then he heard running towards the carriage. Cimbura knew "where lightning hit" and snapped the reins. If they stop the horses, we're lost. Two, three, four I'm not afraid if they have bare hands, but who knows, for sure they aren't empty-handed—and his passengers. "Go through" he heard the voice. Dobrak, called Cimbura standing up. Divoka was dancing. "Divoka," his voice like lightning. The horses recognized his voice urging them. With one movement he was on the pole and next sitting on Dobrak who neighed, shook his head on which the man was hanging calling "prrr, prrr," he hung on like a wood tick. Cimbura lashed out the whip into the darkness like a shot.

The man went down and Dobrak jumped forward like a deer. What's happening called Mrs. Miltner. Be quiet said her husband while loading his pistol. The horses ran full power, he let the horses go—his heart pounding. He knew nothing would stop them. Like two dragons they headed for the hill, their feet barely touching ground. When they neared the forester's cabin, he pulled back on the reins. Into Dobris they were at their normal pace.

In the Prince's Tavern all the gentlemen and ladies were waiting for the Miltners. There was already singing and dancing.

Aha! You have new horses, said the stableman. He recognized Cimbura and the carriage but not the horses. You had black ones but now you have grays. Look, that is sweat. They both started to wipe them off with straw. They were frightened below the hill and galloped all the way here. Then they put blankets over them took them into the town square and walked them to cool off before putting them in the barn. Cimbura slept with them all the night. They brought him supper and a pitcher of beer which he drank while smoking his pipe. The others spent the night till late morning. Miltner told Cimbura "We won't leave until after twelve. He didn't mind. He fed the horses, and towards noon he and the stableman took them to the lake to swim. When they got out of the water, they danced around like ladies.

IX

The trip to Praha brought Cimbura more honor. He brought gifts, told of all the news, then went back to his daily work. But Mr. Miltner wasn't quiet. He told Kovanda everything and sent along a gold dukat (coin) as a remembrance to Cimbura. "There were five of them and he wasn't afraid" he told his wife and children. Who knows, said Cimbura—I saw only two. Mr. Miltner saw them. He rather talked about what the horses did. "Like strings stretched out, their heads, backs, tails like one line, bellies to the ground, their shoes throwing sparks, gravel flying—we made up an hour's time. Sir, there is no other pair like them in all the area who could have what they did. Everyone in Pisek talked about the hero Cimbura. So it happened that everyone who wanted to go to Praha, turned to Kovanda if Cimbura could take them. One Sunday he called Cimbura to the living room after the high mass benediction.

"Cimbura, how much money do you have? I have my earnings here for five years and I have a share of the farm at home. Good. You know you are like my own. I would rather have you than a brother. The time has come when you don't have to work here anymore. You're more on the road now than at home. Everyone wants Cimbura but Kovanda doesn't mind. Kovanda isn't offended because he knows he is like himself; he is industrious, considerate, kind, wise, but he is stronger than I. I know you drive better than I did. You are an excellent coachman and

under my guidance became a good farmer. You can drag the field till the ground is tender as moss. People have trust in you. That's why they hire you. I am thinking for your future. You will stay here till St. Martin's Day. In the meantime we'll have a wagon made for you. I will furnish the wood. You will pay the wheelwright and blacksmith. We'll buy a plow and drag, you will pick out a carriage in Praha. When we have that all done, we'll go to Netolice the last Sunday in October, when they have the big horse auctions, and you will buy horses. After St. Martin's Day we'll part and you will move to Pisek and you will be a carriage man. The farmer had been thinking and debating this for some time. Now he waited what Cimbura would say. He was looking down stunned, thinking over what he had heard. I don't have that much money. Have or have not said Kovanda, we'll prepare for it. You pay while you have money, then I'll back you up and half of Pisek will lend us money. My father used to say "Be wary of debt, hold onto the plow. God and debts—we all owe, God our soul, the Emperor taxes, parents respect. We pay how we can. You'll pay your debts, you are sober and thrifty. Debts eat out of the same pan as man—it sleeps along with you in your bed.

Good, after you will be on your own, you can marry and the money of the bride's dowry will pay the rest of the debt. "Don't brag of the man for his name, don't take a wife just for her dowry." Kovanda—what did you think, I would farm forever and you always my hired man? We will age—you and I. I will retire and you must earn your own bread and prepare for your old age while you are strong and healthy. Don't look for luck, but then don't avoid it. You grew up in a family—now start your own. Didn't you read in the Bible—"It is not well for man to be alone." Don't stand against the order and progression of the earth. The punishment for that is more than any other sin. Cimbura felt sad—maybe he wants to chase me out. God in heaven is my witness. I told you before, you are like my own and I take care of you like my own. Go, and you'll see they will all tell you the same. It was quiet in the room. Kovanda kept quiet knowing there were thoughts of far-reaching consequences. Cimbura must make the decision. He didn't want to lose a good man but knew he must carry out his responsibility. "You wouldn't sell me Dobrak and Divoka, would you? No, at Kovanda's they grew up and at Kovanda's they will die. You will buy your own and love them more." It isn't wise for a man's heart to long over an animal and an animal to thwart a man's way and plans." Then I am decided. If you are satisfied with my labor, leave me here. I'm from farmers and it pulls me that way. I don't like the gypsy life of a coachman—on the road and in taverns—at a strange table and strange bed. If you chase me out I will for awhile be a coachman but will return to the plow, but not sooner than I can buy my own roof and fields where I could make my living.

Cimbura let out his breath—he felt like after confession. Then arose and waited what the farmer would say. I will

do as he says. You talked wisely, said Kovanda. You will stay as long as you want. Remember, I will never say again "It is time for you to leave until you yourself come and say 'It's time, I will go'." My honor won't let me take any money you earn on your own. That is why I will buy horses, wagon, carriage, harness and you will work as before, said Kovanda. I won't pay hired man's wages anymore. You will be my brother; we will divide the earnings. I will take care of repairs. You will give the work and God will give the blessing. Kovanda gave Cimbura a hand and kissed his cheek. Both men came out of the room humbled. From that time all at the farm quit calling out "Cimbura"—the farmer and his wife called him Jan. The children and other help called him "Uncle."

They went to Netolice for the yearly horse auction. They left for the evening and all the way with their light buggy passed horseman with horses hitched in twos or threes behind them. They went across the villages Mysenec, Protivin, Vodnany. It'll be a great sale said Kovanda, noticing all the horses decorated for sales.

This was the first time Cimbura was in Netolice. Even at war he hadn't so many horses. He wondered how many regiments they would serve. Who has never been at the auction can't imagine what it was like. There were: Jewish traders, farmers, thieves, gamblers, noblemen, Gypsies, and soldiers. There were varieties of horses, long-haired Gypsy horses, stallions, work horses. There are sellers, buyers, all trying out the horses. Cimbura looked at a tall one, black as a crow, another one white as snow and other colors. He liked the little colts. He examined the horses. He stopped at one pair and lost sight of Kovanda. And what? Kovanda came to ask him. I'm still looking. Then come with me said Kovanda taking him to a pair. They were still young horses. Like two ladies they stood in a corner. Look they're just shoes on the front legs. Because they were just colts recently. They're three-year olds. This summer they were in the field for the first time. For hard work we have oxen. Over winter they will strengthen and harden. Some day they will be like two lions. Kovanda was talking—look at their straight backs, wide foreheads, kind eyes, and legs like violin strings, his eyes were just burning. They will be "shimels" once their hair changes (a siml is white) they probably won't be true white. They walked away to look further but eventually came back. They asked the owner where he was from—Nemcice, he replied and I raised them myself. I have three mares at home. You can come to look at them and the stallion. Cimbura walked around them not even touching them. They looked perfect. "I wonder why nobody buys them." There were enough buyers but were holding their price. Kovanda looked around again but these held his eyes. I won't give them under a thousand gold pieces said the seller. Another buyer said I'll give nine hundred fifty—no, a thousand. Kovanda stepped up wanting to say here is a thousand fearing the horses would be sold. They all hollered "take

then less for luck” to the farmer. Then keep it the buyer said angrily. Kovanda could have hollered with joy. Truly brother farmer “for how much will you sell the colts?” A thousand—will you guarantee them? With my head I will. Then they’re mine and Cimbura was already untying them. Kovanda pained before witnesses and threw new halters on them fearing someone might yet take them. They each sat on one and galloped out to Netolice. The farmer spoiled them like children, but Cimbura’s heart remained loyal to Dobrak and Divoka. They were like his. With them he worked as coachman to Praha and elsewhere perhaps gone all week. At the “Zlata Husa” (golden goose) Tavern they had a place for him, even his carriage and horses. His best time to Praha during lent when Miltner, wife and daughter went. Driving the two ladies around Praha in the evening. He and his horses rested during the day. He walked around Praha visiting its historic places—reading about them. He knew Hradcany (the castle), Vysehrad (the original seat of settlement), Bethlehem Chapel, Old Town Square, churches, convents, army posts, schools, taverns, its quarters and streets. He bought gifts which were requested of him. For all he thanked God. Didn’t accept anything from the wealthy. “You paid me for my work.” He made notes of whomever he worked for. He never charged more than expected. If anyone wasn’t satisfied he didn’t drive for them anymore.

It often happened when he had to wait for someone. They then wanted to treat him with food and drink. We’ll pay for every but he turned that down. He only ate when he was hungry or drank when he was thirsty. He liked small gifts thought, like a pipe from Miltner. Sometimes his wife knitted him a bag for tobacco or for money and putting a dukat into it, or prayer books, or other books by Tyl, J. from Hvezdy, Klicper. But he liked best books about heroes like Vocel’s books who Cimbura knew of Celokovsky. His grave he visited and prayed at because he was from his area. Erben, in whose books were collections of old Czech songs and authoress Bozena Nemcova because she wrote such beautiful stories. She was a wonderful lady to him. When he would return from Praha, work waited for him in Pisek. He plowed the fields for the townsmen. They didn’t have to tell him, he himself advised them when to seed when to harvest. He gave all the money to Kovanda who divided it on half shares. At new years they added up their money and Cimbura was amazed how much the capital grew at the farmers. Look, you’ve earned more than my farming has. Cimbura knew the coachmen would never be his life’s work and wouldn’t find good fortune in it. He longs more for the life of a farmer.

X

Farmer Piksa in Putim was seriously sick. He was also from Semice and served in the army with Cimbura. He married onto the Soukup farm in Putim. He married the oldest daughter and they paid off the other three. The Soukups didn’t have a son so farmed any old way. That

didn’t scare Piksa. He married MarJanka who was the maid for a year at Kovandas. From the start his parents helped him out but Piksa soon came “out of the bog onto high ground.” And from the “valley onto the hill.” He paid off his debts and took care of his inlaws till their death. Now he thought of his own children, two boys and a girl. In this the Lord God sent him a sickness.

Spring was here—work called—and he lay here like a fire. His chest heavy and between his shoulder blades sharp pains as though shoemakers from Blatna were pricking him. “Listen wife,” he said Sunday morning, “go to church and don’t worry about me. Cimbura from Hradiste will be there. Tell him I greet him and to come visit me. She brought Cimbura back. “Well comrade” smiled Cimbura. I hear you are resting and the wheels are already squeaking in the furrows. He tried to be cheerful but could see his friend broken down, a short breath, his throat wrapped in wet rags and a pan of ice near the bed. “What happened to you?” I was plowing back of the chapel a week ago. The sun was warm so I went without my heavy coat. An icy rain came but I wanted to finish. At noon when I came I was cold. I wouldn’t listen and went again after dinner. Tuesday I thought I could walk it off, Wednesday I didn’t get up. Thursday went to Pisek for the doctor. He gave me medicine and put a leech on me, wet rags and comes to see me every day. “MarJanka put ice on him—you are like fire.” She smoothed his black hair from his brow and side whiskers. Leave us alone he said to his wife. Piksa looked at Cimbura with dim eyes and took his hand. Promise me when I die you will be a guardian to my children.

Cimbura didn’t know what to say. He only wanted to cry over his friend. “Why talk about death”—he finally said. “It isn’t that bad.” “As God wills” he replied, “but brother, it’s bad. The sickness is pushing my very soul out. I know it and when I think of my children—the oldest is twelve, and the youngest is just beginning to walk.” “God wouldn’t allow that, but if he does here is my hand—I will be their guardian.” “There is farming here—if you would stop by on Sundays and advise my widow.” “I will do everything—you can sleep peacefully. We were saved from Italy. You will be saved from the sickness also. MarJanka is a good woman.” What hadn’t been said was in his eyes. “I will send for the notary and we will sign the papers. You won’t die—don’t give in to it.” And he shook a parting hand. “I’ll stop by tomorrow again.” He would like to help, take the sickness upon himself, do everything for them but looking on him worried him. “Be with God” said Cimbura—Piksa, “God be with you” and if we don’t see each other, don’t forget. How can I forget, I’ll come, be without worry. MarJanka was standing in the hall, her eyes red from crying. Will he die? God won’t let it happen said Cimbura and looked at the child in the mother’s arms. His eyes teared up. He turned on his heel and left. He calmed down on the way to Hradiste but all knew something happened, but he didn’t say anything. All night he dreamed of Piksa. He saw

everything over again. On awakening his thought was, “I wonder how it’s in Putim. He said his prayers under the stars and prayed for Piksa. Everywhere he went he was on his mind.

He plowed all day in Pisek and when he came home towards evening, he prepared to stop in Putim. Kovanda came into the barn. “Well what is man” philosophically, “steam over a kettle”, nothing, a leaf on the tree of life. The shepherd had met a friend from Putim, your friend has died. Putim Piksa is with God, his soul left overnight. Cimbura took his hat off and crossed himself. He prayed quietly but didn’t cry. He bent over heavily as though a heavy load had fallen on him. Kovanda supported him. Piksa paid his debt, he gave his soul back to God who lent it to him. We are all from Adam bound to death. God wrote his verdict and we all wait for it to pass. It doesn’t help be sorrowful. We must accept God’s will and pray for the dead and help those who are left. The Lord God cheer you and kissed his hand. I thank you, said Cimbura. Don’t wonder why it was such a blow for me. Piksa and I grew up together and at war we were like brothers. He doesn’t have a relative in Putim so he asked me to be a guardian to his children and I couldn’t refuse. You took a big responsibility on yourself said Kovanda, but taking care of the poor, widows and orphans is a deed of love. Wednesday morning they buried Piksa at the Putim cemetery. Farmers came from Hradiste, Smrkovic, Zatava, Razic, Kestran and Herman. The pall bearers from Putim were: Hubacek, Cernoch, Babak, Keclik, Zizka and Hanak. Cimbura with relatives from Semice lowered him into his grave. The singers sang a religious song. “Goodbye wife, children mine, do not stand at my grave, go back to do life’s battles, and leave me to quietly sleep.

Cimbura returned home and couldn’t for a long time occupy himself with anything. He only had himself to worry about and now he had others. He had never been involved with officials but now as a guardian he had to get acquainted with them. Miltner now became his adviser. Cimbura saw to it that Piksa’s last wishes were fulfilled. The farm was given to his son. The widow could farm it till he came of age, she and her husband if she ever married. After fourteen years the son was to pay out the share of his brother and sister and the mother given retirement up to her death. The official said what if the farm is run badly and would have a large debt? I will take care of that, said Cimbura. He realized he had tied up his hands, and wouldn’t be able to leave Hradiste so as to be close to Putim. To be able to have his own, perhaps in Semice, now this dream flew away. I will have to give up being a coachman and stop traveling around. Dobrak and Divoka lost their ambition and just wanted to lull around and walk with their slow step. Someone else took over the trips to Praha and so Cimbura parted with the city. He still went to Pisek to work fields. Kovanda sold his oxen so whenever Cimbura helped with his horses. Every evening he would run over the hill to Putim. He didn’t go to the

house, just the barn to check the livestock and feed and asked what they needed. On Sundays after mass he checked the fields with the children and visited awhile with the crying widow. Even Kovanda and relatives from Semice helped and advised. Kovanda told his wife “What’s the use, ten advisers won’t replace one husband and a hundred hired hands won’t replace a farmer.” Doesn’t she farm well? Asked his wife. No, Cimbura only stops by in the evening so the Lord God farms. We’ll likely lose Cimbura. He realized he can’t farm here, there, anywhere. He’s needed more there. “He won’t be hired man there—on account of the people talking.” Will he? But he could go there as a farmer. That would be best—what can that woman do alone. The farmer didn’t say anything to Cimbura but observed how he talks. “They’re behind with their work. They can do only half the work we do. They’ve hauled in only half their rye and the rest will get rained on. When Kovanda met relatives after church—we can’t push him into a relationship. He himself has to decide. Someone from his relatives should throw a hint. Kovanda saw how the children come to Cimbura for advice, how he talks and plays with them, lets them ride horses and makes toys for them. That will pull him there smiled Kovanda to himself.

It was a beautiful fall day. The last cutting of hay was drying in the meadows, Cimbura was pitching the hay on the wagon to the girl. It’ll be no time before the ground is bare said Cimbura to the boy while filling the other load. The potato vines were drying ready for digging when we get done with the cabbage and potatoes our work will be over. The shepherds won’t have to watch the cattle. They’ll all sit around a fire and without worry visit, sing, play cards. While they were daydreaming the boy called out “Francek is running here” flying without a cap, barefoot, his hands waving. Something must have happened. Only a messenger with bad news runs like that. Cimbura ran towards “What has happened?” “Uncle, Uncle”, mother sends word to leave everything and came right away. I was grazing cattle on the clover field and they’re blowing up he cried in a frightened voice. “Jesus Mary” cried the girl on the wagon. They all new well the picture on farms where livestock had bloated on the horses called Kovanda unhitching them. I’ll go with Cimbura who threw the boy up on a horse behind him. “Tell me!” he said on the way from Hradiste to Putim, where were you grazing them? On the new clover. I couldn’t hold them back as they saw the river and started to drink. Did you bring them home? I did but the heifer already laid down on the way. There, by the empty house called Kovanda. His eyes wanting to pierce Cimbura and tell him. “It’s your fault, MarJana should have been yours already and you the farmer—this wouldn’t have happened, but swallowed it and said to him. They flew around the parish meadows, the road began to rise and they neared Putim. They jumped off at Cernoch’s farm. Kovanda tied the horses together, turned them back to Hradiste and told the boy “go back to my place now on the meadow—slow. You don’t have to be afraid Dobrak

has more sense than you. They hurried to Piksa's. There at the gate lay a cow—bloated. She was gone already. There in the yard neighbors were walking the horses, others were giving the cows lime water, petrol, eggs, whoever suggested what. On the manure pile they were trying to lift a pregnant cow, another had fallen over.

Mrs. Piksa covered her face with her apron and started to cry. This is how Cimbura found her. She stood alone, nobody came to comfort her, no one to lean on. Cimbura's heart shook—he stepped up to her with a strong good voice said “Don't cry MarJanka. It'll be better again. The Lord God will help.” When she heard his voice she dropped her apron and her gaze fell on Cimbura full of trust. Help, I beg you, Cimbura, help. A horse, a horse is falling someone called. If he falls, he won't get up, hold him and walk, hold him with all your might. He's down, a shiver went through the farmers. Cimbura's eyes dimmed, lift him. Why aren't they lifting him? The horse on his back legs kicking, moaning in pain. What are you thinking Cimbura, he'll kill you. He heard nothing, he went to the horse's head. Get up he gently said, held the halter by one hand, the other by the mane, the horse turned—Cimbura stood solidly and with quick hands stood the horse on its front legs. We won, everyone called. Hold him Cimbura called, under no conditions let him fall. He twisted the tain around his arm, he twisted to the left, then to the right and like a shot the horse jumped up.

Now, two hold him by the halter and run her around. Kovanda himself with switch in hand started after her. Cimbura looked around the yard and by the gate saw a half-dead heifer. He ran over and lifted her like a toy—laid her on the grass and shut the gate. He ran over to a young bull who was fighting to have his mouth open to have the white lime poured down his throat. Cimbura jumped to him. He pushed him against a wall. He grabbed his nostril with his right hand and lower lip with his left, pried his mouth wide open as it were a goose. Won, said Kovanda. The mare's colic left her, the other horse was doing well and one by one they helped the other cattle. The disaster was over. The Piksas could have been poorer by three thousand--horses, eight hundred, oxen 600, cows 500, bulls, heifers, calves—I've seen and heard many things said Cernoch, but what Cimbura did, that I wouldn't have believed, even for a hundred I wouldn't have stepped up to that horse. Everyone was carrying ropes to lift the horse and he with his bare hands lifts it. The heifers weighed about 5,600 Vienna cents and he lifted it like a feather. They all wondered at this.

How did this happen? Kovanda said to the widow. We have clover seeded in the barley. We've cut it before and nothing happened—and today like it was bewitched. It had been cut for a few days because we were hauling hay. I told Francek to let the cattle in the field for an hour—a farmer would tell you that in the morning with dew on it

you can't feed clover or a first seeding of clover after a frost, you cant' feed.

Cimbura stayed at Piksas all night. He buried the cattle. He stayed in the barn and tended to the livestock. Into half the night he and MarJanka talked. In the morning when he fed everything and didn't leave till he was sure all was well. He walked into Kovanda's house—they were just finishing breakfast. He stood before the farmer and said “The time has come, I want to leave here.” They all looked at him stunned. Kovanda smiled—I know your heart, and knew this misfortune would soften you. I said to my wife “today we'll surely lose Jan who is like our brother.” Go, Jan, the sooner the better, not that I want to chase you out but I feel bad for widow Piksa, the children and farm.

It didn't last but a month that in the Putim church of St. Vavrinec the 20th of October 1858 Jan Cimbura was married to Marie Piksa. So began the second half of his life.

Part Two I

The Sunday after the wedding at Piksa's in Putim a family dinner was being prepared. The wedding was quiet as becomes a widow but to the dinner came all the relations. All of Cimbura's brothers and sisters from Cemice came. Piksa's family came showing that they didn't resent Cimbura marrying onto the place. MarJanka's two sisters came—to see the new brother-in-law and mainly what dowry he brought to the place. Our farm will carry the third name now. The farm was called “at Soukups from olden times, then at Piksas now Cimburas” said Anka—married somewhere behind the water. The other, eyes turned to the ceiling, said if only father would see this, but nobody answered them, noticing their biting manner and thinking a wedding dinner shouldn't be spoiled by any sourness.

The church bell rang noon and the new farmer stood and prayed the Angelsus. He was ending “with Jesus Christ and amen” when someone called “enough”. Kovanda stood. Before we sit at Cimbura's table “Brothers, lay your gifts on the wood”. At this invitation Cimbura's oldest brother pulled out his prayer book and out of it took 10 hundreds and laid them on the table still holding several in his hand.

“Brother, our father in his grave, God give him heavern, now the share from our farm belongs to you. According to old custom and right you are to bring to a new farm a pair of oxen, two plows and a cow. Its value should be five hundred gold pieces—her take them—and added them to the rest on the table. What can I say, said Kovanda holding a prayer book in his hand. Cimbura accumulated earnings at my place. We worked together, ate together, managed. For his wok and honor I give this money. Cimbura, brother take what is yours and in the quiet

Kovanda counted out 1500 gold pieces and put them on the well scrubbed maple table. Cimbura didn't recount them, so he wouldn't offend, but put all in a pile. The Lord God thank you brother and the Lord God thank Uncle and turning to his wife said: MarJanka, hand me the key. She handed him two silver keys. We went to the corner where under the cross was a three-cornered cupboard. He opened the oak door. He put one key into his pocket, the other back to his wife. My MarJanka whatever is mine is yours so we can work together not only in name but in body and soul, and kissed her rosy forehead. Amen! They all finished the prayer and with the holy cross blessed themselves. So without marriage agreements, signatures, stamps and witnesses but in front of husbands, wives and children ended this first act. The women spread white cloths over the table, conversation became cheerful the room smelled of soup "hadrusenka" and everyone picked up their polished spoons. When they finished the soup the women's conversation started "not a cow, but a stallion he should have got, because at our placae we raise horses, Anka was heard to say. Kovanda winked and turned his head to look out over the village as though he hadn't heard. There the fall sun was shining—several children were playing on the grass, geese, large, white who were fat to overwinter well and bring out of their nests many yellow goslings.

The dinner progressed. Beef in sweet almost gravy, mutton pickled in vinegar, now duck with new cabbage, bread and washed down with beer. What are you thinking today Kovanda, Cimbura sat watching him, how he's looking out the window only hearing half what was said. It was two thirty the church bell rang. It's ringing for benediction said Cimbura. We thank you from our hearts gladly of what we had. The bread is white-gravy fit for a king's table—We mustn't forget to thank the Lord and started a prayer.

Women, said the wife, we'll go to church and you men sit a while with your pipes and beer. They heard horses neigh, Who's here? Every wondered. The Piksa's gate had been left wide open because everyone was welcome today. That is the custom at celebrations, baptisms and weddings. In the gate stood Kovanda's shepherd with Divoka in her decorated halter. He head held high as though smelling the air. Divoka, called Cimbura, where did you come from hugging her. And that was a sight after seeing each other after more than a week. Kovanda always, talked about it with tears in his eyes. The mare joyfully kept on neighing. Cimbura keeps petting her, how she's well fed, how her shoes are—"You, my golden one". Come I'll feed you, I'll give you twice browned oats. The mare followed him like a lamb into the strange barn—That was something to behold," Kovanda always, ended. And it was so. A dog couldn't be more faithful. He could parade around the world with that horse. I'm an old man, and saw many things. In Stekin I saw general Vindisgrec driving around the castle ten times on a horse 10 sah high. My hair stood on end but today my heart

shook when I saw this meeting. So, the farmers spend the afternoon in the big living room talking about horse stories and the ones they raised and loved.

It was long after benediction when Kovanda got up to leave. Wait a moment said Cimbura, I'll see if she's done eating. He ran out and brushed her yet a bit. I'll tell Kovanda to take care of you like an eye in a head, he said to the horse—now be quiet and don't neigh or I'll cry and tell Dobrak greetings. He led her to the pump to drink. Why are you leading her out? Said Kovanda standing on the road with cane in one hand and cap in the other. I said I'm going, not riding. Everyone looked at the rich farmer. You know, Kovanda said, she's been lonesome for you. I wouldn't believe if I didn't see it myself. She eats poorly and only looks towards the door to see if you're coming. She might die at my place—you keep her—keep the halter—I'm giving her to you. She had the truth that picky woman over there. It really is good to bring a mare to the farm. She will be sixteen years. In February take her to a stallion. It would be a sin if this breed should die out without descendants, and God give you good luck in everything here. If you'll need help you know where Kovanda in Hradiste lives. As to avoid thanks and tears he turned with a quick step out of the gate.

The sun was setting back of the castle, but it seemed like a fog, his eyes teared. We divided well, he said to himself joyfully. I'll keep Dobrak, he can carry me around. I've walked enough already. I always, treated Divoka well, never hitting her, a beautiful horse that I gave away.

So ended the family day at Piksa's. The neighbors and relatives had left leaving Cimbura to his good fortune, but not for long. There was still one formality that had to be fulfilled. His acceptance to the village. The administrator was the miller Roucek. One Thursday sent the maid to announce to the village (note: whatever answers or announcements are in the following pages were in rhyme form.)

"I'm to announce over all of Putim that there will be a court hearing Sunday after benediction. So you would know about it. The administrator sends his greetings." We thank you kindly the all replied. She walked along with her little son Venclik who was hunched backed. Some gave her an egg, others a pint of flour or bread. Venclik would get an apple, pear or pancake or scone—whatever the house wife was preparing for dinner. Every knew it regarded Cimbura. It rained almost all week. People mainly worked in their barns as lightning shook the village. They all anxiously awaited Sunday. They remembered it was a good ten years—no, more—fifteen when the deceased Piksa was before the council. It can't be that long but according to the children it was. The son Jan is fourteen and out of school. Frantik is thirteen and Verunka not quite four. That is why Sunday after benediction everyone pulled towards Srnka's tavern. First the administrator and the whole council. After them came

Cimbura escorted by two neighbors. In the corner “below the pictures” stood a table. That’s where the court was held. The farmers sat around other tables, along the white walls were benches. When there was music, that’s where the young people sat. Now it was the lower class villagers who owned just houses, didn’t have land but were laborers. At the door women were curiously milling around. At the windows were the young people under the six foot straw roof overhang.

The questioning was public as was the custom. Doors and windows open. Cimbura was large farmer. He had a lan of land (about 45 acres) some under plow, meadows, pasture, woods, part was rocky and a road took up the rest of the measure.

At the table Roucek stood with his leather record book and tapped against the table. Everyone stood and became quiet.

“So begins the council’s business. In the name of the Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. The Holy Trinity guard our village from livestock disease, flood and drought.”
“Thank the Lord.” They all replied. Roucek continued.

“The village has gotten together for an important event—you all know it, you are to accept a neighbor. Jan Cimbura, bring forth your request.”

Cimbura arose with head uncovered. He stood among all the people. A clean cut man, a man to every inch, slender waist belted, wide hips, large-chested and -arms, body straight as a board, round curly head. Stands squarely on large feet, hand on hop. He is dressed in a white embroidered shirt, flowered silk kerchief around his neck. Today everything on him is new and grand. He speaks with a strong voice:

“In holy marriage God joined me with Piksa’s wife, children, and farm. Across valleys, rivers, woods, hills, I come as a stranger to the village, but I count on your love that you will accept me into your circle.”

On the administrator’s right side sat farmer Cernocho. He was taller than all others. He answered Cimbura. “It doesn’t go so fast, we don’t want a wolf but a lamb. We will live and eat bread with you. That is why we need to question you. That is why we are here in conference. Neighbors ask in line and you, if you want to tie in neighborly, reply truthfully-why we like to question” the questioning continued. Old Hanak asked: “Without any long discussion, I ask about your family lineage” Cimbura replied:

“I truthful to all, son from Semice, farmer Jan Cimbura.”
A good family, all replied. The sound of voices covered by Zezulka who wanted to speak. He was a slight small man, but a big farmer. So he could be seen beside big Cernocho he stood up, but was still small. His family was

all small. “They could all dance in an oven.” That was said of them from long ago. Cimbura said: “I know your father and mother but we know nothing of your farm. You all know Piksa’s land which I will soon plow.” Jaros coughed and spoke up. “Piksa’s farm? Who gave it to you. The farm is orphaned and Piksa is in his grave. The three orphaned—the farm belongs to them.” “Two sons, a daughter, three good children. The father, ach, in his grave left them.” Cimbura answered not on Jaros but the whole village:

“Piksa is dead, I stand by my word. He gave me the farm, children and widow. He made a testament before five witnesses and in that willed me the farm, wife and children.” How so, farm, wife and children in front of five witnesses, unbelievable asked the whole village. The five witnesses felt it was their turn to answer. Keclik arose, pushed his cap to a side and with his right hand scratched back of his ear, as was his habit when he had to think.

“He will—I say to you—he willed it before the wife, children and witnesses. Cimbura farmer on the farm of the children. The oldest son when coming of age—he then will farm on the family place.” They were all satisfied but wondered what they should ask Mika who was next.

“Before the village accepts you as a brother, tell us something of yourself. That doesn’t belong here said Roucek with furrowed brow. He reached for the book like a king after his scepter. But regardless Cimbura replied:

“In the war which Zizka led, so said my father and grandpa. One of our ancestors wounded and bloody on Cimbura’s Castle was the first. His body long ago rotted but his name Cimbura, was left to us.

Ach! He is one man, Kovanda trained him well. He shod him on all four. His father brought him up well. Mika dropped his head but Kolarik, who was the church keeper, leader of their celebrations and singer, spoke up. “Piksa in his grave—we’ll all eventually be there. You are the master of the farm, husband of the widow, father to the children, I don’t ask where it’s written on a white paper, I’m asking for something different—about your religious belief.” The whole village quieted. You could hear the fly buzzing from the window to the table. Cimbura is standing like a statue. He lifted his head eyes turned to the wooden brown ceiling, then to the pictures in the corner. He then folded his hand on his chest under his cap—but look—they all took their caps off, stand and fold their hands like in church. Cimbura: “I believe in God—the world of a farmer, I raise my hands to him, and my face. I don’t disgrace his laws but with his help I will here farm.” Everyone had damp eyes. “Amen!” said the administrator respectfully and stepped away from the table with the book in hand. He stepped up to Cimbura, he took his and laid the book on his arm—kissed him three times.

“Whomever finds fault, say it to his eyes, step out of line as becomes a man.” He waited but no one stepped out.

“Cimbura Jan, you are finished with your hearing. Cimbura Jan has become our neighbor.” All his nobility shown from his eyes and face and everybody was infected by it. The whole village buzzed like a beehive. Cimbura put his cap on and sat down. They all came to kiss his hand. There was a celebration of brotherhood, but that was only the first business as soon as it quieted down some practical business started. Rain came pouring. The young people and women left. It was time for chores. Only the neighbors and tavern owner Srnka stayed, who lit the tallow candles. The administrator wiped his hand over his mouth, coughed and brought out a record book written in the Svabach script (note: This is German letters used in the Czech language. We should remember that what is now the Czech Republic was under Austrian and German domination for 300 years until after the first world war when it became a democratic country until again in 1939 when occupied by Germany and 1948 when occupied by Russia until 1989.)

He opened the book. He would glance at it but mostly spoke from memory. Putim neighbor, brother of ours Jan Cimbura, you must be equal with us, have the same rights, carry the same burden with us.” What will be my rights? Asked Cimbura. The administrator read them off for him, almost the same in every southern Czech village. The right to pasture: you will chase out your cattle, sheep, hogs and geese at first blow of the shepherd’s horn. (note: Each village had a shepherd who pastured the village livestock on open fields and pasture and each evening the herds were trained to go into their own yards. The shepherd was also trained in animal husbandry.) You have the right to fish in village lakes. (note: Actually the seined fish yearly and each family had a right to the fish.) You have a right to the quarry, in case of fire, flood and other misfortunes, you have the right to our help. You have the right to speak, vote and be voted in. Cimbura now raised his shoulders when the voice quieted down. All knew what was next. And what burden will I have? Asked Cimbura. The emperor’s tax, the king’s 1 and tax, the village tax to be paid on time. To guard your fields, not to sell parts or rent them out, keep your borders clean, to repair village roads, keep up the banks of the lake and river, destroy noxious weeds, 1 step of borders left around your land, help with fire, help during harvest, help people and livestock, stand by your brothers ended the administrator. Those we all are obliged to do. The question came. Jan Cimbura do you before God and the village agree to this? I promise—he took his cap off as did the others. Then swear before God! Cimbura stepped up to the table—put his left hand over his heart and raised three fingers. The candles flickered in their oak holders, the council stood as if in stone, in the corner the old cross was getting darker, the administrator put on his glasses; took his book with shaking hands and to Cimbura repeat after me.

- “I farmer of Putim, Cimbura Jan, who holds #25 farm, as you want and if I can I swear before the Lord God nonce and for all that I want to live among my neighbors in peace and honor, plow my own fields, replant the woods, fertilize my meadows, carry my good fortune and sorrow, at harvest help my neighbor, help the poor, have the same rights and burdens in the village of good will—I alone before the village swear, and before the souls of my ancestors as becomes a farmer, I am and will be all yours—to that help me Lord God.”

Roucek put the book down, took his glasses off. Everyone heaved a sigh of relief. Now there remained the last hearing. Cimbura rose again and said: Bartender, beer here. I’m giving a barrel of beer—old and good. The administrator said: We thank you, and so you would know what Putim is like we are also giving you a barrel of beer to greet you as a new member. Cimbura called out—bartender, send to Piksa’s for bread, butter from sweet cream, to go with the beer. What is Cimbura saying, they all thought but Cimbura said: “It’s becoming, to bring something as my welcome to the village. I will plant 10 seedlings and pear trees.” Farmer Klasek flew out of his seat. He yet hadn’t said a word. They all knew him. He’s mean as a dog, when he speaks he bites. They know he’s a poacher, quick tempered like gun powder—like all his generation. He always argues at meetings. Cernoch had to calm him down several times. Do you want to start a new style in the village? He hollered—you don’t have money for beer? Bartender pour Cimbura some water. Soon all were hollering. Roucek, the administrator banged on the table and said: “Cimbura don’t work against our ways—don’t bring discord, sit with us at our table as a family, we’ll eat some bread, drink some beer. We’ll sit honorably and talk peacefully.” Cimbura—well, let the beer run like water in a river, I’ll pay all and in spring plant the seedlings.

Bartend Srnka rolled out the barrel, tapped it. The tables were put against the benches, lit new candles, pulled out the fresh bread, big and round as wheels at a plow, that a knife couldn’t get through. The maid brought the butter. The churchman Kilarik stepped out to ring the evening Angelus. The mayor said a prayer. It seemed to all that the bell of St. Vavrinec Church rang the best they ever heard. When the bell quieted it was like bees to honey. It was wise that Cimbura should know the villagers. So—Cernoch began—the character of the village—We don’t brag, we are not careless people. Kovanda of Hrdiste is a wise person but cannot compare to our Roucek. I’ll tell you something, Cimbura, Roucek was walking to Pisek, he walked by the district office when someone knocks on the window. “Administrator, someone says we have something here for you. So I don’t have to wrap it, take it with you and handed some papers to him. Roucek put them in his pocket, read it at home, signed and stamped it and took it back when he went to

Pisek. In Pisek he met the mayor, shook hands and walked by the office. Wait a minute, he said to the mayor and taps on the window with his cane. Friend what are you doing? Said the mayor. I'm doing office work and pulls out the papers. The window opens and the commissioner smiles thinking it's his mayor wanting to go for a glass of wine "Kein Wein" (no wine) says Roucek, but I'm bringing you the papers and lays them on the sill. "You are a cheeky, daring bearer said the mayor scolding till all stopped to listen. You should go to the door and knock the way you're supposed to. Well, what—replies. I am the Putim administrator. This is the way I got the papers and this is the way I'm returning them—goodbye. The auction I'm going to doesn't wait and I have a group of piglets for sale there, and walked away.

We know Cimbura, you are a strong man, but we aren't made of mush either. Roucek said, now look here a Cernoch. He is equal to your strength even though he is older. The whole village knows it and you should too. Do you know the Nova Tavern in Cizov. I do, replied Cimbura and the bartender. I often fed my horses there. And did they talk about our Cernoch there? They did but tell it again. They all took a drink and listened religiously.

Well, one evening came a man with his trained bear who wanted a room. Bartender Janda—you all know him—Janda had just that morning butchered his pig so I had the shed empty. He gave the man a room and the bear was put into the shed. Cernoch had a load of iron from Dobris for a new wagon. The roads were bad so he stopped at the tavern. He had to stay there want to or not. They all went to sleep but thieves were waiting. They long had their eyes on the pig in the shed. The night was dark and snowing a bit. There were two and the wind was covering their tracks. They threw in a female dog so Janda's dog wouldn't bark. They climbed over the wall and opened the shed door. Oh, darn Keclik let out his breath—even though he heard the story many times his back still crawled. One went in with a hammer while the other closed the door, and stood guard. Something growled in the shed and the blows from the hammer stopped. Well, what? Are you holding him? Help, help it's holding me—the dogs started barking, the one jumped over the wall and from the shed came—help, help! With lanterns all the help, bartender, bear man ran out. The first was Cernoch. They saw through the cracks the bear and man in a hold. Cernoch with one jump pulled them apart—He wasn't afraid of the bear. And what about the their? They all prompted. It was a gypsy. They first hauled him to the hospital, then to jail. Good, he probably doesn't go after pigs anymore. Zezulka here, is strong too said Jaros. When? they all filled their glasses and lit their pipes. He's small but broad. Last year he was building and needed a smooth straight rock for a sill. At the mill at Roucek's they ? several mill stones, because they use three stones for grinding. Zezulka asked for one—perhaps two, Uncle, they're likely worn from grinding grain.

Roucek showed him the pile, just come and take what you need. My helper will help you load them. One, will do, he took the strongest, tapped it with a hammer till it rang. He picked it up and set in on the second step of the mill stairs. He looked it over then—straightened. They all hollered, for God's sakes what are you doing Uncle? It's worn and I need it at home, and walked toward home with it, as though it was a white starched collar—the kind general don Poberta has around his neck—the one behind our altar. Zezulka said, that was nothing—it was thin as paper and light as a feather. Jaros performed a different feat—not strengthwise, but smart. We were in Pisek at the auction—that went alright but we forgot ourselves in the tavern—at the corner. It wasn't far till morning, the townspeople were sleeping like logs. We go, Hlodalek, Hanak, Keclik, Jaros and I. Hey! Get up Jaros pounds on the windows, doors all along the street—it's morning—get up—in the villages everyone is up long ago. People leaned out in their shirts or ran into the street. The police were running with all their might. We put our feet on our shoulders (note—This is a saying when running away from something.) Only Jaros staggers along as though he doesn't know how to count to five. They grabbed hi, "out of my way" he swung his cane around. "I Jaros from Putim. I haven't harmed anyone—running? No, I'm not. Go, catch those who are running. Who are they? Ask them. But we were far and it was no use running after us. The police thought Jaros was innocent because he wasn't running. Neighbor Mika was twisting around in his chair waiting for everyone to quiet down so he could talk. He was eyeing up Kolarik, oh! How he would drown him. In Pisek at the tavern "na Ruzku, but it also has another name. We call it Zavadilka and our wives call it Obiralka. Kolarik went to Pisek for one of their biggest auctions. In September we carry the Holy Cross. It's the feast day of the convent church. Our hired man was hauling a load of grain, so heavy the wagon was squeaking. Kolarik was walking a ways ahead his thoughts on the price he would get—he was going to buy new clothes. The sparrows were calling "stjc, strevc" (Uncle, Uncle). I'm not your uncle. I am Simon Kolarik of Putim. The sparrows aren't paying attention this time the sparrow Cvilink? Cvilink? While he's dusting himself on the road. Then sat in a tree to scold some more. (Note "Cvilink" is a closely-woven cloth.) No, I am Kolarik and I'm not buying a suti from "Cvilink" but wool. The market, or auction was wonderful. At "na Ruzku" the farmers stopped for soup and some roasted meat and a beer. The wheat was number one and was bought by a Jewish buyer—so they drank "till the hills turned green". There was card playing at Kolarik's table by gentlemen who had rings on their fingers and chains on their vests. They said "Mr. Kolarik do you know cards?" I do but I don't play. His friends said "Take care Simon". They call you mister and a townsman doesn't say that for nothing. Aha, I suppose he doesn't have money in his pocket. What? Give me the cards and pulled out several paper gold pieces. It was good that the hired man went home with the horses and wagon otherwise he might have lost

them. Kolarik returned home in the evening with a light pocket and headache. His bag was empty—the one he was going to carry his new clothes in. The sparrows were waiting on the linden tree. “Stryc, stryc” they called. “Cvilink?, Cvilink?” another called.

“If there was, if there was” and they all started chattering. Yes, my golden birds—if there was, and from that time on Kolarik hasn’t played cards. So that’s how all the farmers talked that night so Cimbura would know of their experiences. They didn’t miss anyone even Klaska about a his hunting experiences. How he knows animal tracks and voices. He rids the village of harmful animals. He shot an otter at Blanice not long ago as big as a calf.

And Simek the fisherman. He’s more on the water than on land. He knows every pool in Blanice and Otava and the fish int. carp, Northern pike, perch, eel pout, ell. He himself swims excellently. He knows the depths. He knows when the fish are motionless or swimming.

Nowhere is a bee man—Sterba, religious, quiet, patient. There is no one like him in the whole area. He’s invited in spring and fall to check hives, moves bees, collects their honey, he works without smoke or netting.

Here is Culik a pigeon man, everyone knows him from far because when he walks he doesn’t have his eyes to the ground or the road but looking up and around on rooftops. That’s why they tease him that even in the daytime he’s looking for stars. They call him the star man “Hvezdar”. One time at mass in Pisek, just when the priest turned toward the people a beautiful gray pigeon flew out from under his coat. He holds his lips as if they held a whistle. He can whistle such a beautiful pigeon’s song like the bird itself can’t.

And what about Hornik? He is like a pearl. He is an experienced landscaper, knows trees and how to care for them. His hands are like a magician. Cimbura only listens and the whole village waits that his tongue will loosen, to brag about something or tell of some important even he experienced. But he sits quietly smoking and sipping his beer. They all aren’t drinking just a little. Time is flying and beer rushing the blood through their veins. Normally everyone in south Bohemia is of quiet and hesitant nature, deep and quiet as a river, deliberate but when beer gives them courage they are happy and smiley.

It was nearing midnight when they got up to show what any could do or any of them could do the same. Hanak got up, picked up a heavy chair with hit teeth, brought it forward as if it was a pipe. Everyone tried but couldn’t repeat it.

Good, Hanak, jumped up little Zezulka, but do this—he poured beer into a plate to its edges, put one hand behind his back, supported it on his thumb and two fingers, raised

it above his head and walked around the room without spilling a drop.

Klasek stamped his feed. He had his big barn boots on, high and cobbled. The tavern just shook. He got up and walked but as quietly as a cat.” “That’s a fox’s step” he stopped and stamped his feet again like the sound of thunder.

In the center of the room stood Cernoch. “I will give a barrel of beer if someone can carry me out of the door—he called smartly, but no one moved. Jaros started asking riddles. Kopecky tied a knot which no one could untie. Roucek took whatever in his hands to guess its weight. The bartender brought the scale which showed he was near accurate. Everyone knew something to keep the party going. Only Cimbura sat. “Why, I couldn’t do anything like that, he said to himself, all waited for him to show what he could do. The administrator though—perhaps he’s shy but said anyway neighbor Cimbura, now you know all of us, what can you show us. I heard how you lifted horses from the mud, lifted a wagon load of hay, many things I’ve heard of your strength—so show us now.

Cimbura turned red as a rose, ach neighbors you are wrong, I don’t have strength. I couldn’t do any of the things you have done. It’s true I did all of those things but I didn’t life Cernoch or do any of the other things. The night watchman banged into the door three times before he got out. The party was ending, the barrel was tilted and the roosters began their crowing which infected everyone. Roucek got up first and sang in his high tenor.

“We met as friends, as friends we’ll part. Before we part, we’ll have another drink, then we’ll go with God” They all lifted their glasses and sang on—

“We’ll go with God, we’ll have good memories of this brotherly love, not like a pharisee, stay with us. Amen.

Roucak continued: “Stay with us amen—we won’t stop announcing that God is our love to him honor and glory for all time. Amen.” Then all joined: “Stay with us amen, we won’t stop announcing as long as the Lord in heaven will preserve Czech tongue. Amen.”

“God give us good health.” Then they all sang an old song. “Brothers, brothers, we’ll be only happy, brothers, brothers be joyful. Then they toasted to happiness. They all clasped hands and Kolarik knelt and sang: “The Lord God love us, our sins forgive and give us heaven.”

Roucek ended the meeting by saying “welcome to the village’. Neighbors now we’ll return to our work and all walked out of the door. There was no sign that they were drunk or were up all night. The rain had stopped long ago, the sliver of moon had set and the last stars twinkles had disappeared. The whole village had the smell of newly cut

hay. There was the sound of livestock moving around. A cow bellowed for her newly-weaned calf, the night hour was ended, the eastern sky was brightening, the farmers put on their everyday clothes and went about their chores.

II

So this is how Jan Cimbura became a farmer and a man. He quit cutting his heavy hair as long as it didn't cover his neck and fall on his shoulders. He quit parting his hair on the side but instead in the center. He became like his neighbors but all his life he mainly kept to himself.

Putim from time in memorial was a church village and had its own brewery. Here after church and after benediction all would gather, young and old, in the tavern and Sunday evenings, at Srnka's except during haying and harvest. Cimbura didn't go among them, even for the dance before lent. They all would wonder but none spoke badly of him. "His wife weakened him—like Samson."

It was evident he lost his strength since he got married. It was he even does old women's work at home. He even does the chores for the maid and wife, like feeding chickens, the pig, even milks the cows. Not long ago he went to Pisek with a basket on his arm. Whoever in his life saw a farmer do this? He even milks cows? Asked Roucek. Yes, milks—hollered Klasek so the whole tavern could hear him. Martin's maid worked for us and she said Cimbura taught her to milk, not his wife. Cernock said, "maybe they have cows that kick and the maids are afraid." No, they have good cows and the maid even showed how he taught her—not to pull on the teats but gently squeeze them till the cow lets down her milk and you wouldn't believe how that young frog can milk the cow to her last drop. They all laughed and couldn't believe a man could sit all humped over on a stool and milk. They felt that was a disgrace to a man and there was no end to the laughter. But at Cimbura's they acted as though they neither saw or heard. They farmed differently which the new farmer set up. Other places the farmer only took care of the fields and horses and the wife and maid took care of the other chores, that was their first responsibility, then they looked after the children, cleaning, baking bread, and cooking. At haying and harvest they helped in the field. During threshing and if a storm was threatening she had to jump in to help (Note: At that time threshing was done with a flail—pounding out the grain on a floor.) The south Bohemian wives all complain. "If I had four hands I would use them all."

One could see Cimbura with a sure step all over the yard doing this or that. Because he treated all of his help well with few words taught them, no one rushed around. He wasn't on the place half a year and you could already see the difference. The livestock all had pelts smooth as silk, trees were trimmed. The machinery all repaired ready for spring. MarJanka, his wife, didn't know how to waste time either. Cimbura didn't go to the blacksmith shop to

gossip or spend half a day at the saddle makers, so MarJanka didn't go around either visiting. She sewed, mended, spun wool for stockings. Their windows shown like crystal, white curtains, flowers in the windows. "It's as clean there as at the parish house", I tell you, they could eat off of the floor. This is what the ladies were saying. They would tell their husbands until their ears drooped. "He treats her well. She only goes for water, or wood, goes to pick eggs and can admire her housework.

Spring was nearing. The geese were noisy on the river, the sun was melting the snow on the roofs. The children played games in dry places under the windows. Even the handyman from Domazlice said goodbye and returned to his own home for his work. He promised the boys he'd be back next winter and them each a jackknife. The housewives were setting their duck and chicken nests. From Prachatice were coming wood carvers and Konopiste leather strap makers. They had set up stands by the church and all stopped after mass to see their wares. There were wooden shoes, rakes, brooms, sieves, wooden forks fire treated.

Cimbura was in the shed where he knocked an iron rim off of an old wheel. He put a ladder against the roof and climbed up. He fastened the wheel against the chimney and roof. His neighbor called "are you expecting a stork?" I hope luckily he comes replied Cimbura. His wife turned red as a peony. When he climbed down she said "The redlings are hatching now. I've already put two into a feather box. Well then, it's time I fix the yard fence. He went to get nails, stakes and a hammer. What problems the geese or chickens for the neighbor's gardens. He stopped hammering to listen—he heard neighing from the horse barn, almost a singing. He laid everything down and listened again—That's surely Divoka and hurried to the barn. The mare was prancing her eyes glistening, the veins in her neck large—her tail switching. When she saw him she gave a long neigh—she is in heat, I must go for Kovanda to make sure. He advised feed her only a little tonight and tomorrow morning. Then saddle her and go somewhere towards Netolice, Strachovice, Hurce, Chlumec. There are farmers who have stallions. Best would be though to go to Pistin. There is a farmer name of Dvorak who is a lover of horses. He has four stallions or go to Tvrzic at Svateks.

Cimbura thanked and next morning at dawn rode out. He went across Protivin and Vodnany and its area village. At Dvorak's he saw a beautiful white stallion with here and there a black spot. Dvorak tried to convince him to use an older tamer stallion but Cimbura set his hart on the white one.

On his way back he stopped at Chelcic to visit the church of St. Martin. St. Martin's statue was, he sitting on a stallion like he had bred to Divoka. Cimbura promised the saint he would light a large candle in the Putim church if everything turns out well with Divoka. He quickly said a

prayer to the saint who sat on the horse and especially to St. Vaclav and St. Jiri. He then led his horse back and walked beside her. He prayed the Lord's prayer to farmers' saints Isidor and Vendelin.

Satisfied he returned home and finished the fence.

Soon spring called the farmers to their damp fields. You could see Cimbura day by day in his fields "Pezout" under Hurka, sometime on the meadow "Jirovka" of "Soudna Draha", planted the seedling trees along the road (Note: the fields there weren't joined as we know them. They were here and there and had names.) He always hurried home and didn't leave there unnecessarily. He was especially happy there, never thinking he would be so fortunate. Sometimes he was sad then happy again—He liked being in the fields, then again wondered why he shys away from people. He loved Piksa's children like of his own blood. School was out and he taught the boys Francek and Jan the important school of farming. They were with him whatever work he was doing. They liked going to the lake of river Blanice Saturday evenings to bathe the horses, nobody liked to leave. Going back Verunka would meet them and he would pick her up and set her in front of him for a ride around the yard till his wife would scold that he's like a child himself instead of putting the horses in a coming in for supper. Yes, like a child Jan Cimbura was fortunate—he himself didn't know this was the spring of his life. His heart was opening in love like the witching hour of midnight. It's a loving wife who made his whole life beautiful. Love was holy to him and not to be on public display.

He had seen a good piece of the world with General Radeck, northern Italy, Hungary, Austria, Vatican, Vienna and best of all Praha; but always when he returned home and saw the church spires in Pisek, the winding river Otava, the woods on the hills, fields, meadows, valleys, he felt home was the most beautiful. The little cottages were the loveliest than castles, the chapels and village churches more lovely than basilicas and cathedrals.

The lakes "Hanzlicek or Rezabinec" much better than the Mediteranian. The Lord God was the organist of all the sounds that surrounded him. Each evening before bedtime he walked out to look heavenward to see the mysterious stars. Even though he always prayed and sang in church, now each Sunday he washed the dust from him, put on his best clothes, he went now to lift his soul from the dust. He opened his prayer book but now the words seemed empty, that another man had written. He should be able to pray to God with his own words—this scared him—the devil must be tempting him in God's house. He studied each word and realized how he liked these old prayers and knew how to "pray in truth and in his soul. From then on he prayed more with thoughts than words, directly to God. His strong faith let him feel he could speak directly with God and God could answer him. When the priest got

up to preach the gospel, his words fell on Cimbura like the dew on parched ground. There was no need to fear God, but to love him and know that I can listen to him. Jan Cimbura always thanked God when he married MarJana Piksa and family life made him a whole man.

One morning, news spread over Putim that during the night MarJana bore twins for her husband. Two boys, like beech trees, were carried to the church to be baptized the same day. One was carried by old Kovanda from Hradiste who gave him his own name Martin. The other was carried by Cimbura's brother of Semic who was called Vaclav after whom the other boy received his name. Both of those name saints have statues of them mounted on horses. Those boys will both be great horsemen. All the women acame to see the mother and babies. They were strong already that their swaddling cloth could hardly hold them.

III

So after the fortieth year of his life, Cimbura experienced the late spring of his life. In his idle time he could play with his sons. They both slept in one cradle and looking at them with his wife they marveled how beautiful they were. Martinek has eyes as blue as the heavens, hair blonde. He is like you MarJana. And Venousek (Vaclav) eyes black and sparkly. His skin dark, heavy hair, truly he'll be like his father. Cimbura would like to have lifted them to his heart but was afraid for fear of hurting them. He only petted them under their little feather beds, calling them endearing names. But as a rose is not without a thorn, night without day and so in one's life there is not joy without sorrow. A great grief was awaiting Cimbura.

Divoka's time was nearing to foal?. They fed her carefully, kept her stall clean and bedded. A week went by and Cimbura worried, looking for advice from neighbors. "That isn't good, something isn't right." They all thought the colt would be dead. They were wrong the colt was fine but it cost the old mare her life. All the neighbors took turns with Cimbura spending the night in the barn, discussing possibilities and advice, but they all knew either the colt or mare would give up her life. She stayed down and let her colt such but an hour later died. They all shed a tear. Cernoch brought his mare who had a colt the previous week but had died. They brought three rollers and boards on which they put Divoka to roll her out. He wouldn't have her hauled away but they dug a deep wide hole to bury near the farmstead. In spring Cimbura planted an apple tree on her grave.

Cernoch's mare accepted the little horse and stayed at Cimbura's almost half a year to be fed and nurse but worked at Cernoch's. The little horse was eating grain and hay well so was weaned and Cernoch's mare went back home. He gradually became used to the closed yard and played with the children, several times Verunka and the colt were found sleeping together in the shade. In a year's

time he had his true color. Cimbura hoped he would be like Divoka but no. He was white just like the painting at the altar in Chelcice. All the village children called him “Belacek” (Whitey). He soon followed anyone who called his name. Cimbura didn’t pay much attention to him. The reminder to Divoka was still too painful. Belacek would stand by school waiting for the children. They would save pieces from their lunch to share with him. Cimbura’s boys Martin and Vaclav were growing, standing and rolling around the floor. Cimbura would say “I must be careful so I don’t step on my little golden bugs with my big feet. He always wore big boots. The finer ones hurt his feet. He would go to the shoemaker and have them specially made. “He would say if they rub me or are tight you won’t get a gros from me.” So rather than hammer out or stretch the leather he would add, so the boots were fit for a giant and so it goes that “Cimbura’s boots” were proverbial and still talked about to this day. “The boots got bigger and so did Cimbura.”

Cimbura saved on his horses and didn’t hitch them up unnecessarily. He wanted to show his old mother in Semice her grandsons, how they’re growing and beginning to talk. It isn’t far from Putim to Semice but for their little legs they still couldn’t walk it. I’ll carry them Monday when the village has their celebration. They need to know where their father is from. But how will you carry them? Asked MarJanka. You’ll see—he pulled out a pair of boots, put each in a boot put a stake through the straps and over his shoulder it went. They jumped around joyfully and only their heads were above the tops. Ach! Husband, you aren’t going to carry them across the village like that?, making the sign of the cross. I’ll go through Putim, across Smrkovice, when I get to my place I’ll set them down in our room and put my boots back on. But people will laugh at you. “Will or will not” no matter what you do you won’t please everyone. You carried them under your heart, why couldn’t I carry them over my shoulders? And took off down the road. He walked in his house slippers barefooted, carrying his wool socks in his pockets.

And the people? Well, from the start they laughed but then it became a common sight and found nothing funny about it and today talk about it how Cimbura loved his children and what big boots he had.

Cimbura liked to walk barefoot best—in dust or mud, rain or heat. In late fall he would wear his wooden shoes which the wood carver made for him each year. He lined them with sheep skin and they couldn’t have been warmer.

Now when it came time for village celebrations, Cimbura with MarJanka to Srnka’s tavern to be among their neighbors. Those were times they called “remembrances” where everyone talked and joked about each other’s shortcomings. Especially happy-go-luck Mika who

looked to poke at others. “Miko, you have a big mouth” all the farmers called. This time he picked on Cimbura.

Cimbura, how many wooden shoes do you have? He asked innocently. I have several, because I always, can’t find a fitting pair in Pisek. Though in Stasice the wood carver has my measurements. “And where do you put them?”

Where else, under the shed so they would dry out and not crack. “Well then it’s true” said Mika. MarJanka has for a long time watched a hen go under there but when she looks can’t see her anywhere. Only his wooden shoes stand there like a pair of horses. This is strange she thinks, is she a witch? I’ll kill her we can’t have a bewitched chicken here. Is the hen black? The villagers asked. Those are usually witches. If a black chicken lays an egg on Good Friday and a person carries that egg under his left armpit for three weeks and crosses nine field borders, daily an elf will hatch from it. Oh! No, said MarJanka for she knows where Klasek was aiming. It was a white-speckled chicken. A thought came to her. She pulled out the wooden shoes and there the hen was sitting in the shoe, chicks ready to hatch. The other held a mother cat with three little kittens. They all laughed which embarrassed MarJanka, but Cimbura—no. My feet, I can’t thank God enough for them. For more than forty years they’ve carried me on the earth. From battle and fire, from faraway lands you carried me home safely. What would I do without them. That’s why I’m not ashamed of them. When he finished, he sat down again and said to Mika “a cap has to fit the head, and wooden shoes fit the feet.” Even a big shoe sometimes comes in handy. He kept on speaking. Last week I was coming from the field. The snow was thawing, a warm wind was blowing from the Dunaj River. On the fishpond below the church children were playing. The ice cracked and water flowed over the pond. The boys hollered and ran to shore. Another boy fell into a hole which was cut for fishing and had only a thin coat of ice on it. I jumped on the ice but before I could have got to him he would have drowned. I took off my wooden shoe, took a run and let it sail towards the boy. He grabbed the shoe and it held him till I got there. Do you know Mika whose boy it was Mika? Xx Everyone quieted; it was my Vojta, Mika said. It was Cimbura’s quiet way of telling rather than getting mad. How fortunate his wife is to have married so well the second time. She isn’t even forty and has blossomed to a beauty. He said to all the men: don’t depend on them and the help. What you see needs to be done—do it. Study and understand your animals, take care of them and you will be successful. He like and treated his pets well. He became more attached to the colt, not blaming him for the mare’s death and started taking care of it instead of the boys. Now he could see it was beginning to develop more like Divoka.

“God give you good fortune”, someone said as Cimbura entered the gate. It was the cattle dehorned whom he

knew well. Just like the tinkers, and other smiths who came twice a year. They don't overstep each other's boundaries and villages. How are you farmer? At God's will, good. And your wife and children. They are well and how are you? As you see we are alive and work is going well. Dvorak from Pistin sends greetings. How is your young horse doing? He's a year old and it's time to neuter him. Show him to me. Jenik ran to find Belacek who had the run of their farm. The guests stayed overnight at Cimbura's. When morning came, they again looked over the young horse. Believe me, it would be a sin to neuter him. He will be a beautiful stallion. So Belacek stayed to be a sire.

IV

MarJanka urged Cimbura to see the young stallion but to no avail. He's the son of Divoka. He would ride him and use him for breeding. He would give Belacek one more year of freedom.

Do you know the Putim meadows? How cold you not know them, green and straight as a rug. Only on some the last cutting is left and used as a pasture. Then the herders bring out all the village stock, even geese to graze. The youngsters from the village gather there. They sing, play games, sides are drawn, and battles fought. They build a fire, potatoes are roasted. The boys ride the young colts. When evening nears and the sun sets back of Kestrany the herders gather the stock in a circle and ready them for home. Where to tomorrow? To Jirka's—to the rock cross—to the parish meadows—to Rezabince—etc. Cimbura's Honzik sits on Belacek like a king quietly listening, then says tomorrow we'll take them to "Podkova" and the debate is ended. On these meadows up to his third year Belacek had his freedom. For two years he was king of the colts. The third year the harness maker came to Cimbura's to measure him for collar. Cimbura began to train him each day. He would lift each leg, tap his hooves with a hammer, taught him to bend his head down, let him wear the horse collar all day and let him feel other parts of the harness. He couldn't run around the yard or village anymore but trained to pull a wagon beside another horse. He wanted to turn and pick a bit of grass, but the old mare pulled his head back and Cimbura pulled up hard on the rein. Belacek tried various tricks, but nothing worked for him. The farmer knows all of his movements and Belacek is afraid of the farmer's hands and eyes, but when he settles down the farmer pets him and talks to him gently. He was taken to the blacksmith to be shoed. Belacek snorted. The blacksmith smelled of smoke, not of hay like a farmer does, but he let his foot to be lifted like Cimbura, Francek or Honzik did. If only the farmer would loosen his hold or take his eyes off of him, he would show the blacksmith, but Cimbura stands guard so stands like a lamb and is afraid to even blink an eye.

Ach! He is easy to shoe—like an old horse and pat his rear. By and by Belacek became used to things and different smells.

One time Cimbura took him to the blacksmith shop tied him short under the roof overhang. He could hear them talking. Today we'll shoe him only on his front legs. He could see the forge, the hot iron, the sparks until he wanted to run. When he shoed the first leg he beat his foot but couldn't shake the shoes off.

It felt strange, he would stumble over every stone, he must learn to lift his legs higher. In no way could he kick them off. Ach! little one. They're nailed down good with five nails, wait till tomorrow, you'll know what they're good for.

The spring sun rose back of Hurky like a king's prince the rose over the Putim area. First the old church on the hill brightened, then the house roofs and lastly the fish pond "Hanzlik". All fowl came to life.

At Cimbura's everyone was up. He stood happily in the doorway, "Stryc, Stryc" (Uncle Uncle) called the sparrow. The ducks called "Klas Klas" (an ear of corn). The rooster called "dobry ji—trooo (good morning. The hens called "Jde okolo hospo—dar" (the farmer is coming). The hen was running after her chicks "Krok-krok-krok" (walk-walk-walk). The gander was leading all his geese to the fishpond.

Cimbura came to Belacek's stall, bent his head down for the collar. He ran out happily to the pump for a drink to wash down the oats. The old gelding, like a teacher after a pupil, slowly walked behind him. Belacek knew he had plenty of time so took a run around the yard, stopped to nibble an apple blossom. When he saw the old horse standing by the wagon pole he quickly stepped along side him.

Honzik and Francek harnessed them, hitched them to the wagon. Cimbura is carrying sacks of oats, one on each shoulder, and loading them on the wagon, then two sacks of rye, two of barley and one of wheat. The first trip for Belacek will be to the mill.

Verunka is standing on the door sill with Vasik and Martinek. The boys are growing. They wouldn't fit into their father's boots anymore. They even wear pants now. (Note: Before boys were toilet trained they wore dresses.) They are three-year olds but are so strong, they would be guessed as a year older. They're pulling on Verunka wanting to ride on the wagon. Cimbura walks around the wagon checking. Like a hoy queen MarJanka comes out with holy water which was blessed on Three Kings Day. "So the Lord God would guard you, the guardian angel stand along side you," she sprinkles the horses, husband and sons.

Belacek is anxious to go, pawing with his feet. A bare hoof cannot dig out so much dirt like a shod one. He digs up the smooth yard like a plow. "Stand" calls Cimbura. Verunka runs to open the gate wide. "Hang on" he calls to the boys who are sitting on the sacks. He clicked his tongue and the old horse started out slowly but Belacek jumped ahead quickly and stopped short. "What is this?" He's hitched in back and reins on his head. The horse collar feels different, pressing. He realizes the old horse is pulling and he has to too. He can't jump to the left or right but only ahead. How embarrassing, with everyone watching. Everyone along the way complimenting how he pulls as though he'd always done it.

Belacek was a strong pulling horse and as a result didn't fit in as a team, so he was used as a single. Both he and the farmer liked this. He left the team to Jenik. Francek used Belacek for getting a load of hay. When he reached the edge of the village he stopped to look around and as soon as he spied Cimbura he took it across fields cross country not caring that he lost Francek and part of the wagon along the way.

Belacek was now shod on all four. He would be taken to Hanzlik Pond to bathe. The farmers would say when that horse is in front of the plow and Cimbura behind they could plow a furrow as deep as the Blanice River and as wide as tahe Otava and as straight as a road. Cimbura soon forgot about Divoka. He had a loving wife, loved all his children, Kovanda and Belacek. The twins were now four and Cimbura thought it's time for them to know what a little work is. He spoke to them more as grownups. He started to teach them—names of birds, trees flowers and they were always at his side.

Berries were now ripening in the woods—at Vapenice, Obcizne, obrazku at Plazu, Hurky, Skala. The woods were like a spread table for the village children. These were the first fruits after winter. After dinner the woods tempted them rather than school. Verunka will be with the little boys so they wouldn't be in the way of hauling hay into the barn—it has to be hauled today. The sun is clouded, the mosquitoes are biting and chimney smoke is drifting towards the ground. There will surely be a storm and then the hay will lose it's nice smell and taste. The men will load, Cimbura and Honzik drive, Francek tamp the hay in the wagon. And what will we do with you two bugs, asked Cimbura of the boys. We're going to the woods said Verunka. Hurek is the closest. They rushed out of the house, with little kettles, towards the woods. The women came out with rakes to rake the hay on piles ready for the men to pick up. Even the dog ran out debating which way to go, after the wagons or children. Finally he ran into the woods. Verunka called after him "You can't go with us, you know you'd be chasing animals and the gamekeeper wouldn't like that!" You know "Chlupacek" lost his skin last time." Now go home, but after a few steps he was right behind them no matter how much they talked to him. The woods closed about them.

They all went about their work with the hay when Cimbura heard a new sound. What is it? They all wondered. The bell in the church tower is ringing for some danger. Honzik stood high up on the wagon. The woods is burning, hollered Cimbura. The fire was at the edge of Hurek. "My God, the woods is burning" cried Cimbura. The woods he loved, knew every tree, a hundred times he had walked through it. Where did our children go? Cried MarJana. They went to Hurky everyone cried. "Jesus—they're in that woods." They'll burn there, dropping to her knees. "God won't let them—at that Cimbura stuck the fork in the ground and ran for Belacek—unharnessed him and jumped up on him. He hadn't forgotten up to now his days of freedom, but now stood not knowing what to do. This is a dog's life he thought to be harnessed but Cimbura could read his thoughts. Belacek feels Cimbura on his back, the reins loosening and like a bird takes flight. He flies across everything Cimbura guides him. He sees people running from all the meadows. He flies past everyone toward Hurky. Cimbura leans over his neck and they've crossed the River Blanice—towards the woods they fly into the firey woods road—flames shooting around them. All the animals, squirrels, rabbits, deer, birds a fleeing. He hears peoples' voices—saws, axes shovels here. We'll throw up a dirt furrow. "Make way" he cried to the people—Belacek turned through the woods but Cimbura had to get him back on the road. Cimbura pulled hard on the rein, Belacek stopped but wouldn't budge. They all ran call—get off the horse, he won't go through the fire—something will happen. But they didn't know the rider or the horse. He has to get his children. The horse reared three times. It's no use Belacek we have to go. Belacek knows he has to mind, he snorts loudly and turns towards the road. The rider and horse become one no matter if fire or dragon stand in their way and were closed in by the smoke. People came from all sides, the gamekeepers direct the work, the soldiers come from Pisek. The wind is turning from the east turning the flames out of the woods. The village of Hurky is saved. Look, look, they all cry—Cimbura is walking along the field road, Belacek dancing along side of him—on his back are Martinek and Vasik, each holding their kettle of berries. Chlapik, the dog, making circles around them. Verunka is running ahead to tell mother how daddy and Belacek saved them. Hello! Is it you or a ghost calls Cernooh. Praise to God, it is I and my children. He doesn't stop but heads downhill towards the fish pond below the church. Roucek, Jaros, Hornik, Koubsky, Cernoch all follow and see Cimbura, with their own eyes, only his long hair has been singed off, the horse well, only his mane and tail singed, both smelling of smoke and covered with ashes.

We flew through the fire well enough, but the center of the woods was free of fire. I called to Chlapik and he took us to the children. Verunka with the boys was already running away from the fire on the upper road towards

Skalks's hill and to Seliba's. your wife is coming called Kolarik and Jan (Honzik) and Francek. Mommy, Mommy the little ones called, they slid off the horse into her arms, Cimbura's eyes filled with the tears of joy. Honzik and Francek took the rest of the harness off of the horse. Cimbura jumped on his back and both went into the water up to his nose only Cimbura could be seen standing on his back and seemed like a ghost floating over the water.

V

Today is Sunday. From the Putim church can be heard the organ and voices flowing across the cemetery. The farmers with their sunburned faces, quickly shaven, long hair parted in the middle stand in their places, over the hug tombs of the Radkovec knights of Mirovic, with bowed heads. Once a week it is so, before God they pray and meditate on their lives. During the week there isn't time but on Sunday their soul longs for the word of God, then after mass visit the graves of their loved ones. Cimbura stands every Sunday at the grave of Piksa. Someone taps his arm with a cane. He quickly makes the sign of the cross, turns and sees Kovanda bent over his cane. I'm especially coming to see you. You're covered with glory again—the whole area is talking about your brave deed. Ach! Uncle, What glory? Anyone who would have had children there would have done the same. "That's true, that's true" but nobody but you could have gotten their horses to go in there, only you. Everyone knows that and everyone will remember it. That horse boy, I would like to see him. They went to Cimbura's yard where he had let the horse run freely to be admired. "Just like his mother", as if I could see Divoka. But it I were in your place, says Kovanda I would have him neutered. And why? asked Cimbura in surprise. Did the commission see him already? How Cimbura understood what was meant.

Just so you wouldn't lose him. If he was castrated—no, but a stallion like that—I don't know my boy, they could take him. The conversation turned to other things. Everything is leaving me. Dobrak isn't any more, the other two I sold. I'm slowly coming close to the ground—looking in my grave. I'm parting with the world and with you today. I want you to carry me to my grave and lower me. You are like ours so with them take care of my last wishes when my eyes close for the last time. And they did close "before Saint Marketa put her scythe to the rye". Just before harvest three pairs of horses brought Kovand in Hrachovina's wagon, decorated, to St. Ann's Chapel and from there carried the casket on their shoulders to St. Vavrinec Church. His sons and Cimbura carried him and lowered him to his grave. He returned sadly home and always, remembered, up to the time of his death, Kovanda like a father. He would recall his advice when needed, remembered his sayings. Except the last advice. That no—he knew he would lose all his spark and fire, become a lazy gelding.

Soon after his soul was shaken, the mayor sent letters informing the farmers that in a week's time there would be an inspection of all horses in the Pisek district. Even Belacek was listed. His mane and tail had grown out after the fire and looked his prime when Cimbura rode him out of Putim to Smrkovice. All the farmers rode out on their horses, either saddled or a blanket. All the sons and hired men went. Francek and Honzik rode the mares. Belacek made his way nipping horse to the left and right and made his way to the head of the line. The Calvacade went across Smirkovice, Semice to the highway from Vodnany to Pisek. The sun rose over the ponds turning them to silver. On the right side of the woods was "Kravi Hora" (cow's mountain) and in the center were the army horse barns, their red tile roofs glowing red some half hour's ride to Pisek. The barn's yellow and black gates were wide open. The guard master with whip in hand stood waiting for the parade. He waited for the farm horses with a smirk on his face—but what is this—coming towards him a horse like a lady. Oh! If it wasn't a sin—a horse like a beautiful angel. He dropped his whip and squatted on his heels looking up at the horses. "It's a stallion" he called out. Where did that stupid farmer steal him? Jealousy crept over him—there is no other like him. The old soldier, an experienced horseman, a wonder he didn't bow to Belacek, waved them into the yard. The soldiers stood in wonder at their guardmaster why he's suddenly catering to the farmers. Belacek led them in and all stood in line formation. "Wait till our old man sees this miracle" called out the guardmaster in German and sent the corpporal out into the road to see if the commission is coming already from Pisek. He walked around the stallion, open his mouth, counted his teeth, he measured him out with his hand. It was nearing nine o'clock when the carriage rattled before barracks.

The Rytmistr and two officers entered the grounds and stood before a small table, put a book of records on it, the veterinarian went up to the nearest horse. The dismissal of horses went quickly and smoothly—most were the same old horses, here and there a new one so the farmer had to tell where he sold or traded it. On the other end stood Belacek. The guardmaster told what kind of horse stood there but he only grumped into his big cavalier mustache and looked at the nearest ones. Here and there he ordered one to step out and run around. Belacek was impatiently stamping his feet till it came his turn. The officers spotted him and it took their breath away. Belacek stood in all his glory like a groom. His hide was smooth, not really white, almost rosey how the white and black hairs mixed. His mane was braided. His head and neck as though sculpted from marble—his black tail almost to the ground. His legs to the knees are like a deer's.

Where did this noble animal come from? Is it Arabian, surely half. He's a Berber says the veterinarian, I would say English, says another. Cimbura rides him around, and he struts. They all examine him and find no fault. All the Putim farmers have left and they still sizing up Belacek.

Cimbura is of little heart. He should have listened to Kovanda and had him castrated. They'll surely separate us his inner voice is telling him. We'll keep him here for a month to try him out, says the vet. A soldier puts an army halter on him and leads him to the barn. If he works out for us you'll get whatever you want for him. I will never sell Belacek—then you'll get whatever we'll offer—we'll leave the money with the mayor—you're Jan Cimbura from Putim, house #25—yes?

In the stall the stallion neighed—Cimbura's heart cried—he took the halter and walked out of the barracks. Sadly he returned, hung the halter on a nail and no word could leave his mouth—nor could he eat. Be reasonable, his wife said kindly—they take a son to war. The mother and father are sorrowing but does it help any? Don't sorrow for the horse. Cimbura nodded his head, Marjanka speaks the holy truth but in his soul he thought: in a year I'll have to go before the army with Piksa's son, like my own, then Francek. Like water the years run, this year I'll take my twins to school and it will be hard to part with them. An animal is an animal and the mind can forget them, even Belacek. In that way he was satisfying himself. Hubacek, his neighbor was now mayor and in a month brought the unheard of sum—a full 1200 for the stallion and a letter saying Belacek will stay in the army. Not only Cimbura was sad but his children and all the village children. Belacek didn't come to school during noon hour anymore and beg for goodies. He now had harder and more important work to do. The children could do anything with him—now had harder and more important work to do. The children could do anything with him—now they took him away from the children—to war.

About a half year went by. Winter was nearing with its fogs, frosts and shorter days. The leafless trees sadly waited for its arrival.

On a nice fall day several horsemen left the Pisek army base. On a black stallion, black as a crow, sat the Rytmistr, behind him on heavy horses the sargents. They rode on the Vodnany road. It was slightly foggy and here and there the fires lit by the herdsmen. They went near Semice, Aovy Dvur and somewhere near Protivin decided to turn back. The Rytmistr left the Emperor's Highway and turned toward Skalice, Hermanice and Razice. In Putim the church clock was striking ten. The schoolteacher had just let the first class of children home when there was the pounding of hooves on the wooden Blanice river bridge. Soldiers, soldiers they all cried and stopped in front of the school with their teacher. "Praise be Lord Jesus" the children called out a greeting. The officer smiled, leaned back to look over the boys "kanonenfutter" (cannon fodder) he said in German. The boys all look at his uniform, his high boots, the black horse with yellow saddle. Then their eyes turned to stars. "Belacek! Cimbura's Belacek" they all called come here, and looked for a goody to give him. Belacek raised his

head, twitch his ears and as though he was remembering stopped, then galloped to the children. In vain the corporal swore and tugged on the reins. Martinek ran to him, look this is our horse. The horse bent down to sniff his bag. Martinek petted his soft nose. "Soldier, my dear soldier, let me sit on him. All the soldiers laughed. The corporal lifted him to the saddle. Belacek, we're going to our place—mother and father, Honzik, Francek and Vasik, who is sick today, will be so happy. As though the horse understood he turned and headed for Cimbura's—the rest of the soldiers behind him. They're threshing at Cimbura's today, only MarJanka is cooking. "What is happening?" When she heard all the hoof beats, she jumped to the window and there—Belacek is coming. Martin is sitting in front of a soldier with a large waxed mustache, and following are five or six other stallions. She ran out, opened the yard gate wide greeted the horse and all the other soldiers. All the threshers run out. They couldn't take their eyes off of Belacek, how noble he's become. Cimbura praises him that he isn't ashamed of his old home and hasn't forgotten them. The soldiers dismounted, MarJanka brought a loaf of bread and knife. She herself held a plate with a large lump of yellow butter and white salt.

Cimbura felt bad he couldn't give the horses oats but gave each a fork full of dried clover hay. Honzik and Francek brought pails of water for the horses. Cimbura talks with the Rytmistr and is filled with joy at the compliments the officer gives Belacek. He is saddened though that the stallion isn't called Belacek anymore, but Marengo after the noted horse of Napoleon. "Marengo", the corporal called and the horse lifted his head. Cimbura felt bad. Just as though Belacek disappeared and Marengo was there. No one at Cimbura's could call him that.

The soldiers left Putim before noon. Cimburas escorted them to the edge of the village and stood until there was only dust and the horses were over the hill. They hoped they could meet again but by spring the stallions and riders left for different camps even Belacek disappeared.

If only Cimbura could have read the Vienna newspaper he would have seen how Marengo is earning renown. He would have known he was talked of over Europe. He would have read his false genealogy how he was from an Arabian mare and Andalus (?) sire a horse of pure blood. And Cimbura would have written with his heavy hand a correction that his horse is no Marengo but a faithful Czech horse Belacek not from an Arabian mother but Divoka from Kovanda's farm in Hradiste and the sire was Musak from Dvorak's farm in Pistina. He is then a Czech horse raised in Putim by Jan Cimbura, farmer from house #25. Too bad! He would have read that Marengo was given by the Emperor himself to his general prince Windisgrec.

Even Honzik didn't get to Belacek who was in the 11th regiment of Pisek under crown price alder Saska in

Trident nor Francek who was in the army with a rocket corp.

VI

For ten years the pastor Father Hynek Skala was in Putim. Each Sunday and holy day walking up the narrow steps to the pulpit and announce who will be married, for whom masses will be said, fast days, processions. All his parishioners liked him. He was a man with small weaknesses like they—he loved horses like all the farmers did. It was strange. He was a town boy born in Pisek. When he came to Putim to their old parish and started some farming he became attached to all the horses. Not like the farmers who raised them and couldn't part with them when they got old. Father Skala could easily trade them for a better horse. He always, had his coachman drive at a trot. He would time the horses from Putim to Pisek which was usually about 15 minutes. "I must look for a different pair", he would grump if the time didn't satisfy. He loves horses but has no affection for them, because he didn't grow up with them. In Skovice for the priests came from far and wide, Vodnany, Protivin, Volyne, Bavaria. The farmers would admire them when the coachmen would drive them around the castle grounds. The Putim farmers would save their praise until their priest came rolling in, the horses alike in color and size. Aha! Let's look whose team this is. It must be borrowed. Borrowed? No! Those are our priests from Putim. The farmers all stood around admiring. These horses put all the others to shame.

For this they liked their priest. Today they lifted their heads towards the pulpit but hardly recognized him. His smiley face seemed ten years older, pale—he was stooped like under a heavy load. In a shaky voice he announced the proclamation he held in his hands. There was war—two wars. [1866] Austrian empire had tangled with Prussia and Italy at the same time. The women cried loudly and the men hung their heads on their chests.

There—now they have it on black and white—what was talked and written about for a long time. MarJanka was devastated, worried as though a huge boulder was on her shoulders. The neighbors were all sad. Honzik and Francek were there. Kavalir's son was an infantryman, Sekyra's son Vencl, but mostly they were sorry for MarJanku. The wives left and the men stood in groups in front of the church as usual. There will be war—there will. Like the death bell it rang in their heads. The teacher Jelinek and Father came out of church and all moved towards them. It will be terrible said the priest. When will it start? Where will our 11th regiment go? Is it true Prince Albert from SAS (Saxony) will come here and Saxony will join us?

It's for sure there will be two armies said the priest—north and south because we will be pushed on two sides—the Prussians to the north and Italians to the south.

It's hard to say where the Pisek regimen will go. Now they are in Trident and likely stay there, they'll be going against the Italians. Those that are left in Pisek will go somewhere. (Jicin is N.E. of Praha towards the Polish border which was probably Prussia then(?). The men could no longer look at the faces of Cimbura, Kolarik, Vlach or Kavalir.

The priest called to his coachman—hitch up, we're going to Pisek then called to the farmers who were standing like a thick heavy cloud—I'm going to Pisek, if I find out more I'll tell you after Benediction. He took out his watch as usual—put them back, but what time it was he didn't know—he watched the horses' legs, but didn't see them. He depended mainly on the captain, Hrozny (from BoJemil) in Pisek—He will tell him what will be with the Pisek infantry and Klatov cavalry—he'll know something of the hope of victory from the generals—but he himself wasn't hopeful. In Pisek the people stood around the town square. The gates to the barracks, around the castle were open. Horses, wagons, officers, soldiers were about. Buckets and trunks were being loaded. The buglers were practicing their signals, swords were being sharpened, guns examined. The boys were singing their war songs and soon everyone was joining in. The ladies and gentlemen were passing out cigars to the boys who were waving their caps—"Don't be afraid", we won't give in—"we'll beat them with our caps". The band began to play on the town square. Father Skala couldn't get to speak to anyone but still was glad he came. He was breathing easier.

We'll win, we'll really win as he jumped out of the carriage by the church. Go to Pisek, dear people. You'll see with your own eyes. Like a spark thrown into a barrel of dust, the words inspired everyone, and all ran to Pisek. They returned in the evening singing battle songs. In the tavern the old farmers talked of their war experiences. Monday came, Tuesday, Wednesday and further days came. No one worked in the fields, quickly fed their stock and ran to Pisek or at least to the BudeJovice Hiway. The fear and horror of war left them, as though they were drunk with fighting spirit, they were ready to put on the emperor's white coat.

Hordes of soldiers were marching towards Pisek, coming from Klatovy, BudeJovice that at times the road wasn't wide enough for them people came way from Protivia and Dobevice to meet the troops and after resting in kPisek escorted them way to Cizov or Zahori. The army band was playing, bugles calling, drums beating and singing one song after another. The farmers liked to see the cavalry coming. They could hear them far across the fields. The trumpets blowing the "Generals' march". The whole band on white horses. When the band stops, the troops sing:

A breastplate on their chest, of silver they all are, the cavalry is coming, pistols in their fists. They are our brides taking us to war.

The dragons are in the field—where will they carry them, the Netolice horses?

Across a field to far away, to battle, to war war is for them.

The Hussars-Hussars are coming the people holler. On Hungarian shaggy, low horses. The men black like gypsies, mustaches wax like a thin needle. They didn't sing, just glowering and swearing. Then the lancers come with their long spikes.

The people sing to them:

Green lancers, running to war. Like a roar of water the swords will cut you down. Loyal blood will run—too bad for you—too bad.

In Pisek the infantry is in formation in the square among them cannon and wagons of ammunition. Everyone brings them food and drink. "These are our boys!" From the open gates of the barracks troops are pouring out. The band is playing Radecky's march. The drums are beating a step. The boys stretched out like strings gather around a general with a green feather and gold braids sing boys hollered Hrozny to his group. Captain Hrozny a true father to his soldiers started singing:

Eleventh Regiment

Saxony is the Prince

He fits into the Army

On Pisek's Square

Prince Albert regiment

Marches on the battlefield.

You don't belong to me my dear

Anymore at your table

Our Pisek Regiment after a bloody

Battle. Where did your love stay?

In the battlefield—he lies there.

The old general high on his horse twists his grey mustache. He looks joyfully at the sons of Czech South. I must win everything with them. The infantry marched out of town singing. "Fathers we would greet you, mothers we would kiss you if I could only stop. Be with God sisters, brothers. My life belongs to my country, for her I'm going to battle."

Where are you going soldiers? Where are they chasing you? We don't know—Italy or Prussia—into a fire. They waved again and started singing.

"God be with you fields, meadows, woods when we're dying in the field we'll think of you. Tell my love there, I won't be kissing her anymore."

Women were wiping their tears, even the soldiers now felt sad. They left the saddest verse for last.

"Mary mother of God, teary eyes on your bed, to you we will be leaning when we will be in the hospital, desolate in this wide world, dying for our Emperor. We will be longing for our home, the nuns will be caring for us.

They couldn't sing no more but broke down crying the whole area resounded in their marching. The birds have quieted. The soldiers disappeared from Pisek, Budejovice, Klatov. They went north and south.

Everyone was interested in the war, not only Sejkpa, Kavalir, Sekyra from Putim or Kolisek and Krajic of Hradiste or Widow Mastny from Smrkovice, mainly because they had sons there. There were thoughts only of war. The youngsters walked around the villages with songs.

"The recruits are slowing leaving our villages, the gunsmiths are sharpening their swords, to the gun they'll add—like poison—a sharpened bayonet. Blacksmiths are shoeing, steel shoes—our brothers are marching in battle against the Turks.

Elderberries were now in bloom On the Blanice Bridge young people were standing in groups singing:

"A regiment of soldiers standing on the Pisek Square—stood there for the last time, a row of good sons. Tucked in their cap a twig of green—they went away to war. The war will destroy them for us."

Even the old people didn't want to go to bed. The men sat around the tavern, the women on benches visiting about what the men had heard. There was talk of Prussian spys dressed as Hussars, how the Prussians are spreading into Cechy, they can't be stopped and the fire of war will come to them.

There was one person in Putim who kept quiet, and that was Cimbura. The villages knew he wasn't a talker but this they didn't like. He again kept to himself, didn't leave the village. Their saying was "You must howl with the wolves if you want to be with them. Psychology calls for this. The cripple Venousek carried mail from Pisek daily. The anxious people waited for him at the school and as soon as he came all out of breath he would hand the priest the newspaper. Everyone quieted like in church while he read the paper out loud.

That's how he found out in Putim how the crown jewels were taken out of St. Vitus Cathedral in Praha. How the cannons are preparing to guard the silver tomb of St. Jan Nepomucky, how the state offices and treasury are running to Praha and how the people are hiding in forests with their cattle and burying what they can't take with them, plastering over what they've hidden in their walls. Even the children were listening, like little birds in their nests. They were in school making bandages for the wounded. The Prussians had surround Drazdany and to Praha were brought the first wounded Saxons. Just wait

till our boys get there. When our troops unite the Prussians will see!

Kolarik spoke up “That star we saw forbodes bad things.” They all remember a new star had been seen in the north and then slowly disappeared. They all scolded Kolarik that he shouldn’t have brought up that subject. “Just so it wouldn’t happen like in 1859 in Italy” remembered Jaros. A new monument has just been built in Pisek to commemorate the fallen from that war. The Czech lion fighting with a snake wrapped around him. The lettering on it: In the year of our Lord 1859 fighting courageously in battles at Malegnana the 3rd of May and Solfeina 24th of May. Fallen heroes 860 men of the Czech 11th Regiment. How many returned? Not Cap. Bayer or Berg. On the battlefield stayed Corp. Zupan, Priborsky and Cermak and almost 900 men raised here in the Pisek district.

That year there was also a fiery comet in the west. Klasek hollered “you’re all old women the stars don’t determine war, but the cannons do and those we have. We have a thousand and they’ll destroy everything in their path, and then our horses against those old mares the Prussians have—ach! No use getting mad. There—there now, and they all returned home with rosey hopes. They don’t have horses! They’re sacks filled with hay, they’re just cats. Our cavalry will win everything. Their horses are big bellied cows”.

Windisgrec is leading and he’ll trample the Prussians to mush. If it was there I’d show them said Klasek. If I were general said Cernoch I’d have a different plan. This was the first time Cimbura had furrows in his brows, hair graying and his back bent from a heavy load, worry over Hozik and Francek. There is nothing that can save them but God—he told MarJanka who sorrowed for them wherever she went. He worked but his mind was on the battlefield. The village of Custozzo where fought under Radecky in 1838, Verona, Milan, Navarr, the whole of Lombardy. Honzik marched from Trident along the deep valley of the Adiz River to Radetsky’s battlements, poor boy, that’s where he must be—is he living and well?

Francek is closer—by Hradec Kralove likely in battle already. He still believed his Emperor and Prussian King would make an agreement without bloodshed. With these thoughts he went to bed and arose in the morning. He didn’t pet or smile at the children.

Hay cutting—how he used to look forward to that. This year he lost all feeling for beauty. He finished cutting and even hated to go home. The villagers would be about and he would hear about the battles and the dead. Poor boys, thinking of Honzik and Francek. They had to turn in their scythe for a sword, their plow for a gun and bayonet. He shivered. “Well, so Cimbura” said Roucek, you’re eating away at your soul. You don’t visit with us or share your sorrow. Klasek turned on Roucek, “you know both his sons are at war. Ba! Cimbura would give for masses if the

boys don’t return. Maybe you wish them to die said Klasek. Cimbura stood dumbfounded—what is this man saying. With his fists tight—“Klasek prove what you have just said!” They all tried to quiet Cimbura but he only saw Klasek. Stab, stab, calls a bunting by the road. Where, where, calls the crow. In the belly calls a thrush in the meadow, but he doesn’t obey until Klasek replies, but he turns on his heel. “Stand” roars Cimbura, you are a liar, a skunk, you aren’t worth a bullet as Klasek ran away. He stood awhile looking at the men. Why aren’t you ashamed of yourselves? And why? asked the farmers. Ashamed because you all are blood thirsty. All you talk of is war—how many are killed, what our side has done, who they trampled. Are you Christians? And you are mad if someone “doesn’t pull on the same rope with you”. Cimbura’s spark turned to fire. Right, I keep quiet. I see how you look for blood, the death of your own or strangers. Do you remember how last year our crops were hailed out? Haros had wheat thick as a beach, next to it was Keclik’s rye, long and beautiful. Next was Cernoch’s oats as tall as ferns—our fields were ripening. Here over Pisek and another over Protivin dark clouds arose—flying, lightning, wind, hail as big as pigeon eggs. Yes, they all nodded wondering where Cimbura was aiming. Whatever grain head the hail hit it broke off. We walked into the field after the storm and I see you, brothers, how we cried. We cried not only for the grains but for the beauty lost. Look, that is how war is. I spent many years like that in the firing line at Volta, Milan, Komarna, Szoregu. In Italy, Hungary and I still can see not the grains standing there but the boys—heavy artillery, all down. A half year the grain grows, twenty years or more a man. The neighbors hung their heads full of shame before Cimbura. When a tree killed a shepherd at Hurky, for one person the whole area cried. When Hamak’s horse drowned, the whole village was sad. And now what are you so anxiously awaiting. Not one, not ten or a hundred—no—there will be thousands dead. Our sons and brothers will be lying on the battlefield with their heads shot up, or instead a son like a maple, a cripple. Why oh why are people killing each other, someone they’ve never seen? And horses—beautiful horses will end up on the battlefield, and you can’t wait for that bloody and sad information.

Roucek thought where did this come out of—this quiet man. Well, said Cernoch he laid this out for us and took us apart. Cimbura turned from them and left.

From that time sadness took over Putim. There were no more war songs. People still waited for the priest to read the news but no one took joy in them. Not even when they heard victories of the Austrian army over the Italians at Custozzo or how the northern army under Benedek is winning at Skalice, Mnichova Hradiste, Svinistan, Kralove Dvory, Jicin. It was talked about but entirely differently. Kolarik often would repeat—what is wrong with people, what do they lack? We aren’t Christian. He speaks the truth said Mika who also was in Italy in 1859.

To talk about with eagerness—in that time you don't feel like a man but a beast. To hear the dying calling for their mothers, fathers, brothers, sisters—that is the most horrible.

“And that all for nothing, only because of that Bismarck”.

The papers are now writing—at Hradec Kralove that's where the battle will be decided. That is a great stronghold. The moats are filled with water from the Labe River. Benedek will defeat the Prussians there—But they didn't the 4th of July news came to Pisek of an unfortunate battle at Sadova (by H. Kravlove) all the office from Praha were leaving. They're carrying the treasury to Budejovice to bishop Jirsik. There the officials will live. The smaller business were right on their heels, and so were the troops. The brigade of Lilienfeld was leaving Praha across Netolice to Budejovice and in the Pisek Town Square some of the wagons stopped—but the soldiers weren't singing or smiling—only fear was in their eyes and they had only heard of the enemy. They just rested, ate and fed their horses and were on their way with bugles calling—the officers swung on the horses and the wagons rolled. The next group were coming from Cizov with the wounded. They went slowly across the bridge.

One wagon, two, five, ten wagons, farm wagons bedded with straw, in them soldiers, heads tied, arms in slings, feet bandaged. Along the driver sits a soldier with a red cross on his arm, pale. They're hauling only the slightly wounded and healing for they had to give up room in Praha for the badly wounded who they're bringing from the battlefield. There are Saxons, Poles. Doctor Karel Malec, an old veteran, is waiting for them. Easy, easy now he calls, follow me. They're around the small square with the Virgin Mary statue. The Poles are crossing themselves. The schools have been turned to hospitals. The people are pressing close anxious to know something of the battle. Don't be in the way called the doctor. The doctor picked out several town girls and ladies to help him. He sent some home to bring cloth, bedding, scissors, wine, bread, meat, dishes. Before evening all the wounded were taken care of and in fresh cots. Now Pisek was waiting for a new group to come. Who else could come? Who else but the winning enemy—the Prussians. The battlement at H. Kralove didn't hold them. Now they were marching toward Praha and to the south to Vienna. Wild rumors everywhere. The last—the Pruss are heading for Milevsko. Now Pisek was full of fear. There isn't a healthy soldier in the town. They thought of their glorious history and decided they weren't letting the Prussians into their town. Why do we have armed lodges—just to shoot in festivals. They prepared to arm and develop a war plan. The Austrian army is broken—perhaps they will regroup before Vienna. That will give us time we'll get gunmen from Vodnany, Vimperk, Susice, Strakonice, Klatov. We'll make a stand at the hiway to Praha, we'll destroy our bridge—we'll defend ourselves. Guards were posted

in the church spire with telescopes. They'd be able to see them to Bernatice. Around town everyone was hiding their valuables, made plans for an escape the town horses and wagons wouldn't be enough. They all called Cimburá, Cimburá, take my family somewhere to a safe place. They hired even Cernoch, Roucek and farmers from other villages. Cimburá—we'll take your wives and children but we ourselves will not move. All of the Prachaticice will rise up with us. Their old army souls were rising even their Hussite forefathers' souls would guard their land and not give in. It was harvest time but no one thought of the fields. The news were not good.

Praha gavae up without a shot. Cardinal Schwarzeberk with purkmistr(?) Belsky rode to meet the Prussians and gave them the key to the Praha gate. At the castle of old kings, Hradcany, a Prussian general stayed and gave out a manifest promising the Czech country independence. Wide lines of Prussian regiments were rolling across Moravia towards Vienna, the heart of the Austrian Empire. What are our men doing—they ran to Hungary, their souls so shaken that there in no thought of further battles.

And here, when least expected, at noon like if they crawled out of the ground, the Prussians appeared in Pisek.

The guards in the tower didn't see them, no one rang the bell, nobody blew a warning or a drum roll.

Prussians, Pruss, everyone cried as if there was a fire. All locked up, horseshoes rang, like a wind four riders blew by. There were four Prussian Hussars under Bluchner, making themselves at home they stopped at city hall, one jumped off, the others turned their horses facing the Square, their left hands on the reins, in the right hand a carbine. Everyone was gathering around the Hall. “What do they want?” Did they bring some announcement? “What were those in the church spire doing?” Sleeping? Just then the officer came out, mounted, they turned out of town in a cloud of dust.

The Administrator opened the window and called out “The war has ended.” Pisek is saved—in Mikulov they signed an agreement. (That's near the Austrian border below Brno.) From Belina (by Pribram) to Orlik is the Prussian line. Nothing else, nothing else—you won't see them anymore.

The hungry Prussian soldiers were sickening with cholera and other diseases. Today they still talk in South Bohemia of hunger. In Sudomerice and Bechyne two soldiers found a nest of eggs boiled and ate them and blew up over night. In the morning they were dead, at night they buried them under a pile of manure. In Milcin one housewife still remembers today what they had to give each day to the Prussian king's troops. For breakfast two cups coffee, bread heavily buttered, at noon a pound of meat along

with other food, at lunch the same as breakfast, at night, bread with cheese or butter, fried potatoes, two eggs hard-boiled and beer. When they got to Varvazov they burned out the mill, went through the cellars, attics, went through all the cupboards, trunks, caught the chickens and drank the milk and beer life if they were at home.

Josef Prchlik, the miller, put on his Sunday coat, went along the creek, then up to the castle. He wasn't wrong—there sat the officers around a table looking at maps. Debating. Prchlik wasn't afraid of them. As a young man he studied at Pisek, then he was a secretary at the castle in Varvazov and had contact with bigger nobleman than these. He was tall, broad-shouldered, beautiful blue eyes. He stood by the table and with a firm voice said "Sirs, I suppose you don't know what your soldiers are doing to my mill. They're behaving like wild Turks—my daughters and maids had to run into the woods to hide. I'm not concerned about some food or drink but the honor of my mill. Are you going to give us your protection or must I and my help do it ourselves?" Are you telling the truth? "That I am," he nodded. "Lajtnant Streinman, immediately, go to the mill. The young officer, just a boy, jumped to the miller who led him. They came at the right time. In the yard two soldiers were cutting up a sheep. From the upper window his wife was calling for help! The Lajtnant pulled out his sword, hollered so loud his voice skipped "Habt Acht! (German) He sent word to the castle and in an hour the place was cleaned out. The soldiers acted like lambs. They stayed around playing with the children. When they had to leave they were sad to leave. Bernard Von Frideric-Streiman, lieutenant of the 8th captains Prussian King's Westfal infantry company 57 remember the mill for a long time. He sent the miller's wife, Pepinka, a picture of himself from Veseli—could they come again to the mill to visit.

But nobody liked the Prussians, young or old for their gluttonness. Seven between meals they were gulping food, whatever they came across. Unripe fruit, milk, mushrooms, cucumbers, greens. They had no manners. Only when cholera raged among them their king encouraged them to sign a peace. This happened in Praha 23rd of Sept. and the Czechs breathed a sigh of relief.

The war was over, our whole regiment returned because it didn't get into the battles. Hrozny from BoJemil returned with this company but was sad as though coming from a funeral. Yes—yes 13,000 dead stayed at Hradec Kralove not to return to their families. Over all of the Austrian Empire there was an era of rebuilding, mainly in the army. The time of serving was lowered from seven years to three. Francek and Honzik returned home in fall. They weren't greeted not only by Verunka, Martin and Vasek but by a new sister who was born in that year of war—"Marie Anna". She was called Marianna.

Whenever Dr. Malec from Pisek came to Putim MarJana called the little girl, "kiss the doctor's hand. If it wasn't

for him neither you or I would be on this earth", and she herself kissed his hand who saved her life.

VII

All winter in Putim and all over the Czech country war was discussed, whose fault here—there. Benedek has lost and was blaming whomever. Everyone complimented the cavalry. "If it wasn't for us" said Vaclav Sekyra like an old general. He was a smoker, straight as a needle, a huge mustache, who wore armor as a cavalryman in the 1866 campaign. If it wasn't for the cavalry everything would have fallen into the Prussians' lap.

Well, Vaclav, they all prompted mason Sekyra, tell us about your war. Well, it was this way. Our main stand was at Hradec Kralove. In front of it is the Labe River and back of the river stood our army. He showed how they were spread out. He laid down his tobacco pouch, that showed where the reserves were, his pipe where the cannons were lined up. We cavaliers rode before the infantry to show them where the Prussians were or weren't. Day and night we partolled until during the night from the 2nd to the 3rd of July they called us off to the rear with the reserves. We took care of our horses and now could hear the firing. We were behind a hill and couldn't see much. By noon we could see by looking at the officers, something bad was happening. Our division officer stood on the hill with his telescope. Ordinance was coming—going. I stood by my gelding quietly praying—not only I. We could neither think or talk. It was the heat of battle we could but not pray. It was an hour after noon. We could see an hour from us a division coming, but we soon recognized the armored horsemen, the Emperors, Mikulas, Hess, Ferdinand. Where are they going? We see now—our infantry is retreating—why?—Our tenth company Gablenz is holding, which we belong to. "Into the saddles" we sat—an hour se sat. The firing came closer and closer instead of retreating. The ordinance officer came flying towards. "He must be carrying a message but he only waved his sword and signal flags were waving from the hill.

We ran our horses to the hills by probluz (n.w. of H. Kralove) one look and we knew. Our infantry was running like rabbits—it was our turn now to hold the Pruss till our troops could at least get back of the river, back of the fortress. We see our brigade officer—this is the moment Cimbury always wanted to hear—Prince Windisgrec. I saw him on this beautiful horse. The one they took from Putim—Belacek. I would give my head that I wasn't wrong. My heart jumped and I wanted to call out Belacek. They stand before us, and he doesn't make a move when the Prince tells us in Czech "We Cavaliers, we have to stop them—follow me. We all spread out, head for Stretetice when the first horseman of the Pruss. appear chasing our infantry. We must attack." The farmers all sat closer to Sekyra. The area there was

something like between Putim, Kestrany, Razice and Herman—flat and hard as a table—just made for a gallop. The old soldier could see it all over again. Around the hills the Prussians and their troops were assembling. Another half hour later none of use would have gotten through. The bugles sounded—we eased up on our reins. Here and there the infantry was shooting at us. We all felt the sooner we get through that line the better. But every cavalryman knows that before an attack you have to save on your horses, judge the distance, jab your horse and fly full gallop. We're not yet in full gallop. We have our eyes on the brigade leader—a thousand steps separate us—now 500 from the Pruss. who are flying towards us. What is our brigadere doing? We know he's supposed to be behind us, not in front of us—he has time yet—now 300 steps—I'm in the first row and what? I see Windisgrec, hand in his sword, standing in his stirrups—his horse flying his sword pointed to the heavens. He crosses himself with the sword and go-go—call the buglers behind us. We let our reins go—our knees pressed tightly to the horses' bellies. Like a white eagle flew Belacek with the general and like lightening flew sideways into the dragoons—took the horse down with the rider with that we were through. Our job done—behind is Wrangel, he'll finish the job. We turn—they're aiming again at us—Belacek is first and breaks through again. Around the hills the shooting quieted because we were whirling among the Pruss. riders only the swords could be hear clashing. We won because our armored men went through first—our heavy horses beat those Hungarian cats. They're like dragons, fast as the wind and fire. Like a toy they broke them up. Now we turn on the black Hussars in black uniforms. Skulls on their hats and on the horse's bridle. Our troops are joining us. We have swept the horseman from the battlefield. Our brigadeer stood before us with Belacek, his sword broken in half. The bugler sounded "return". We stopped our horses. Slowly we turned towards Brize with our heavily breathing horses to regroup. Along the road the Prussians hid taking shots at us as though we were pears on a horse. Sekyra stopped as though he lost his fire and tears came to his eyes. They weren't a bit ashamed to shoot us in the back. Every once in a while a rider or horse falls. All at once our brigadere lifted from the saddle and fell to the ground. Belacek stood as though nailed to the ground—turned his head wondering what happened. I jumped to the Prince. He had been shot between his shoulders. We carried him away. It was sad. That morning there were near 600 of us, now barely 200 were left. Company Commander Bertling took our brigade across the river to Moravia and the rest you know.

They wondered about the Secret Plan the Austarian generals, which didn't turn out, but that didn't interest Cimbura anymore. It's too bad you don't know what happened to Belacek, he used to say to Sekyra. How could I know, fear overtook us. We all went somewhere back of Vienna into Hungary. Peace was made, our service was shortened and I came back with Francek and

Honzik. We thank God we came back with healthy bodies.

Almost 13,000 dead and 16,000 wounded brothers lay there. That is the bitterest memory. Across this field they had to race their horses. He couldn't bear anymore. He jumped up and left. He must hide somewhere where he can cry loudly. So that year was how gatherings ended—sadly. But time heals. It was a bad year—1866. It seemed there would be no end to the terror. The blood soaked earth opened up new and new graves. Fires raged in our unfortunate land. The villages of Hracholusky, Prestice, Jaromer, Luzec, Dobruska were burned out, its people scattered, masses were not only said for the dead, but collections taken every Sunday, articles collected, food, feed everything possible for the needy.

Now all the churches had adoration hour for three hours so God would stop punishing us, keep us from war, disease, fire and poverty. People kept complaining, and the less they gave. Only Cimbura after every request, loaded his wagon with grain, hay and straw. Took it to the district office in Pisek or stopped at the parish office to give whatever he could afford. "Well, so him?" he can give—look how well he's doing.

And it was so. When Honzik and Fracek returned from war all the buildings were newly-covered and white washed. Trees planted—stalls full of cattle and a new sheep barn. But daddy where do you get feed for all of the stock? Did you buy more meadows or seed more clover? No, I didn't but I'm doing what Kovanda did and which the other farmers don't understand or don't want to. I spread manure and drag the meadows like I do the fields. There's no shortage of manure. The more cattle you have the more you can put on your fields. That is the magic and marks. Cimbura took the sons to all the field and meadows. The woods was nicely taken care of. The farmers would say, "he would rather have his finger chopped then he would cut and sell wood from his woods. The boys looked in wonder at the land. I kiss your hand, said Honik for what you have done for our land. Another would have done it too said Cimbura. Another would have come here to farm. I am doing my obligation. The time is soon coming, you are of age and can farm yourself. I just promised your father on his deathbed to farm here to your coming of age. It came with a debt and I will give it to you clear. You only need to pay off your brother and sister and give your mother a living. Dear daddy, I beg you kindly, I and my brother, don't leave us yet. Farm like on your own, dismiss your help and keep us as hired men. I've forgotten much since I was at war and wouldn't know where to start. Remember I also have my own children Vasik and Martin and Marianna. I am getting older. I have to remember them. I will buy them property in Putim and help them out with their mother's support.

Don't buy yet says Honzik, farm here and with what you earn then put that away for them, we love them as our own. I will buy land anyway we will farm together even if it was five farms. They were all happy with their agreement and didn't speak of it again. After St. Martin's day the help left and the boys took their place.

There was a change now in the Austrian Empire not only in politics but farming. The one main railroad from Vienna to Krakow Poland and its branches was not enough to have carried troops around the country to defend our borders, but there was lack of money. Then the prince of South Bohemia, Svarcenberg, came forward. He bought out other nobility lands, formed cooperatives and by fall of that unfortunate year measuring started for the railroad of Emperor Franz Josef from Hluboka, the seat of the Svacenberks, to Plzen. Engineers were running around with their chains and poles. Pisek didn't want the railroad through there so it was aimed to Strakonice. Behind the surveyers came workers dividing up the work between Hluboka and Plzen. Almost overnight little huts grew up for the workers. There was money like pieces of iron. Uncommon wages were paid and they hired anyone. Even Cimbura in winter took three teams. They paid not by day's work but by the load.

When Sept. 1, 1868 arrived and the first train came through Razice all of Putim went to see. Quiet came back to the area, except when an occasional train came through. Politics were changing. In Vienna the ministry of Belcred fell and Beust started to "push the Czechs against the wall". In politics each shove meets resistance. Our nationalism awakened in us the love of our language. From the time of Karel Havlicek Borovsky (a writer and resistance leader) 1844 there began this uprising of nationalism.

When Beust fell, came Gisker with Herbst and Plener. We answered by building the National Theater in Praha. Our ambassadors left Vienna. Persecution had no effect in Praha or in the country. It all the more raised the flames of resistance. General Koller in Praha was backed by Palacy, Reiger, Count Clam-Martinic, and at Pisek—Julius Greg. We knew him even in Putim. In nearby Novy Dvur his father was a minstr of woodsmen. We knew Julius as a doctor of law at court in Pisek. And was voted in 1865 as an representative to parliament. The farmers knew his brother Edvard, they knew newspapermen Sladkovsky, Srejsovsky and their papers, "Narodni", "Hlas", "Narod". The keyword then was "we're against Vienna, against their government.

Klasek of Putim got himself involved in politics. He had his hair cut, grew a mustache, wore a hat. He was a great reader of newspapers. The more radical the better. He hoped all parliments in Praha or Vienna would be reorganized and new elections held. This was his "cup of tea". Speeches, singing, organize societies. Too late at night he sat in the tavern expressing his opinions, argued,

talked of freedom. The listeners heads spun—and there was beer. They drank to anything and everything.

He's a devil—God protect us—the women complained—hoping he would go to hell. They told his wife—he taught our men to drink and play cards, but she herself was worried and worn out. She had to worry about the farming. Klasek thought he was a gentleman and was ashamed of the farmers. Now, every day he wore a green hat with a jay feather. He formed a hunting club, carried a gun on his arm. The Praha gentlemen come, give him cigars, call him mister.

Even Cimbura was influenced by the new politics, but for Klasek, he had to stay out of his way, or there'll be trouble. He spent all Sunday afternoon reading. He would visit with Cernoch, Roucek and others for discussions but nobody would get him to the tavern with Klasek.

Neither Honzik or Francek were influenced by Klasek. But it was predetermined that Cimbura and Klasek would meet.

When the villagers accepted Cimbura among them. When it came his term to be elected mayor of Putim. But Cimbura felt he really belonged to Semice since he didn't own the farm so he didn't accept any offices.

Election time was coming around like a black cloud. There must be free elections, hollered Klasek. Elect whomever the office suits best. Klasek came our as mayor. This caused big arguments in the village. Some had hired a lawyer to protest the election. The district office in Pisek had the right to question the election. Cimbura, you have to go with us to the meeting said Kopecky. "I don't care to, you know I have to keep out of Klasek's way". We'll all go, said the neighbors, we may need you. Oh! You'll do without me. You have a lawyer. I don't understand the laws. You yourself said the election was crooked. Well, then, I'll come.

The district officers were already seated when Cimbura arrived. He stayed near the door, his eyes roving over the crowd. There were mainly the farmer mayors from neighboring villages. Koliska from Zahori, Perina from Kresic, Hesoun from Vrcovic, Sejjal from Nepodric. He recognized the townsmen. Piksa the butcher, who bought cattle from him. The rich baker Kalousa who bought his wheat. The big miller Lukas, young Pakes, buyers Solc and Sobr. And there—the princes' people—there was no more time. One of the gentlemen started to speak. He scolded the Putim people. This is the first—all the other elections went smoothly, only you in Putim argue unneighborly—at the same time he looked in the corner where Keclik, Cernoch, Roucek and Cimbura stood. The time has passed when onl farmers ran the village. Now the cottage and house owners have the same rights as you. Whomever they elect you have to accept.

I know Klasek a cottage owner, the third arose. He is well known throughout the district. He is a knowledgeable person and politician. I don't understand what you have against him. Any other village would welcome him.

Klasek, surrounded in the other corner by his new associates, was smiling, twirling his mustached, stretching. The opposition stood with heads down, they'd like to have been underground. Just so now they wouldn't be sued, they're thinking. Even Cimbura stands from one foot to the other as though barefoot on thorns. He's waiting maybe Keclik will say—well, am I not a good and reliable neighbor? And our village laws, is that nothing? But Keclik stands, eyes drilling into the floor. Well, say what you really have against Klasek—nobody—Jaros talked all the way down the road and here nothing—Hornik is quiet as a fish. And there across from us Klasek is laughing at us and blowing himself up like a balloon.

Let me speak, old women, called out Cimbura. He pushed his way forward—they breathed a sigh of relief and held their heads up. Ach! Cimbura, you're here too—he was greeted and those that didn't know him looked him over from head to foot for he was heard of far and wide. "Yes, I'll tell you why we won't accept Klaska as mayor. It's this way—one who doesn't know how to farm on someone else's place". That's an insult, hollered Klasek and stepped forward. He turned towards Klasek, laid his stern eyes on him and Klasek took a step back. We were invited to tell why we don't want you, even I don't want you and will tell you why. For one, you are a poor farmer, you have good land but the poorest crops. You plow late and poorly, you don't use much manure but you shoot well and speak well. After we vote for a huntsman or broker I'll give you my vote, but for a mayor I don't want you—mainly because you're spoiling the village and the young people. You teach them drinking and gambling, enticing them from home to the tavern. The town gentlemen brag about you. They call you mister, and you foolish farmer, you believe it. If a true countryman has to be in a tavern half the night, smoke cigars, neglect your farm, waste time and money, holler and argue, then I don't want to be a countryman. The wives shake with fear when they hear that in Pisek they'll be voting for an ambassador, or there will be speeches, they know ahead that Klasek can talk the men into anything and they don't know in what condition they'll return. So you're serving your country with your mouth but in reality you're harming it. You would take us all into a grave. Remember what I'm telling you in public—you'll lose your place. You'll parcel it out to whoever give you the most, to a Jew maybe, or a German or to Svarcenberk. You're leading all the farmers that way—and the whole nation. You might die and even a crow won't over you. But if your land comes into strange hands and after that another farm, a third farm. This is a sin against your people—that's why I don't want you for mayor. And again because you're lazy. Lift your hands and everyone

will see it. You have hands like a scribe. Guns and cards you have in them instead of a plow. You even show off a ring on your finger. That is why if I ruled I would throw you out of the village, and send you among the gentlemen in Pisek. The men at the table didn't speak for awhile. Then—he's insulting—insulting jumped up the officials and townsmen. "Klasek's life is nobody's business." "I'm saying—those aren't insults" said Cimbura, "but truths." Klasek in his mind knew it was the truth but hollered "I'll sue you, Cimbura, for defaming me." "Sue me" but I tell you're the most foolish man in the village—you can't fix your own place, how can you manage the village.

That is all I wanted to say—now "God be with you" and turned and left from the deeply quiet room. The rest of his side left with him. The lawyer broke the quiet by saying, Mr. Klasek, the shamed, beaten farmer, "'on" let this go by. If you want to I will file the suit and you'll see how we'll crimp Cimbura".

Well then, write it and quickly he said angerly the Putim Council advised Klaska to give up his office but he wouldn't hear of it. I'll take it all the way to Vienna if I have to. I'll show them who Klasek is.

So now there were two sides in Putim--two mayors and two councils. "Cimbura, get a lawyer too, his side advised.

MarJanka said "I beg you, take an attorney: I'm afraid of Klasek—he'll even get you to prison." I'll just tell the truth. I don't need a lawyer. So he represented himself. He thought of Miltner who he used to drive to Praha.

Cimbura repeated what he had said. And why did you insult him. He was asked. I didn't. I told him clearly to his eyes. And why did you say it. The officials wanted to know why I don't want Klaska for mayor, so I told the truth—why?

The truth, my dear friend, can't always be told. You might have the truth but you don't have the right to say it, and started to tell Cimbura the difference between truth and right. What is it really to you that Klasek drinks, is lazy, plays cards? It is much to me, replied Cimbura, and everyone turned towards him. Even the farmers thought—that gentleman is right. But they knew Cimbura had different ideas—something important. "This is the way it is." We live in the same village—Klasek and I, as you all know. Not long ago what a wonderful life we led there. At celebrations we drank some, sang, danced. Whoever had something against it. We discussed it and there was no argument about it. "What we roasted at home, we also ate it at home." We visited, read newspapers, the youngsters met in the village, sang but didn't mix into village affairs. No one would have stood for that. Today everything is the opposite. The young boss the elders. As soon as supper is over they don't even think of chores. They grab their tobacco and head for the

tavern. Klasek is the head there, he cuts everyone down that doesn't agree with him. There is drinking, cards and in the morning no one wants to get up. Work doesn't get done, everything is falling to pieces. Bad things are happening, dirty songs are sung and who is at fault. Klasek's bad examples. I know how drink affects me. I could lose good reasoning, the meanness could rise in you. I could gamble—lose money—the blood in your veins is like fire—I could talk foolishly—If I drank further. I could become vulgar, mean—that I can feel what drinking would do to me. That is why after a few I quit. Hardly three times a year at celebrations do I have a drink. Now daily people are drinking, spoiling the young and this Klasek is what you are doing.

The lawyer listened and would like to have listened more to Cimbura, for when he spoke smoothly he was nice to listen to, but Cimbura finished and was quiet.

Well, if it's the way you say, you not only have the truth but the right for your side. Who will witness for you? All of Putim who are here. Yes, Cimbura has take taruth, even those who were on Klasek's side. Court was over.

New elections were called for and Keclik won as mayor. Klasek had to pay court costs. He left Putim and bought a tavern in Pisek. He stayed there, above his head, a few years. He was a political agitator, sold protective insurance, usually German. He was even a matchmaker for brides and grooms, until one beautiful day he disappeared from Pisek leaving large debts behind him.

"He left for America" was the gossip. "It's good he didn't have children."

Well Cimbura said "He brought it on himself." Cimbura farmed Klasek's land, built it up, repaired all the buildings that you wouldn't have known it was the same place. "Well, he's preparing a place for his retirement" they all said—they weren't wrong.

VIII

It finally seemed there were more reliable political people in Vienna. It was 1870 when the political winds started to turn. They were making promises to our people, our request for the use of the Czech language. We believed like a child, but a new war was coming France and Prussia. (Note: In regard to language etc.—Bohemia and Moravia had been under the Austrian Empire for some 300 years. German was the official language, the Czech language was preserved by the small villagers. Not until at the peace agreements of World War I did the country become independent, formed by Bohemia, Moravia and Slovakia they became Czechoslovakia a democracy until Germany took them over in 1938 at the start of World War II, then Russia ruled over them to 1989.)

There came a time when Pisek decided to build an agricultural school. The main interest in it were the large estates of the nobility. Prince Paar, Prince Windishgrec, the two Svarcenbergs, the princes from Orlik and Hluboka, Prince Lobkovic. This was a time when agriculture was blooming, looking for new ways of betterment. New machinery was developed. The nobility needed educated people on their lands especially new crops were being introduced such as sugar beets, the fisherys need to be updated. Pisek would donate the building, the district would pay the teachers—only interested pupils needed to be found. The newspaper articles weren't enough. There needed to be meetings for the farmers, the need to send their sons. The farmers didn't seem that interested. The district needs to call a large meeting of village officials to explain everything and register their sons right away before their hard heads think it over.

The Prussians were winning and the French running.

Cimbura also went. He often thought that the farm boys should have schools just as well as the city boys. He had read about it and now his dream was coming true. I'll send both Martin and Vasek so they would be well-educated farmers. He urges other to go. Prince Lobkovic presided over the meeting, explaining if there was something they didn't understand not to be afraid to speak up. This was good Cimbura said to himself, each will have his say—There will be no arguing, no smoking no beer. The speaker talked and talked about various parts of Czech history, Cimbura listed with half an ear. I've heard this a hundred times. He can't seem to get to the school. Even Klasek used to talk like this.

Quiet now, the speaker called. The Prince wants to speak. He spoke Czech. Who is for the school, raise your hands. Like a first they came up. Who is against it raise your hand. All went down except one. All look to see who it could be. The prince put on his pinc-nez, the hand stayed up waving. They're all asking each other who is it? Who else but Cimbura—he has to have his say in everything, they mutter. They step away from him. The speaker acts as though he hasn't seen him—why bother with one. "We're all here for the school"—he starts. "A moment your highness prince" the voice speaks up firmly—you don't have a word they all call. Make time for him said the prince icily. First tell us who you are and then state why you're against the school. I'm farmer Jan Cimbura from Putim. I'm not against the school. I hope for it but before I raise my hand for it I need everything explained clearly. The speaker hasn't told us anything about the school or where it will be. Where else but here in Pisek. That is a mistake sir prince. That is what I am against. But, friend where would you want it?—on your farm in Putim he teased. "Perhaps Putim, Smrkovice, Hradiste. In a village but not in Piske" and why not? Well, here in Pisek are townspeople. They should have their own schools here—to raise their gentlemen—to town life.

Even we farmers send our sons here. The parish priest says you have a smart boy send him to Pisek and keep the dumb one at home. But common sense tells us that is a mistake and insult to us. A farmer must have the 'smarts' to observe both the fields and heavens, air and water, people and animals. That's why we keep our smart boys at home and send the others, who wouldn't make good farmers, to town schools to learn other trades, where others tell them what to do. A farmer has to understand and make his own decisions. That's why for these best boys we want a farm school. Just as you couldn't raise a fish in a tree you couldn't raise a farmer in a town school, but spoil him. Our farm blood would be spoiled by you. Why should our boys come to town. Here they would learn to smoke, drink beer and wine, eat gentleman's meat. Go to theaters, taverns, coffee houses. Here he would soften and get lazy. He would learn an easy life here instead of farm roads, his hands will soften. He would not get back to wooden shoes. Here we have our national dress. Our embroidered coats, yellow leather pants, embroidered vests, otter hats. Our Prachensky dress would disappear. Our girls will start sewing their dresses after town patterns. The long town coats will shade their born beauty. They won't be like field lilies anymore. They'll be like paper flowers. The farmer won't save up a dowry for his children but will start parceling out his land for them. There will be only houses, houses. Our country will become poor. They'll be working not for themselves but for others. In a year's time the nobility will make them gamekeepers, grooms, coachmen. This is what my inner voice tells me. That is why I want the school in a village or not at all. The farmers began to see the light. Look how well he talks with the Prince and how the Prince talks with him. The gentlemen at the table one after the other tell him how and what will be in the school. A garden, orchard, they'll go to the nobilities' farms to observe the new machinery. What does Cimbura think the school would be in some stupid village according to his wishes. Everyone else's head would have spun and given up, but not Cimbura. He waited patiently till the prince asked again: What do you think Cimbura? Have the gentlemen convinced you of the school in Pisek. "No, they haven't." Well, then tell me what they're thinking. "I don't know—they think differently than I and I differently than they do. The farmer and townsmen have nothing in common and often make fun of each other. When it's time for the pre-lenten dance the men and women in town dress in our native dress and we laugh at them.

You will have a small field by the school which I could jump across and divide that among 40 or 50 boys and three teachers. What should a boy think of that. We need our boys to learn on the farms. Would the nobility put their boys here? Why then show our boys their farms. Cimbura thought he must have said everything already. Don't pay attention to him the gentlemen called. On account of him we won't build a school somewhere in a village. The Prince quieted everyone down. "There is

much truth in what he says—it's evident he gave the school much thought. Think about what he has said. It was nearing noon, they were hungry, hot and thirsty. End it, end it they all called. Don't you see it's noon.

The Prince pulls out his watch. Darn, how it ran. I promised the Princess I'd be home by noon. He ended the meeting. The school would be in Pisek. Cimbura had left before the meeting ended. Have the school wherever you want. Perhaps on the church steeple but Martin and Vasek you won't get in there he kept telling himself on the way.

When the Prince got into the carriage, tucked into his fur coat, he asked his assistant who this Cimbura was. The assistant thought why is he bothering with this foolish farmer. He's a Putim farmer Jan Cimbura, foolish man, with an unsatisfied head. Hm, foolish he isn't.

Do you know Cimbura—tell me what you know. The assistant thought—it must have stayed in his head like "a nail stuck in a board". He new he must answer right away, according to army training. How wouldn't I know him. The whole district knows of him. All the children stories about his strength. "Tell me one." He would much rather tell the Prince about better things but there's no way out of it.

I know him from the horse fairs. He's a lover of horses—the reknowned marengo on whom Windis-grec was shot. He was his. Hm, curious, tell me more. I'll tell the Prince about horses and he'll forget about Cimbura. "You mentioned his strength" yes, they call him Strong Cimbura. It's a story people make up—like Samson and Hercules. You can't believe everyone. "Tell me one example". I don't know much—some steward in a nobilities yard would know. He has contact with common people. But I remember when your placae was burning. Farmers came from far and wide. Three men couldn't get a heifer out of the barn—the ceiling was already burning—Cimbura jumps in, lifts her like a lamb and carries her out into the yard. "That's unreasonable—for a heifer you don't risk a life." He also said—it wasn't for the heifer but more for the three workers who would have been caught in the fire. "Tell me more." Well, in Pisek we were sitting in the tavern when an argument broke out, some traders and brokers were cheating a farmer from Putim. During the loudest noise a voice barked out and shot like thunder was heard. "Quiet" and his fist broke the oak table—it was quiet as in church. He doesn't look for trouble but when there is he stands against it—he doesn't brag about himself. One time a man in Pisek bet all a ten piece who could lift a bar of iron like he did with one hand. "If Cimbura was here, he could—voices called out—he's here, but they couldn't budge him. Don't bet, you would lose. I surely couldn't lift that. But when carpenters come and say, Cimbura we're lifting the rafters, can you help? He gladly comes and hands them to the men like match sticks.

The carriage came to the castle. I invite you to dinner—I still want to hear more. Cimbura also had the Prince in mind on his way home. “He’s a likeable man—if we talked we’d come to some conclusion.” “He’s worth more than all those there. Then, he forgot him. His children were running to meet him. He always brought them some goodies from wherever he’d been. He never brought candy but fruits. Today he brought a string of figs. The first running, husky as a colt, Martinek, then like a little lamb, Marianna, Vasek can’t keep up. Cimbura thinks, he isn’t as healthy as he should be. He’s smaller and thinner than his brother. His heart aches at this observation. He gave Vasek the frozen cone to carry to mother who will divide it.

Spring was nearing—the winter had brought a lot of snow even big sleighs couldn’t be used. Now March came and there was no sight of snow. There was a strong south wind. Cimbura’s ear understood winds, even today he saw how the wind was awakening the trees. Just like a mother shakes her children in the morning. “Get up, spring is here.” Cimbura liked nothing more in nature than trees—especially a ripe apple. Today he walked among the trees, looking at their buds and shiny twigs, the two nut trees he planted when his twins were born. One was strong the other seemed to be dying—like his sons he thought. He shakes the trees, testing them. He thinks, I beg you awaken. If it dies, my Vasek will die. He cuts a few twigs but they’re all dry. Then Venclik’s voice brings him back. “Daddy someone came to our place.” What are you doing to my tree? Cimbura didn’t answer but picked him up in his arms. “Tell me who is here?” I don’t know. It isn’t anyone of our relatives or farmers. A gentleman and lady—they’ve never been here before. They just asked if Jan Cimbura is home. Then come boy, we’ll greet the guests. He sent him with the rest into the kitchen and went to the large sitting room. Look, husband, what guest we have. All of Putim will envy us. At the table, spread with a white tablecloth, sat the lady and gentlemen. There was a fresh loaf of bread, salt and knife. He wondered to himself, who are they and what do they want? He had seen the man before but couldn’t remember. “I greet you under our roof”, he said. The man arose and smiled. I told your lady we were old friends—from the meeting at Pisek, that—In that moment he remember—it was the prince. A mistake Sir Prince, I or my wife are neither lady or gentleman, but farmers. My good and faithful wife MarJanka, looking at her lovingly.

MarJanka clasped her hands and lowered her eyes—cheeks red. I am only a farm wife and this is my good and faithful husband, Jan. “Good, neighbor Cimbura.” My wife and I have heard much about you so we wanted to meet and know you. So I would tell the truth Sir Prince. I thought the same of you when I first saw you. That you don’t put on airs as would your help from the highest to the lowest. Then we understand each other well said the prince. We’ll let our wives sit here and you take me around your farm. He first took him among

the cattle then the sheds for the pigs and chickens. Cimbura don’t be offended but your sheds are not right. They shouldn’t be wooden but cement. They should be turned to the north with a sloped floor and larger troughs. This they would tell you at school. “That could” said Cimbura since it isn’t proper to debate with guests. They looked at the sows with little pigs. How old are they? Guess—four weeks, siad the prince. No—they are two weeks old. That is good, complimented the prince, but your breed is poor. Weh have a boar from England. We’ll lend it to you. We don’t do well here with a strange breed. I’ll stay with the local breeds. They looked at the chickens. The rooster paraded about as though wanting to impress the prince. The rooster should really have about ten hens per rooster—they lay better. I would add some different breeds. The school could advise you on that. They came to the sheep barn, Cimbura like the smell but the prince held a perfumed hanky to his nose before he got accustomed to it. His eyes even teared when Cimbura opened the doors wide. The sheep all pushed to one corner. The ram stood by a black block of salt which hung from the ceiling by a chain. “You have a nice herd with nicely curved horns. What do you see wrong on him asked Cimbura. I see many things. He is from an old Czech breed—we are countrymen in politics here but in farming we buy sheep from the Germans. The old Czech sheep are small have less wool and not as good. Tell me, how much does one cutting unwashed and washed weigh? I cut twice a year said Cimbura, but I’ve never weighed? That is a mistake—they seem to have to have more wool but thin and not a good wool. If you press it between your hands it will stay that way. Our sheep have soft and combs out easily—when you open your hands it springs back up. Get rid of your Czech sheep and start some purebreds, possibly Saxon—Austrian. This wool is in demand and pays well. I’ve never sold wool said Cimbura. What do you do with all the wool? For our family. In winter we kard wool in summer flax straw for linen. Explain it to me—well, it’s this way. The earth not only carries us, but feeds and clothes us. I love raising everything. Let’s say I seed flax—I cut it, wash it, dry it, pound and comb it and then weave it. I dry the seed in winter and press the oil out. That we burn in all our lamps. My wife bleaches the woven cloth and that we wear all summer. Then when winter comes we would freeze if it wasn’t for the sheep. We make woolen coats, leather pants. We work the wool, the weaver makes the cloth. For Sundays we have it embroidered or dyed. We have woolen socks, our horses woolen blankets. My wife makes dowerys for our children from wool. Well, good said the prince. Farming takes care of you but certainly not all. I live according to my war years. For breakfast I bread bread into milk, black bread, tasty—the smell of the earth. There isn’t a butcher in all of Putim. We don’t buy meat and eat it only during celebrations when I even have some beer. We have fruits and vegetables, cottage cheese, butter, we use wheat and barley flour. Dried fruit—plums, pairs, apples and all our seasoning from the garden except salt. Do you smoke? Yes, I learned until in my adult

years—I smoke in the evening after my work, except during harvest I lay my pipe away like all farmers do. I would raise my own tobacco if the nobility would allow it. I brought tobacco seeds from Hungary when I was in the war. I found them in a paper years after I came home and seeded them at Kovanda's in their garden. From Pisek came a captain, threatened both me and Kovanda with a fine. They cut it off and carried it away to Pisek. The earth is our mother, it feeds us, take care of it and it will repay you, neglect it and it will punish you, you will die from hunger. Our neighbor Klasek neglected it and took up vices. The earth punished him as Cimbura talked he seemed to forget the prince was there until the rooster crowed. You have the truth, you have said it well and share your surplus. That's what the school should teach first of all.

They went to the milking barn, they were southern Czech cows. Slightly built. Have you seen my breeding bulls the Prince asked? I did and admired them. You can see, said the prince, what that can do. I buy bull calves in Switzerland and pay three-four hundred for each—your cows are small. Your barns are low and small. The low ceiling prevents proper ventilation. Take the wooden floors out and put in stone ones, put in different mangers so the cattle don't have to stretch up with their heads. This way dust falls into their eyes. That's true, said Cimbura as he opened into the horse barn. The mares aren't home but I'll show you the colts. "I heard marengo was from you" Cimbura stopped. Sir Prince what did you say. You know of Belacek? Please tell me where that beautiful animal is. He looked at Cimbura in surprise. "I ask everyone I meet" said Cimbura. I ask soldiers, I went to the Prince at Stekne, he was recovering at a spa and promised to let me know but never did. "So you haven't forgotten him", smiled the Prince. How could I. Whoever had that animal in his hands couldn't forget him. Would you recognize him? I think I could. He had a mark on his back, just under the saddle and under his mane a small lump the size of a walnut. "Do you know of him?" I don't know neighbor Cimbura but I will ask other Princes and you'll see even nobility promises are good. Wait—he let the colts out and they flew around the yard happily. Even the Princess came out of the house to be by her husband's side. I love horses most of any animals, she said. The prince recognized that they were a known breed from Netolice. We have none like that in our herds. He had seen many horses at fairs in Cimelice, Kolorodov, Novy-Dvur, Kladruby, Chulum and other places but none like this. He had found other expensive colts which they would train for parades, to pull carriages, hunting, work horses from Belgium and Holland but this farmer had raised these without any schooling. I wonder, thought the Prince what he could accomplish in modern breeding—he'd like to have Cimbura managing his herds. Cimbura, I know you don't farm on your own land. I make a suggestion—let your stepsons run the farm and come to work for me. Never, for anything would I, Sir Prince. Here I pay my taxes and have no one over me. I

am a Prince here and at your place I wouldn't be. The boys will farm here and I will farm on Klasek's place. MarJanka thought "he said it well". Then sell me your colts. Those I don't sell only later as a team of hourses, a pair each year after I train them. You, like my colts—I will give you one for a remembrance. I will accept and in return I will send a young Scottish heifer and bull. They shook hands and Prince picked out a white colt a "Siml". They walked towards the carriage—neighbor Cimbura, I invite you to my place to show you my herds. That I will, when my road leads near your place. Then come soon and bring your wife along. He kissed their extended hands and thanked them for their visit.

"Have a safe journey" he called to the coachman and footman. The Princess called "stay well here" and MarJanka replied "with God's will." "Be with God" they all called. Then Cimbura, and don't forget about Belacek.

The Prince sent for the colt and in return the two calves were brought along with a letter telling of what he had learned. The wounded Gen. Windisgrek was taken prisoner by the Prussians, and for a few days of battle nobody took care of Belacek. He then got into incompetent hands who didn't know how to handle him. He fought him and his eye was damaged with a whip. As a useless horse he was sold to some buyer. That's all he could find out.

Cimbura soon forgot since he was troubled by his son whose health was failing. Even doctor Malec couldn't help him. He couldn't understand why all the other children were strong and this one was dying before their eyes. When one beautiful morning when the sun shone over Purim Cimbura was leaning against the dry nut tree—crying for his little son. "Come out tree, our son is going into the ground". He pulled it out of the ground. He chopped the tree up—put it into a basket and carried it into the house. "This is from Vasek's tree, burn it while we still have him.

Have you ever spent an early morning on a farm? After a night's rest all awaken and are calling for food, everything is coming to life. Cimbura's sorrow was that much deeper for there in his bed lay Vasek cold in death. Cimbura had to pick out some fir boards to take to the mistr cabinet maker and taylor to have a coffin made and a shroud. The next day the house and yard was cleaned up—machinery put away. The housewife was baking. Everyone will come for the funeral. The third day, like before a wedding, everything was clean and waiting in the casket till they come for him, was the groom, Vasek. The priest came with his ministers, the teacher came with the singers and school children, then came the casket bearers and flower girls and carried Vasek to the cemetery. Honzik and Francek lowered their brother. Their tears falling in the grave. To quiet their sorrow Cimbura said—MarJanka—remember the Lord God gave and the Lord God took. He took one child and left us four.

In Vienna Feb. 1871 the minister was Hohenwart. Two Czech ministers Jirecek and Hrabetinek were also appointed. There was talk of the Austrian emperor to be crowned king of the Czech country. In September there was the proclamation that the Czech state had a right for a king, a new voting right, a promise of the country's defense, promises, promises. What all has Vienna always promised us.

But prudent Czech heads were turning to the north—Berlin. Germany had won over France and brought back five million in gold. Black clouds hung over Austria. The ministry of Hohenwart fell—like smoke all promises fell apart like steam, fell apart our rosy anticipations. The minister Auersperg didn't want to hear of anything. A beautiful dream ended and came a rude awakening. In Czechy petitions were gathered, meetings with fiery speeches. The anger brought back drinking, cigars, cards. The young turned against the old. Societies sprung up like mushrooms after a rain. Pisek recognized that if they would stay as a king's city the modern railroad should be built not less than two hours away (walking distance) the railroad would have joined Pisek with the world. All hoped the railroad station would be in Putim. Many doubted this. But in spring the building started, the second one in the area. There was no time for politics, news or elections. The workers came from all parts, but mainly from Italy. All hours of the night the taverns were open. The neighbors complained. There was money around again which went as quickly as it came. The farmers worked with their teams, carpenters, masons were busy.

In Vienna the world's fair was being built. Agents were hiring men mainly in the south. Money was flowing—the quiet, peaceful Putim wasn't recognizable. All week music and dancing was heard. Even during the week traveling merchants were setting up their stands along the railroad. Cimbura was afraid for Honzik and Francek so they wouldn't be tempted. But like grown men they too sang, danced, drank, but came home on time and early morning had the horses hitched. Cimbura wondered—what will become of this—Oh! Nothing laughed Honzik. We'll earn money and put it away. Those who won't will drink it up. By winter the railroad will be built and all the strangers will be gone and Putim will smarten up and be quiet again. "The Lord God give us that" said Cimbura. Honzik and Francek worked on the railroad. Cimbura took care of the farm and started training Martin. Cimbura was in mourning for his dead son and all the noise and merriment bothered him. But like flooding waters receding from fields and meadows and returning to its way towards the ocean—so it was in Putim. The was progressing, new white watch towers were built along it. The yellow station in Putim reflected as a mirror into the pond below the church. A small road

was built along the railroad which would join the village with the station.

The workers moved further towards Vraz and Mirovice. Life was returning to its old tracks. "What did I say" daddy smiled Honzik. That's because a young crow is smarter than an old one, said Cimbura. "You have the truth, but something unhealthy that never had been here before stayed here, and he looked towards the taverns where men gathered daily. His greatest joy now was in hot summer to smoke his pipe sitting by MarJanka on the step or bench by the house and listen to the evening sounds. The rush of the river could be heard, the frogs, the thrush, once in awhile a cow moored. That's at Hubaceks—they weaned her calf. Nine o'clock came. In the church tower young Kopecky ran the evening prayer hour—no one wanted to go to bed yet. Back of the hill by Hurky the moon rose. Its light spread over the woods, meadows. The mosquitoes quieted along with the frogs, only the sound of the river and rustling in the trees could be heard. On the bridge over the River Blanice singing voices could be heard as soon as the last toll of the bell stopped. Even the teacher, who taught the youngsters their songs, sat in his garden by the school. Father Skala listened through his window and sang a few long forgotten songs. The boys were singing "I have horses-four horses when I give them oats they jump hop-hop. When I give them hay they jump-jump. Those are horses mine." For some time now two voices are missing. The high tenor of Honzik Piksa and like silver the soprano of Roucek's daughter Rozarka. They started army songs. Cimbura thinks, if he's there I'll know his voice. He isn't there said MarJanka, neither is Rozarka. Now the girls sing "abovae the mill, below the mill, geese are grazing". If she's there she'll answer now, because this is a loving millers song. Each family in Putim has their favorite song and has it played at celebrations. All know what each likes to drink as well as sing. Both MarJanka and Cimbura are thinking, well, that's the way it will be. They both sit in their deep thoughts, on their lives past, their hard beginnings and what a nice life they have. They held hands think of Vasek and look towards the heavens. Honzik will get married, they'll move to farm at Klasek's till the others grow up. Where is Honzik wandering—he's sitting by the mill with Rozarka. He came there in the evening to ask if their grain was ground already, no, Rozarka says, wait till father comes and he will tell you. The old man didn't come and Honzik hopes he doesn't. He'll come back again tomorrow night to ask. So he sits every day with Rozarka. Everyone coming to the mill smiles. They all know why they aren't singing on the bridge.

The steeple clock has rung ten. Through the quiet night the train roars by from Razice towards Protivin. On the hill by the church the night guard puts a large bull's horn to his lips to glow the hours. At the taverns the dogs have set up barking—waiting for their masters to come out. At Cimbura's the opens and closes—Honzik and Francek

have come home. The mother goes in too. The farmer sits awhile yet. Everything on earth is for man but man alone is for God. He then with a prayer on his lips also goes in. So day by day time like this went by.

There was talk of celebrating the opening of the railroad but in Vienna it was different. They had the world's fair but what happened to the same as happened in the story about the frog. They burst, which even affected the Czechs. Many organizations also went broke. There was no more foreign capital coming in, factories, etc., farms were selling out. There was no other talk but of auctions and liquidations. Many stayed with a beggar's cane in their hands. The waters were rioled and many unfriendly hands were profiting, farmers were ruined for many years after. All the fault of beer Cimbura said. Many agreements and organizations were started in taverns—toasted with beer. It couldn't happen any other way. There would be a change at Cimbura's. Winter was coming. Each evening Honzik went out. He brushed his clothes, combed his hair before the mirror; but came home disheveled. Cimbura smiled, Verunka teased her brother. Is snow falling? Asked Cimbura. No, frost is all around. I thought since your clothes were so white—teased Verunka. Honzik turned red and went to bed—the next day he tramped again to the mill. He didn't sit on the feed sacks anymore but sat in the house with the rest watching Rozarka sewing her dowry. In the daytime all the men were busy around the mill but young Piksa only sat and looked at Rozarka. The men gathered to talk of their war experiences. The accidents at the mill. How one miller's teeth ached so he tied his jaw with a rag—the ends tied on the top of his head. When he went to adjust a gear it caught the ends of his kerchief, pulled him into the gears and killed him—and so the stories went.

At Christmas, when all had returned from mass, Honzik came up to his father and in a shaky voice said “Daddy and Mommy I beg you, will you give me permission to marry? I will give you a good retirement. Well, said Cimbura—first tell us who the bride is. “You know here well, she is not from far away but miller Roucek's daughter Rozarka. Rozarka! They all called innocently, as though they didn't know anything about it! Well, that's a good girl said the mother. And a beautiful singer added Francek. Only Cimbura questions seriously. Did you beg her father and mother? No, not until I have your permission, and I didn't know if you'd be satisfied with Rozarka. We would like a good or even poor girl. Then I ask you, go tomorrow for me and ask for her. I will and send Soucek (a go between as customary) after dinner he sent Martinek to Soucek's “Tell Uncle to stop by here.” Soucek was a villager who took care of wedding-funeral ceremonies, invitations etc. farm ethics. As soon as he saw Cimbura's son in the doorway he knew right away what was up. Aha! He thought, today they'll be sending me to the mill to Roucek's to ask for the bride. The miller hasn't “fallen on his head”, he knows he'll put Rozarka to Piksa's in a warm nest. Ne said to Martinek—tell them

that after Benediction on St. Stepan's day I'll bring Cimbura to Roucek's. He licked his lips. After the agreements they'll send for a pitcher of beer and the miller mother will show how she can cook and Rozarka like a blooming flower. She'll be in a white starched apron serving.

Everything went to the hair like Soucek predicted. They examined everything and forgot nothing. Men must manage for the inexperienced—that is the rule of the village. Soucek arranged for the dowries of Roucek's and the retirement of Cimbura's and a share for Verunk and Francek.

And how about your children? Asked Roucek of Cimbura. They don't have a share in Piksa's. I will go to my own farm and not be in their way, but Honzik has to pay a retirement to his mother. I, mother and children will go to my farm. There we will make a living but Hozik must pay her retirement in money, not produce from the farm. What will Francek and Veronka do, will they stay with Honzik? Asked Roucek. No, Francek has found work in the brewery in Pisek. Tomorrow he leaves. Cottage owner Sterba has asked for Verunka's hand so we might have two weddings together. So, the two fathers took care of all the arrangements so the young ones would have a start and there wouldn't be any doubts how things stood. What machinery was there I will leave. What I bought I will take. The livestock we'll divide. Rozarka will get a bred mare, a cow and heifer. They shook hands, Soucek said all agreements are above courts, clapped his hands and sang. Loving lady mother, let them bring a pail of beer, slice thick bread with lots of butter. We'll drink to the bride, the wedding will be by lent, their announcements are on the way. The wedding will be the Tuesday after candlemass day. By St. Josef's day Cimbura will move to his farm. And the young ones can start seeding in spring. Soucek ate and drank for two. This unheard of thing had never happened to him before. Not to know that Sterba had a liking for Verunka. Shame on himself, for he already had a husband picked for her. From Cimbura he heard, “tomorrow go to Sterbas right away” when the next morning he opened the door at Sterba's he was greeted by “Good, you came, there was another man coming by. Well, I've arranged all weddings why shouldn't I yours. So the next Sunday all the agreements were made and two weddings set but two weddings at once—that's unheard of, the women said, so Cimbura had to give in except for one—the music. Everyone wanted new brass music from pisek, but Cimbura set his head. If there's to be music it'll be old Czech. I won't do—they'll just play for you. There was no giving in. The groomsmen set out for Strukovice a far and wide known Czech town. When a boy is born there the father will look at his fingers and determine if he's going to play a violin or bagpipe or clarinet or rub a bass.

Since every boy born there is a musician. The grooms hired the best musicians there were and the biggest where

will they be playing. “for our weddings”. Well, boys, who is all getting married that you want such special music. “Three families are uniting--Cimbura, Roucek and Sterba. They didn’t know the others but as soon as they heard Cimbura—“the strong Cimbura is marrying a son and daughter?” We’ll come—

They came and brought all their wooden instruments a bagpiper—and how he played, two violinists and when they took them out of their leather bag and laid their fingers on the strings they just sang. The bass player put his smooth bow on the strings and they smoothly growled. The leader pull a clarinet out of his pocket, screwed it together, as soon as he put it to his lips it was like a bird singing. Not for nothing were these clarinets called “Serafin”.

They came out of Sterba’s(sp?) place first, went for Verunka and Honzik and aimed for the mill. There with her maid of honor among her relatives was Rozarka like a queen.

Around eleven they left Rocek’s. The music led them with “now they’re taking my love to be wed”. Everyone whooped until the village shook. The bridesmaids twirled their kerchiefs over their heads singing like larks.

Guns were shot—the church bells rang to greet the guests. The sun came out from behind clouds and shown for the next three days, because the celebration lasted that long. The first day they were at Roucek’s the second at Cimbura’s and ended the third day at Steba’s.(sp?)--- They danced each night the old Czech way. Whoever comes with a good will is welcome. Roucek pays today—Cimbura—then Stebra(sp?). In all the village, work stops. The music is as though charmed when they play “when we part” the men have tears, the women cry. Then they play a circle and couples twirl—then they play a “hop” and an old grandma, “dry like a prune”, light as a breeze jumps around in a corner. There isn’t a song on earth that the musicians can’t play. Cimbura sits quietly for two days but the third he can’t hold it anymore. Cimbura poured himself a beer. His eyes sparkled, his hands clapping. The music plays with him like a child. He finds himself before the musicians. He gave them a give piece and sang that song he loved most:

Protivin castle between mountains, don’t forget what you gave me, a pretty hanky you gave me, embroidered a pretty hanky with tulips. The music played as though chased by the devil, Cimbura was filled with the music, he can’t stand it he has to go out, out. He raises his hand, whooped and twirled three times. He is charmed by the music. “Where is my faithful wife MarJanka”? He opens his arms and she flies into them. Everyone steps back and they alone dance a solo.

Later—that couldn’t have been me. It must have been the music and beer—then waved his hand—well, so what.

In started at Piksa’s after a funeral and after a wedding will be leaving. He parted with Honzik on St. Josef’s day. Honzik thanked him for everything with tears. Deal fairly and truthfully with everyone and you need not fear God or King—Cimbura said. Pray to God daily, love your wife and bring up your children well, for your daddy in his grave don’t make any shame—this is what his mother advised him. He thanked her again crying. We can’t be with you forever. You’re sad now because the room is empty. You’ll bring Rozarka this afternoon and it will be like Eden. Daddy and I will come to greet her. He came for her with wagon and four pairs of horses. The wagon was cleaned and shiny. They loaded the wagon with feather ticks and all sang. “Stripped feather ticks on a pole are hanging—Honzik you take care of the horses, I took care of the wagon, come Rozarka we are going”.

The mother brought out her crying ride but as soon as she saw Honzik she jumped up beside him. He put his hand around her waist, snapped the reins, careful called her mother. Whichever way they went in the village, all heads were out the windows. That night when Cimbura laid in bed on Klasek’s placae, he said to himself, “I’m finally on my own”.

Third Part I

From the time MarJanka put a loaf of bread on the white maple table and Cimbura nailed a nail on the wall above the table and hung the cross, the place was called by the villagers “at Cimbura’s” not Klasek’s and Honzik’s place was agin called Piksa’s. It tool awhile for the people to get used to it.

Children are good message carriers. Mayor Hamak told the boy take this note to Cimbura’s. “Daddy sends this” no, this is now Piksa’s, you have to go to Cimbura’s. The embarrassed boy hurried away. At Cimbura’s ashamed that he made a mistake laid the note on the bench and hurried away—wait Mrs. Cimbura called, feeling in her pocket for some money—but to no avail. The wild boy was gone.

I wonder what it is said MarJanka from the stove where she was making just a plain soup. From the village office I suppose. When the office thinks of something—God help us. MarJanka was deep in thought until she heard the soup boiling over. Well, what a nice life I’ve had. She had Cimbura to thank. He raised her children, left the farm free of debt. Honzik is a man too, how well he farms and in two years have already baptized two children. Francek isn’t at the brewery in Pisek anymore, or drives the priest or gentlemen with the carriage but is here in Putim at Srnka’s tavern, where married into the family. And Cimbura—one day he will give their farm to Martinek and will give a dowry to Marianna. Ach, My God, what a husband I have thought MarJanka, then—something crackling brought her back—opens the oven and too late,

it's all burned. It must be the letter—I can't remember anything. I'll burn it, but just then Cimbura and son and daughter were returning full of laughter. It was spring, snow was melting and ditches had to be cleaned in the meadows. She heard the tools being put away, Martin going to the shed, Marianna calling the chickens "puta, puta, put put put". Only the farmer took off his wooden shoes and comes into the room in socks. "The Lord God greet you" husband that you're finally coming. "The Lord God be with you." Has something happened. Your stove is smoking. I'll have to clean it. No, it's all due to the letter there on the table. Who brought it and from whom? Vojtisek, Hamak's boy came flying with it. Well, it's from the mayor—we'll see what he has to say. He looked at it awhile—then said: It's a bad letter. I never thought of it, but I guess the town gentlemen did. It's a lottery. They pulled out our Martinek's name and he'll likely have to go into the army. What are you saying? I thought it would be another year. I'm telling you it's here on black and white and walked outside.

Spring was here—people go get haircuts, trees are trimmed, dry wood picked up. People buy new clothes, animals lose their winter hair, trees green up. Into this beautiful time, such bad news have to come. From Vodnany, Mirovice, Breznice, Blatna, Strakonice, Volyn, Horazdovice, Susice, Hartmanice, Kaspersky Hory, Planice, Klatovy, Nyrsko, Pisek—they tak their sons to the 11th regiment. High boots, hat with his lottery number went son Martinek, behind musicians. The mother was impatient and ran to Pisek during noon hour. Here is the hat—called Hamak. Martin bought a blue one with a rose. Did they take him? she cried. You didn't think they'd let him go, did you? Where is he? Where else in the barracks, we'll bring him towards evening.

And they did. The mother greeted him with tears and the father with a smile. It must be, so don't cry. Three years will go by like three days. You'll get to know a new land and people, you'll obey and give orders. If you get spoiled don't come home or say you're ours. That's how Cimbura parted with his son after St. Vaclav day in Pisek in front of the barracks.

They missed him and came closer to each other—father, mother and Marianna. The low cottage covered them like a hen on her chicks. They all talked about him when Honzik and Francek with their families came to visit. There was now talk again of war. The news were full of the movement of the Turks upon their Slovenian brothers in the Balkens. They tightened their fists when they heard this song:

"Whoever a true Christian is, hear what the Turk is doing. Blood then runs, take up your sword, Oh! Faithful Christians, let it stop." The talk was of the terrible atrocities the Turks were accused of. This song was published with musical notes and picture for 2 Krejcar. Why does our emperor tolerate this. Why doesn't he join

the Russians and chase out the Turks to Asia somewhere. The time came. The year 1877 the Russian-Turkish War broke out. Alexander II Czar of Russia took up the sword against the Turks. They crossed the Danube River to the Balkans. They took Sipka and Plevno. All the cities and villages in Czechy celebrated. Masses were said. A new song was sung:

Osman pasha at Plevno, received a wound to his leg, and because he didn't want to give up, they were cutting him a new coat. (in rhyme) In each village there were at least five dogs who were named Osman, Turk or Sultan. But the army officers started forbidding celebrations—sympathies for Russia were not popular. But why? people asked themselves. They didn't understand that the Austrian politicians were jealous of Russia, the Czar, concerned that he may get too powerful, so they were encouraging Russia to make peace. Martin wrote—we're marching to Yugoslavia. His letter was one of parting:

My dear parents, I don't know if we'll meet again on this earth so I am thanking you for everything. I kiss your hands and feet a hundred times. I always say thank the Lord God. We will be going to confession and communion so I ask your forgiveness I know I sometimes didn't mind you, sometimes teased my sisters Verunka and Marianna. I beg Honzik and Francek, all forgive me what I have done against since birth, and pray for me. Many times I dream of you and Putim and I don't know if I'll return so I greet for the last time Uncle Hamak, Cernoch, Roucek, everyone—the boys and girls.

Cimbura read with a shaky voice and knew Martin would always be their faithful son.

The papers carried news that Austria would surround Bosnia and Hercegovina. The whole 13th armada under General Filip stood ready to cross the River Save. Two weeks before the church festival in Putim, Cimburas found out the Martin crossed the River Save and are going against the "Turk-Hadzi Loj".

MarJanka said, "It will be a sad festival. Maybe they'll shoot our son", and she could visualize all the terrors she had heard about. "Wife of little faith" I myself was in fire, also Honzik and Francek. God guarded us. Call on God and don't predict. Why, it isn't even a big war. They aren't Prussians but a handful of rebels—in a short time they'll give up and we'll have some rest.

Harvest time came in full swing. The grains were beautiful. Cimbura liked cutting his crops. Each year he would go to Pisek to pick out the blade. It had to be the right measurement, a nice bend to it, it had to ring like silver. If it struck a nail, it was the nail that had to give not the blade. Then he had to find just the right whet stone.

Finally he set the blade to the handle and went out early in the morning, preferably on a Monday, to his rye field. The early wind would blow his long hair. Cimbura took his hat off, knelt in the green grass at the edge of the field, laid the scythe across his shoulder, said a prayer with hands folded around the scythe, made the sign of the cross. "Lord God give us abundance then started to scythe. The row of grain falls behind him. With each cut he stepped ahead, his feet making two lines in the field. He returned home in the evening, scythe across his shoulder. He heard across the village Li-I-me, li-I-me! It must be a new lime (to mix into cement) man—he doesn't even know how to call out. He and Marianna did the chores, bedded the cattle, pumped water, cut some feed up. (Note: the way he describes the watering it seems it was raised from a well with a bucket according to the word he used.) Honzik came running up the street—this was unheard of, he couldn't be coming to visit during harvest. What has happened? The mother came running. They all went to meet him. Oh, nothing at our place, but that lime man. He stopped at my place saying "farmer I beg you my horse has become sick and I can't go further. And what did you say to him? I opened the gate and offered him an empty stall in the barn. We parked the wagon, but the man is just sitting and complaining about his horses. Father come look, to help me. He put his jacket on and kept asking—does it drink? eat, cough?

No, father, his head is just hanging down. And seems anything it will go down. It's a white horse. That's usually what the lime haulers have so the dust doesn't show on them. They're too lazy to use a brush.

In the Czech south on the old farmsteads, before there were army barns. The soldiers who were on maneuvers kept their horses on these farms. Cimbura looked at the old work-worn horse. Anger and sorrow were in his heart. Anger at the hauler, old and shriveled, until he looked at him. We'll unharness the horse. Look, it's a stallion, yes, said the hauler, you needn't be afraid of him, he's as meek as a child. He looked at his backbone and saw the black spot. Out of thousands, there was only one that had that, his beloved Belacek. He looked at his closed eyelid. There was no eye there. My Belacek he cried and buried his head into his mane. He said to the lime man—friend, where did you get this horse. He was born here in this stall and I raised him, and tears as big as peas dropped from his eyes. "After the war at an auction more than twelve years ago at Sihove. I paid six tens for him. There were many war horses there—worn out. This one had his eye out." And this one had an army brand M on his leg. They called him Marengo in the war replied Honzik. "Bring a pail of water" and he started to rub him down with a handful of straw. "Oh! They fed you poorly." Don't be angry sir—when I had money we both ate well, when I am poor neither of us eats well. I knew he wasn't well, but still I set off on the road. Pisek isn't my area but further by Tabor. And I had to turn back and go through villages as we came across them so we wouldn't die of

hunger. At least if he could stand it another week I thought.

As they rubbed, hair was coming out with the dirty water. It seemed he was perking up. He took a little oats. They brought blankets. If he lasts till morning, I'll call the army vet from Pisek. Now we'll let him rest. They all went their way and still that night word spread through the village that Belacek had come back.

The farmers were all coming to Piksa's to see for themselves. Frantik came from the tavern at Srnka's. All who had known him as a colt and played with him, came to see. Old soldiers Kavalir and Vaclav Sekyra who rode behind Belacek in the war, came.

"Eat Belacku"—this is hay from Jirovke meadow which you always like—smell it—your appetite will come back. But the stallion just stood with his head down, sometimes quivered a little and let out a rattley breath, then went down like a shot. Everyone stood quietly, only the hauler said "how will I get home now?" Don't worry they all tried to quiet him. We'll buy out your lime and get you home somehow. We want you to remember Putim. "Someone run for Cimbura". Let him sleep someone else said. Where shall we put him? We'll bury him by his mother Divoka. "There will be problems. The commission will want to see him." "I'll take it on myself said the mayor" get the shovels. Before the moon set at early morning black dirt covered the noble stallion, who strangely came home to die. Slowly the farmers went home.

II

What is ringing?—Is that the Putim bell? Cimbura stopped to listen. Seemed to him the bell was cracked—sounding hollow. This was when he was returning from Piksa's. He had been carrying an armful of heather to brush Belacek. The farmers were already unloading the lime in the shed, were paying off the lime man. Honzik's hired man was hitching up the horse to the empty wagon so he could return to Cachrov. I'll expect you back in three days with my horse. Cimbura's shoulders slumped and turned towards home. "Well, he said to himself, it's over and they've buried him under the apple tree. He didn't recognize the bell which was ringing the morning angelus. He did the chores automatically without thinking and went in for breakfast. Why aren't you talking? Asked Marjanka. I don't feel like it—you'll find out. He made the sign of the cross put the scythe on his shoulder and went into the field. He cut not two steps wide swats but three. His mind was only on Belacek, seeing him as a colt running around the farm. He was a farm horse—he should have stayed at a wagon and plow. But things turned out different. Like a punishment, he was lowered like a beggar. He saw the whip lines on his back. That's why he never said a word of farewell to the lime

hauler. Belacek came home to die and that made him happy.

“Darn this farm work” said a voice behind him. He recognized Paroubek’s voice—a lazy man, who used to walk to Vienna to do mason work. This year he was sick so missed the seasonal work. He worked among the farmers and Cimbura hired him for harvest. He saw him wipe sweat with his sleeve and walk towards MarJanka who had lunch for the workers. Bread and a pot of spread. He himself sat down and spread cottage cheese on his slice. When finished he pulled out his purse, paid Paroubek for a day’s work and with icy voice said: “Don’t take up your scythe and leave my field. “Why are you chasing me off?” “You swear brother.” I don’t tolerate that on my field. Farm work is hard work and takes patience which you don’t have. We are cutting God’s gift, bread He’s given us. We farmers pray on the field so God would guard our fields, we pray so everyone who eats this bread will feel satisfied and fortunate. That’s why we need to work with pleasure and not anger. Leave, so I don’t see you.

Paroubek didn’t have the courage to argue so left. No one paid attention to his leaving.

The farmer is mad and returned each to their job, cutting, tying bundles, setting them up into shocks. I have a bad day thought Cimbura—it started badly—I wonder how it will end. He worked on, full of sweat, not feeling anything until the train rattled by and blew its whistle at the depot.

The eleven o’clock one Marianna said. She was the only who kept up to him. He stopped, looked at the sun, then his shadow. “Yes, it’s eleven, we’ll go home. They all left the fields, met on the road, calling to each other, visiting and head for the village. There under the hill stood a wagon and horses. The coachman was fixing the wagon which was loaded with boxes. They all knew him. He’s a hauler from Pisek land hauls to and from the depot. The hauler is like a gentleman. He has workers making money for him. The coachman snaps the reins, one horse jumps this way, the other that way but the wagon doesn’t move. He would be ashamed if all the women had to push the wagon. He tries again but to no avail. Cimbura came hurrying. “Don’t beat them”, but the coachman as though he hadn’t heard and beat the horses again.

“I tell you” don’t beat them hollered Cimbura and hurried along—man, I tell you not to beat them.

The angry youth beat more on the horses. Cimbura was already beside him, threw his scythe into the ditch and grabbed the whip. Cimbura knew that whip well. Ach! That kind they use on Belacek. It had knots along the ends so it would sting more.

“I’ll give you just one like that on your hindend, and the whip whistled. He grabbed himself and sat on the ground in pain. “See, and how many like that did you lay on the horses?” You fool, you have the brake on, the wagon isn’t greased and you want to be a driver. There were people around the wagon like lice. Cimbura clicked his tongue and the horses leaned into their harness and out the wagon went. Such good horses and you would ruin them. The boy hollered after him “I know you, lyou’re old Cimbura and I will sue you.” “Just sue you bully” and paid no more attention to him but one word bit him “old”. He’d never heard that before Hm—he’s right. I don’t have far to go to seventy. I’m graying and the grandchildren call me grandpa and with this new title “Old Cimbura” walked under his own roof.

There are days in life that are lucky, sunny when we get up with a smile and go to sleep with a smile. Then there are days that are sad and one more line is in our foreheads—we whisper “God of mine, what will I still meet today. That’s the kind of day Cimbura had. He no more then got home. MarJanka ran to meet him. A letter came from Martin and the priest sends the paper.

Cimbura sat and read the letter saying “I can’t see well anymore—yes—I’m getting old. He stepped to the window. Martin’s letter and the newspaper were of the same tone. The march into Bosnia isn’t just so-so. The war is getting worse. The enemy is avoiding the open battlefield and hiding in hills and homes. As we march here and there is a shot—three or four in the front line fall. The soldiers fall from the heat and thirst, there is much sickness. “My dear wife, pray to the guardian angel to guard our son” it will be a hard war. It will be long and not end in two weeks like with the Prussians. What would I do if they killed Martin—I am aging man. His inner voice said “God won’t let it happen. He went outside. His faith in God strengthened him. The rooster crowed—but where? Under the shed. “March to your place” Cimbura tried to shag him to the coop, but he insisted on scratching in the yard. “It’s gong to rain.” He looked over the sky. It rang noon from Kestrany and soon from herman and Pisek, even the bells from the railroad guard huts.

They all went in for dinner but before they finished, what a change outside. A huge cloud covered the heavens. There’ll be a storm called Cimbura as he went out. What will fall down? A quiet rain? Wind? Or God forbid, hail? A year’s work is outside, no grain bundles have been brought in yet—to be threshed.

Not only the people are quiet, but everything outside. The bees are gathering into their hives, not even a bird or mosquito is heard. All the livestock is uneasy. Even the water looks black in Hanzlik’s pond and River Blanice. A streak of lightening flashed, then the answer of thunder. The tall dry poplar split, strips of wood hanging from it. The wind rose, one shot of lightening and thunder after another.

Blessed candles were lit and everyone knelt around them. The farm men were pulling on their boots, coats and caps. Then the clink of hail on the windows. "Lord God be with us" said MarJanka. Cimbura was closing windows, not only hail, but chunks of ice were falling to the ground. It lasted maybe ten minutes then came a down pour. Cimbura couldn't stay under the roof long—he worried about the fields, trees. As soon as he got into the doorway he folded his hands. There stood the bare trees, the fruit rolling in the mud. The damaging storm was receding back of the woods. They ran into the fields knowing harvest and threshing was done and wheat sold. Hail was lying in piles. The setting sun tore through the clouds and looked at Putim. It heard the crying the tears.

"What a horrible day" thought Cimbura that night when he lay on his bed thinking, as he had done all his life. Did I put the stove fire out?, did you check the stalls and chickens? Are the workers and children all home? Did you pray? What are your plans for tomorrow? Tonight there was a new question. What will we seed into the fields and what will we haul to the mill? All of Putim had the same question and pressed on their minds like a nightmare.

III

Nobody wanted to go to the fields the next day. Water stood in the meadows. The grain lay heavy in the field. Everyone stood around on the town square. The butcher came to say there wasn't a drop of rain in Pisek. They thought the storm must have been far away and here an hour's walk from Pisek was such damage.

In the morning the postman came from Razice and told in all of the railroad station there wasn't a window left. The hail was as big as pigeon eggs.

Two soldiers came by with other news. The storm came from the west. Zatava and Kestrany had some hail, followed the rail line to Razice, herman, then from Zatava to Smrkovice and Semice. Putim is the worst. Hail is still in the woods at Hurky. "Glory to God" all the farmers said "He gave, He took". It isn't that bad that it can't be good again. Those more fortunate will help us out. A farmer doesn't complain long but looks for another road. They went out into the field to cut the straw. There was no gain?? left. Their hearts ached when they saw the grains on the ground and had to walk on it. The women came behind to rake up the straw. They picked up the heads into their aprons at least to take it for their chickens. But what will we eat until the next crop. Their church festival was upon them. They baked Kolace and bread, some from their last flour. There is an old saying "When there are guests, there must be plenty." There is no music or celebrating this year. They will be asking other villages for help. There were many guests. Putim would think we don't want to help if we didn't come.

Young Kovanda from Hradiste, who was a child when Cimbura was there, said—as soon as I thresh I will bring you both spring wheat and winter wheat seed, and I will bring wheat for bread and flour. "Thank God" but I would sin if I took all of that from you. From your father I learned to keep a supply for the future. There are many in Putim who are in need. If you send it I will share with those.

To Piksa's came relatives from Semice to offer help. We'll give you see, be without worry and we'll lend you grain for milling.

The millers from Benesov and Cerveny came to offer help and that's the way it went on each farm and house. Neighborly love helped over and above the insurance payments.

It was much worse years later when hail destroyed the whole are from Pisek to Tabor. Even the whole country couldn't give enough help. We were witnesses to the love of our Czech countrymen from across the ocean who gave us a helping hand, not empty but full of dollars.

At Cimbura's stood a wagon four boards high full of sacks of wheat. Young Kovanda himself emptied the sacks into boxes. Cimbura didn't help. It was best if the gift was done from A-to-Z by himself. It was proper that way otherwise Cimbura felt as though he was examining every sack and its contents. Like the saying goes "Don't look a gift horse in his mouth." Cimbura goes about his chores and just as Kovanda is finished he comes out to shake his hand, took him to the house, put a plate of food before him—golden pancakes sprinkled with sugar. "Uncle, I was amazed at the heavy wheat you have, peas like pearls, lentils as big. I haven't seen what you brought but I know your fields and how well it produces. Your father, if he rose from his grave, would be cheered, and how glad he would be to hear about Belacek. So, they visited and MarJanka would come in once in awhile to see if there was anything they needed. Just sit awhile and tell about your wife and children. Marianna will hitch your horses. As he was leaving Cimbura said—I wouldn't wish on you or me to have to come to your place with a load like you have come to me. Misfortune doesn't walk among mountains but among people. Our family will always remember this and there will come a time when my children will help your children. For now, God repay you. "I'm glad you have accepted my help. They shook hands and walked their guest out of the yard.

There were not only farmers helping each other, but an unexpected help—The Prince sends a letter. Let me know what you need. Potatoes, rye or wheat, barley or oats, peas and lentils. Their wheat, which they call bearded, and gives flour like no other. Would they like their large grained barley?

The proud village cant seem ungrateful, but they cant' decide what to ask for. The mayor says "Talks Cimbura"—what should we ask for? Remember this "whoever asks, doesn't like to give". Our people didn't ask for anything but everyone brought. That is important to tell the Prince. We will send a messenger that we aren't requesting anything but he can give of his free will what he would like.

Who else, we'll send Cimbura. He now the Prince who visited his place. Now you can pay back his visit. "I will talk to him in your name." He left the next morning early. The nobilities' lands started in back of Pisek. He heard shots and a flock of frightened partridges flew across the road. The hunters were chasing them from the potato field and wheat stubble. The roosters were cackling trying to call their flock together.

It's a fall day but sunny and warm. Cimbura takes his coat off and hangs it on his cane. He is thinking of what he'll say to the Prince. By a man's speech you can tell if he's good or bad. "You won't catch the shot after the gun is fired, you won't hold back foolish words." "Good words will do a lot and won't burn your mouth." He sees the white castle in the black far away woods. There are more shots and a group of hunters come towards him. "The Lord God help you" he would call to working people but not to these green-blooded hunters. They look at Cimbura, talk about him. Then one, in the center of the line, lays down his gun and with his dog. Who is it? Cimbura can't recognize him. He tries to remember and looks him over from head to foot. He has old dusty clothes on, short pants, socks, coat and hat with a feather. Some old gamekeeper he thinks. Cimbura reaches for his cap but before he can doff it the hunter says "greeting Lord God" if I'm not mistake you are Jan Cimbura from Putim. As soon as he heard the voice he knew. He straightened like a soldier, takes his cap off and happily says, that I am and you are Sir Prince—I can tell by your voice. Yes, we have aged and you Cimbura have gotten gray and bent towards the ground. Time doesn't add beauty to us. How are you? "According to Gods' will. We are healthy and if we complain we would only sin. "God's hand has struck you." Did it destroy your crops? That it did but the wound is healing answered Cimbura. But other troubles God is sending me. My son is in Bosnia. His life hangs on a thread. And my horse Belacek, you remember him. The one Windisgrek rode at Strezetic? Yes, him and we met at his death. Cimbura told him of the strange meeting, but no more—you must tell me how your wife and children are. "Like you, my dear Cimbura. My son is also in Bosnia. Worries have grayed my hair and I'm preparing to retire. Tell me where you are going and we'll walk together so we won't tire standing here. "Mainly to your place Sir Prince" Ach! So you're repaying my visit. No, sir, I have come to speak for my village. We, received your letter offering help. Our neighbors have showed their love with their help. Your help we would gladly welcome but we cannot dictate what we want—that we would not do. But,

dear Cimbura I meant it well because I don't know what you would need.

Everything and nothing, for "you cannot fill a sack with holes;. We will accept every gift however large or small but we do not request anything. We cannot keep you, for your own soul, from giving to us but our pride keeps us from begging. The hand of God has wounded us but not destroyed us and it has brought you to us. A good friend is worth more than gold.

You know what Cimbura, you took me throughout your farm—now I will show you mine, and you like my advisor tell me what I should send you.

Cimbura—"whoever asks my advice I cannot refuse without sinning".

They were nearing the castle. I'm sorry and so will the princess and children be that they aren't home. She would be hour host—but I myself will serve you breakfast. "Thank the Lord God, Prince" but I have already had breakfast. He looked at the sun and thought "my Goodness", it's nearing noon and he's offering me breakfast. The Prince smiled, I erred—it's dinner we'll have, just a piece of meat. Cimbura replied—I don't go across a field without a slice of bread and knife in my pocket. I have no gift for the princess or children. How can I accept a meal. Even without your gift I would invite you for food. We ate under your roof also. You would offend me.

IV

As at home Cimbura prayed out loud. (in rhyme)

"Before I take up soon or fork,
from heaven onto earth Lord God
come to look at us, bless our food and drink,
which we want for our living, with your blessing to receive."

Health to you Prince, the farmer wished and without further (adeau)adiou?? Sat in a soft chair. The Prince also blessed himself. So, dear Cimbura, like at home, and brought a pan of cold meat. Cimbura thought—"at home, eat what you have, at other people's what they give you." The servant poured a glass of wine. "To your health, Cimbura, and yours also sir, and clinked their cutglass. Cimbura didn't talk much during the meal, only answered questions. When he finished, he laid down his fork and knife, picked up any crumbs and said "The Lord God thank you." It is well to eat and drink here. And even smoke smiled the Prince and offers a cigar. Cimbura was in a quandy. He couldn't offend his host. Sir Prince—without offense, I won't take the cigar but smoke my pipe. "And why not?" Because it isn't for a farmer but for a gentleman. The flame is without protection and if a spark flies there would be a fire. A cigar isn't finished but thrown away and that is a waste. That isn't for a farmer. It causes many fires. Now we hear many times a whole

village is burned out. Time is changing. The young are different. Now a farmer is ashamed of his fur coat and fur hat, now he puts a hat like a nest on his combed hair like a duck tail. He leaves a mustache under his nose, rolls a cigar around in his mouth. He's ashamed now of a slice of good bread in his pocket. Now he has a buttered white roll. Good and holy were the old farmer's ways. A farmer greets with "Lord God" thanks, and parts with "Lord God." Now it's different They—"my respect", good day, good cheer. Part of the fault is in the farm school in Pisek, the students, the office worker in Pisek, it starts with the cigar, that's why I won't take it in mouth while I live.

Good, said Prince and tapped the bell for the servant. I like a pipe too. "Lujs, bring a pipe and tobacco." Lujs came with a table of tobacco and pipes, stuffed with nice tobacco and lit them. Soft smoke drifted towards the ceiling. It was nice to sit and discuss affairs.

Dear Cimbura, it's useless to stand against progress. We are both old world people. You are older than I, but you must recognize that the world is getting more complicated. The young easily get used to that, in language and dress. It's a step forward.

A mistake Sir Prince, it isn't ahead, but a deception and delusion. Much has changed since the railroad first came through Razice. Education is growing but are morals growing along with it. I have read papers for thirty years already. The longer I read the more I see floods, theft, fire, murder, suicide. (Note: of interest to me is the word suicide which in Czech is self-murder.) Something is wrong somewhere. (Note: This sounds familiar.) So, according to my thinking the head is getting educating and we're forgetting about the heart. I can only see it getting worse. It seems as though education was everything. In life it should be honesty, sobriety, love, religion. That is the basis of good fortune. With that must go a working hand. Otherwise man leaves a straight road.

You have the truth said the Prince. I have lands in different parts of this country. There the farmers think they are the most educated in all of Cechy. You wouldn't believe that they have contempt for religion, they stay away from church festivals, they travel around, don't go to church and spend all afternoons in the taverns. But look, said the Prince—in that educated area and advancement I observe a strange thing, which has never been known. Tell me, said Cimbura after the Prince hesitated. "It won't seem possible to you" said the Prince. There the housewives don't go to church so some one wouldn't steal eggs from their coops. There you have to guard the fruit on the trees, the grain in the fields, the meadows, the woods, the fish in the ponds. There we guard not only the nobility lands, but the farmers have to guard so something isn't stolen or ruined. You wouldn't believe land that was lost there. If I didn't buy it a Jew would.

It happens here also said Cimbura. Farms have been lost because the farmer was educated and wanted to be called a gentleman, and worked that way. Soon the land was sold out little by little. The land holds a farmer—that is our strength, and a sin to sell it. Like Kladiva sold to you, because he was in the middle of your estate. He should have said, I will trade for land at the edge of your estate. Then he wouldn't have been in your way. Well, said Prince, he banked the money and is living off of it. Paper, said Cimbura, what is that. I remember when I was a child money value fell overnight. Who had a thousand at night had ten in the morning.

Tim was flying, soon they heard the carriage in the yard. The carriage is ready called Lujs. The Prince pulled out a silver watch on a black string. Cimbura thought, "See even our hired men now have watches like that." We'll drive through my lands, said Prince. Cimbura—"I know what the oldsters used to say." If a person sat on a fast horse even in a week's time you wouldn't circle a Prince's lands. I would rather walk to be able to observe more. Just say when, the Prince said and we'll stop the horses.

They drove through the park first. Cimbura had never seen flowers like that. I would like to stop. The horses stopped on the spot. How are you stopping he wanted to say to the coachman, horses are supposed to start out easy and stop slowly, but kept quiet. He saw how the horses had plowed out the dirt in front of their feet and their heads held tightly back. "I won't ride any more since the coachman handles them so unchristianly. He looked around at the trees. He knew them all, but they had different leaves. The roses were all different colors and still in full bloom. The fruit trees were trimmed and formed so they wouldn't hang over the road. Other trees were ready to have their fruit picked, worms taken off. (Note: This is interesting that they picked the worms off.) We have trees in different rows—here a new one "Bismark". There a French, Gravstejn, Tsar Alexander. Our pears are "Virtemberk", Napoleon, Holland. There were trees of cherry, plums, plums for prunes, peaches, apricots. Then a field of clover in bloom. We are keeping that for seed. The seed was from Styrsko(?). We have Russian wheat from the River Don, rye from New Zealand, beets from Bavaria. Now I'll show you something special. Look around. Cimbura had heard the strange noise like a train somewhere. Now he saw a strange scene—steam plows. We got them a month ago from England. They work beautifully. Look—they take three furrows and the plow goes easily—as if empty. We're plowing under pastures. I will get rid of the sheep and us their sheds for cattle.

You are making a mistake Prince. A sheep is like a holy animal. They bring good to a farm. The Lord loved them and invited us to his table "Lamb of God". Everything is good from the sheep—wool, meat, milk, manure.

I'm not wrong smiled Prince. In farming you need to think of profits. Sheep aren't profitable. We are plowing everything under to raise crops. We won't get rid of the cattle or leave them out on pasture, but raise crops and feed the cattle. You farmers must do the same, leave the old ways. Raise diverse crops. Beets for oil, beets for sugar, hops for beer, and whatever can be raised here. See more legumes, French alfalfa like Horsky in Libejice showed you. Plant more corn. You have to have better plows. Plow deep and early, better other machinery. We even drain our lakes and ponds and make fields and meadows.

Cimbura stepped before him so he could turn away. Sir Prince don't take both from us the ones I love most. Ponds and woods. Our old ones weren't fools when they built the ponds to gather up the water. If you drain the ponds drought will come on all of us. You will have to bank them up again and fill with fish. Without water there would be no life. The Prince smiled but Cimbura knew he didn't convince him.

Let us go in the yard and I will show you our machinery. The agricultural schools often bring their students here. You farmers waste too much time with handwork when it could be done much easier with machines. Like this grain binder and thresh machine. Throw your flails away. Cimbura softens up and looks over the grain binder but says what the nobility can have, our farmers can't We can't copy you on our small farms. What I can do says the prince, you can do. What you can't do your cooperative can do. I have a brewery, milk plant, a sugar factory. Why couldn't your cooperatives have this. From individualism go to collectivism. Organize, you will become stronger. Buy together, sell together. Just like from small bricks you can build a house. It won't be good if this doesn't happen soon.

Cimbura said—everyone gets burned once. What happened to our breweries and sugar factories five years ago." Who bought them at auctions? And who became poor?

For officers you wouldn't be able to have your uneducated sons. You would have to find honest men.

Come along said the Prince. We have many things to see yet. When I walk along hunting in your area I see you leave too much land lay. Your field borders are a step wide, your ditches two and your alleys 5 steps wide. Your field roads are sometimes as wide as the emperor's highway. Agree among yourselves on your borders width. Field roads no more than 2 sah.

Sir, it's like this, said Cimbura. The boundaries and ditches aren't ours. Whose are they? They belong to the poor, even the edges of the ponds and woods. It's their grass in the alleys and even their grain heads along the field. We farmers feel a responsibility, which the Lord

gives, to help the poor. Let their cow graze in the alleyway. Give our field helper potatoes, some clover for their cow. The children without field have the old right to pick up left behind heads of grain. My heart ached when I saw the implement of yours that was for raking up those left grains. The Prince is sweating but must defend himself.

We take care of the poor differently. Even our ancestors had poor homes and hospitals on our estates, pay pensions and those that served us help them in their old age.

And those poor who don't serve you? They should ask and we will help them.

They were at the horse barn now and the conversation ended. Well, you've seen my yard. Did you like it? I did and I didn't. Now tell me Cimbura what you didn't like. Your garden, the roses are French, the shrubs Japanese, flowers Italian. Your nursery. The trees are German, Holland. Your livestock is Hungarian Swiss, pigs and dogs are English. Tell me, what do you have Czech? Is something Czech better? There sure is. Why don't you have Cibulku pears? Zitavka apples? Are there those kinds? There are and beautiful. I could have brought you some if it wasn't for the storm.

That's funny my gardener didn't tell me about them. Nothing funny—because neither are Czech. What else don't you like? I don't like that you don't treat your horses well. And how so?

Look here, as the carriage slowly followed them. Their tails are barely a finger's length. How can they chase flies off. Look how they're pounding their feet and shaking their skin. We help our livestock but not with a whip. We put a fly net on them. We rub them with smelly alder leaves. "Good, and what else." Your help. Everywhere where five or six people worked—there stood by them a supervisor, a steward, a guard, a man from animal husbandry and none of them worked. A person has to work. That's the way he was created. He should work with gladness and not have a guard over him who will threaten him. with us, our workers work with us. Both like brothers work together and sit at the table together.

Much truth lays in your reply—times have changed and we can't go back to being patriarchs anymore. Tell me what else you would like to see. Nothing more sir, I beg for any offence. No, you didn't. I enjoyed your visit and will drive you back to Putim. I thank, but my good legs can carry me. But I am going to the station at Pisek to meet my wife and will take you there. That is different then.

Then sat in the carriage and whomever they met, looked. "Cimbura is riding with the Prince." Cimbura tells the Prince who the people are. I still have half an hour says the Prince, drive toward Putim and the conversation

continues. “Are you still so strong?” Where has the time gone. I’m nearing seventy, strength is leaving. “I heard you in anger put the ax into a stump and it couldn’t be pulled out.” Well, that I did said Cimbura. (The conversation went on about the time the heifer was tangled in with the horses in a previous chapter.)

I understand you have an organization in Putim who buys cattle—there you have the beginning of a co-op. But you haven’t told me what I should donate to Putim? I would say send a load of fruit seedlings from your estate. That is one thing our neighboring villages can’t give us. But they’re German—teased the Prince. “You can’t look a gift horse in the mouth” smiled Cimbura. That’s good advice said the Prince. “Live with God and greet your wife and children.”

Cimbura, I promise your son will soon return from the war. “If only God would give that” he replied. Once more they waved goodbye.

V

After the Prince’s visit Cimbura’s head was full of plans of what the Prince had suggested. And the Prince himself had thought of the suggestions Cimbura had made. We do have only a few things that are Czech. We even speak poorly Czech, mainly German and French. In time both thought of those things less. A hard winter was over and farmers started their spring planting. Easter was late so the seining of laes was late. Mainly carp was kept but others were also in the lakes, pike, whitefish, eel, tench—(cadat, cejn, mik—which I don’t find in the dictionary). In Putim they liked pike best. Everyone knew of the large pike in their lake. Her tail fin had the year 1848 branded on it. This year they pulled it out and God only knows how old it was. They always measured then threw it back. This year it was a sah long (6 feet).

Next came the sheep shearing. First the sheds are cleaned, the manure hauled on the cabbage field, fresh straw is put in the sheds, the sheep are washed twice in the pond then the fleece is cut.

These are things Cimbura thinks about as he goes out to sit in the sun after dinner (noon). He holds his pipe in his left hand pulls out the tobacco pouch with his right. The pouch is made from a pig’s bladder. This one is worn and cracked. It will be time soon to butcher a hog. The new bladder is hung over the stove to dry some then Marjanka opens it and laces a shoestring through the top. This will last Cimbura another year. He looks at the fruit trees full of buds. All of the young trees the Prince had sent in fall were coming to life.

But he must have forgot about Martin, he feels fear in his soul. Is he still among the living? Did he fall in battle? Did he die in a hospital? He can hardly be living?—he

hasn’t written. They say the regiments will be sent back and new ones sent, but I don’t, believe it.

Where did he come from, here stands a soldier calling daddy, daddy. Martin is it you or am I dreaming. Yes, yes yesterday the train brought us to Pisek and I have a week’s leave. And I’m thinking you are dead says Cimbura. They are discharging us sooner. I will be home in fall. Marjanka, Marianna, come look. They hardly know him. He is stronger, brown like a gypsy, a mustache and his hair is thicker and blacker. Go, run for Honzik, Francek and Veronka. We will all meet here after benediction. Now you and I will go to church to thank God.

In the Putim church during benediction kneels Cimbura with his son Martin. MarJanka is bending over the stove baking. Marianna is running to Srnka’s Tavern for another pitcher of beer. After church all the neighbors are stopping by, parents of pays who went to war with Martin. He tells how this wasn’t a war in battlefields. But a battle of Partisans well hidden in familiar hills. Some 200 officers and 5000 soldiers stayed there. We lacked water, bread, everything. Our foot soldiers had to take hill by hill and village by village. We were at Zepec, Banjaluky, Vysoke and Sarajevo. He tells all about the Turks, the arms they used, their homes, churches. A week of visits go by and Martin must go back to the barracks. They all part joyfully knowing he’ll be back in fall. Only the father finds parting hard and doesn’t like to see him go. If only you could stay and work. Now as they looked at Cimbura he seemed old. His head was white, his shoulders bent. Something they hadn’t noticed before. Martin and Veronka look at their mother. Ach! What a change—her veined hands folded, her brow furrowed, her hair under her kerchief nicely parted but seemed as though sprinkled with flour. Mama you have flour in your hair, I’ll brush it off for you, but found it gray. Father, said Martin you sit as though you have a load in your arms. I carry a load of 70 years of what has met me—good or bad. I feel it. The body is like a shell my boy. When I look into the water in the morning I see an old head looking at me. I am like a tree. I grew and bloomed, was strong but I’m starting to die. That’s why I look for your hands, your head and heart so I could live with you a few years yet, so I could teach you, you are bone from my bone, blood from my blood.

Martin left sadly. Cimbura knew war didn’t spoil him, his body and soul will be like his. Martin did come home and they worked together and Martin took over the hard work from his father. Marianna took care of her mother and would have jumped into fire for her. All went well and Cimbura’s thoughts of Martin marrying so he could retire left his head. MarJanka would laugh. We are just like retired now and our children are taking over. People were jealous. “Take advantage of it.” When Martin gets married and different blood comes in—who knows if you’ll get along.

And so the years went by. Good and bad is laid in one's lap. Sometimes the road has roses, other times thorns. The look of the village changes. Like ripe pears, neighbor after neighbor is falling into their graves. Cernoch died at nearly 100 years of age, Zelzulka moved to the cemetery, they carried Keclik there and slowly a new generation is taking over. Cimbura misses the old ones and he doesn't understand the young ones and they him.

In life good luck changes places with unlucky. Verunka is mostly the unlucky one. A load of wood ran over her and only by a miracle came out of it. Then God sent pox onto her. They all cried for her. She was given the last sacraments, but she didn't leave. A wild wonder that she pulled through it all. Her husband that time, after Kopecky, was the church singer, leader of the church festival and led the rosary prayers. He was a religious man and an exceptional farmer. (Note: There is no mention of her marriage previous to this.)

The road is not always rosey at Piksa's and Srnka's. Honzik loved trees and herbs and like a professor understood everything. He has two sons and two daughters. The children at Srnka's (Francek) and Sterba's call granpa, grandpa—

Putim is a special village. It has something many towns don't have. Two railroads run near it, and this year 1884 since spring another railroad is being measured and being built "Transversalka". Razice, Putim and Protivin form a huge triangle. There were Italian workers around again. The people called the "Tatars". But the strangest and unheard of in the village was Salomon Steiner—a Jew. He rented a house by the bridge across from Roucek's mill. He put a door in one of the windows and filled the living room full of goods. He put up a large white sign with red lettering which met everyone's eye. "Salomon Steiner sells colonial goods, cheap—tobacco, school books, whiskey, plaining cards. The double doors opened wide. In one window of the door was a girl in a short skirt with a glass of rum in one hand. On her exposed neckline hung a little barrel with the word "liquor". On the other window hung a mustached Turk in turban and pointed shoes, smoking from an enormous pipe. On the shelves behind glass stood bottles with gay pictures pasted on them, "sweet whiskey". There were health and stomach drops. Another shelf held large mouth bottles of coffee, both roasted and green. Candy, pickles, skirts, dress material, silk kerchiefs, ribbons, aprons, coats, shawls, stockings, gloves. The women's hearts yearned for the beautiful colors. It couldn't compare to their farm woven materials or the men's sheep coats and hats. By the door stand whips with red and white tassels—a barrel of salted herring permeating the air. On the outside walls the Jew hung hoes, shovels, scythes, axes and on each wrote the price with a chalk, cheaper than the blacksmith wanted. Inside there were sacks of cookies, flour, rice, prunes, a large weighing scale, iron rims for wheels, kettles, lamp

oil, matches, lamps, candles, chains, ropes, smoking pipes. A sign hung on the wall "All what your heart desires or can think of is for sale at my place." The small Salomon stood behind the counter smiling and in the store two women, one older and ugly. Under her nose was black fuzz like a man's and waddled around like a duck. Nearby was a girl resembling neither. She walked like a peacock and pretty as a picture, she resembled more the girl in the door window. This unknown newness wasn't welcome by all Putim. They eyed it when goods were unloaded, but didn't step across the doorway even when Salomon waved his cap calling—my respects sir, my respects lady, come further and look my store over. You don't have to buy. I'll give you a free drink to warm up, I'll add some candy for the children, but of no avail. Putimers are bull headed. They go farther to Hala's or Zizka's store, farther to a tavern. Children though are children, they don't have sense. They go by the store and here comes Mrs. Steiner with a big smile and candy in hand "and who is this cute boy? As if you shoot into sparrows they fly away until Mrs. Steiner goes back into the store they're gathering around again. The young people are as bad, looking over the pocket knives, pipes, tobacco sacks, rings, pins, earrings. The Mr. Steiner or Mrs. don't come out, but the young girl. She has on a red blouse as though poured into it, a white apron, a short skirt under which peek out red stockings, black shoes, a red ribbon shaking in her black hair like a butterfly, her smile shows little dragon teeth. Lightning flies out of her black eyes. Whatever boy they fall on he's struck like lightning with his hanhere and we'ds and feet tied in a knot. "Come in, you'll see how cheaply you can buy, how you'll like it here." "Why should we speak up Martin, we did well before you came here and we'll get along without you." He turns on his heel and everyone follows.

Phew! What vulgar fellows, says the store girl quietly so no one hears her.

This doesn't scare Salomon away. Wait until the railroad workers come, those foolish farmers will come crawling. When they're drunk we'll pluck them and throw them out.

The engineers came, the workers, the bums. They built a shack back of the store. "Vinarna" (winery) was written on the door. The red girl carried them red wine. The gentlemen sat in the store drinking liquors, chewed on fishes in oil. Mrs. Steiner served them. In the yard under two chestnut trees a wooden table was nailed together. Salomon tapped out gray whiskey. Soon gentlemen from pisek started to come then the Putimers saw the light. Sterba decided this was "Sodom" they began to call it. In Sodom not Kpecky's house, as it was previously known.

There was noise there all hours of the night Italian singing, German swearing, Czechs arguing, someone calling out that he's been stabbed, blows of fists and wooden ax handles but the village didn't get tired of this. The villagers are mad that all the workers are paid in that

store and the farmers that work on the railroad are also paid there. Salomen pays out from behind the counter. "So much nice money and you don't buy anything." He smoothly talks them into buying or something for his Mrs. and he's lost. The "red girlie" stands before him with a drink, he doesn't even know how, but before he knows it he's playing cards.

But the wives are standing on guard. When it happened twice, three times, they kept quiet but the fourth time—when Hlodalek went for his pay the wife stepped before him. "I won't throw you away or shame yo before the people by going for you to the Sodom—go spend everything, write another I.O.U., get drunk, but remember this. The minute you stumble home drunk knockign on the door I will go with the children out the back gate to my parents. I took a good man, to whom I vowed faithfulness, love, but not a drunk. You want to be like Klasek but I am not Mrs. Klasek. I have children and half of this farm belongs to me—remember and stop—while there is time.

Hlodalek put his head, went and a wonder he didn't hit him when Salomon tried to hold him back. In a quarter he was back, laid the gros (money) on the table. Guardian angels, the Putim wives. They did it. Now there were two worlds in Putim and didn't meet only when necessary.

The Putim neighbors like aristocrats stayed faithful to their tavern—all the rest—strangers—run to "Sodom" which now has something new: beer from the Prince's brewery.

Two worlds side by side for a quarter of a year which don't mix. But what isn't can easily happen. There was the church festival in our St. Vavrinec Church.

"Oh you Saint Vavrinec
you stand on a nice hill
Ladies walk out from you
Like angels from heaven."

Not only the ladies but the young eople came out. Then headed for Srnka's Tavern where there was to be music. Even Cimbura, from long habit, leads his relatives from Semice and Hradiste. All his children smile at him—come sit here. Francek carries a chair across the heads of the dancers. Cimbura looks through the smoke for Martin and can spot him by his big shoulders. He's dancing with Hamak young MarJanka. Old Hamak's eyes met Cimbura's and both fathers smiled. Cimbura looks around for Marianna. Who is holding her there among the dancers? You don't know him" says Keclik. He's my guest, young Kotrch from Stritez.

I don't know Kotrch's neaither do I know of Stritez. I heard it's a village somewhere near Volyne and that they

call Stritez people "rajchaci". I know old Boubala well. He has good horses, heavy Netolicke.

How could you not know Kotrch? Martin says that in Bosnia they served together. They are friends with Kecliks. He came to see Martin riding a horse from Stritez for your festival. You should see how glad they were when they met about an hour ago. So, so, Cimbura's head nods but his eyes don't sparkle.

They heard laughter, singing coming towards the tavern. Francek quickly lit the candles so they could see the new guests. The other world is coming from "Sodom". All the railroad workers with the "red girlie" among them, and Venousek. You remember the crippled boy who went around with his mother. He because a tailor but never grew any bigger and is working for the tailor Losos in Pisek. He comes here often and during winter spends a couple of weeks at Keclik's and Cimbura's sewing. He tells stories to the children. The Putimers like the hunchback but today they don't want to know him. His buddies dressed him as a clown. They smeared coal bellow his nose, a paper hat, in his lips an Italian cigar, his coat turned inside out and a flower on his lapel like a groom.

Play for Venousek, they all holler, pick out a bride for him—he foolishly smiles. His feet ar tangling yes—he's drunk.

"They got him drunk." Cimbura rose angerly from the table. "Shameless people" you got the cripple drunk. They want to insult us they all call. The music stopped. Play—the other world said. Don't even squeak, the locals tell the musicians. We're gentlemen, calls the other world pulling out their money. "You're bums, calls a strong voice. "Lord God" there will be trouble. All the girls leave the dance floor—pushing against the wall. Like a wild poppy, boiling, stands tahe "red girlie". Hunchback Venouse twirls among the people. "Leave in peace" storms Cimbura 'till the ceiling shakes. We won't, we're in a public place. "You didn't come in good will", leave while there is time. Venousek, kcome here with us calls Cimbura—his veins standing out on his neck. Whoever has a taste come forward called the Italian, their knives shining. Quickly, Kotrch hit his chair across the floor breaking the hard oak legs off and handed them out to the boys. Put your knives away—they're a tool not a arms. If you want to fight it'll be barehanded, called out Cimbura. The knife swished past Cimbura's head and stuck in the wall. "Murderers". "daddy, leave this to us" called Honzik and Cimbura saw Martin jump like a lion, and with him Kotrch, Cernoch, Klouda, Sterba and Francek calling—guard tahe light so we can see. Cimbura lifted the candle above his head. He could see how the workers with the "red girlie" disappeared and the Italians stepped forward. Blows were falling, blood squirting. The girls covered their eyes. The dragon woke up in the farmers and quieted the man. They all became animals. The wives

jumped up on the benches hollering “Don’t give up.” When the Italians started bombarding the taverns with rocks they stood each of the four by a window ties up their hands and tied them to a window frame. Then danced till morning then finally felt the blows and doctored themselves up.

That’s how the bloody festival ended. The last strong act of Cimbura was as he held the candles by the wooden hollow holders two feet longhishands crushed them like paper. When he went to stand them on the table they fell into splinters.

As for the festival: within a year Marianna was moving to Strítez to Kotrch’s and within two years Martin brought home his bride MarJanka from Hamak’s.

I hope you’re as satisfied with her as with my MarJanka he wished his son. They retired.

And another thing about the festival: they got rid of “Sodom”. That was the last rising up of the workers. A part of the railroad and bridge were built between Putim and Razice the trains then ran out the Frantisek Josef tracks to Horazdovice then on a side track to Susice, Klatov and Domazlice. The whole group of workers moved to that area and only Salomon Steiner’s store stayed. It neither helped him that he dismissed the “red girlie” or that he hung “God Bless Our Home” on the wall and buarned a votive lamp under it.

No one talked against him but no one went to his store either. He would go around each Sunday visiting. They would be nice to him but no one went to his store. Why do you stay away from me? Why don’t you buy from me? Are you afraid my goods are poisoned? Beacue you aren’t from us, neither of blood, tongue or religion. (Note: I’m wondering if this will some day pass. It still sounds so familiar.)

Weh have two buyers—traders here, why should we go to you? The smart Salomon realized wheat won’t bloom here for him, that the wives won’t forget the “red girlie” and guard their men from whiskey. He closed the store and moved somewhere towards Klatovy (quite a ways west of Pisek). The Putim farmers moved his goods free of charge to the railroad station. The wives made three signs of the cross behind him. (The new parish priest Hynekskala who died the year the railroad was built) heaved a sigh of relief. He commented, I’m glad, the parish will again belong to the Virgin Mary. How do you mean that? “There is a parish that doesn’t have a Jew.” (Note: Now you wouldn’t be able to write that. I’ve found that common in old books—discrimination against Jews.)

VI

A new life began for the retired Cimbura. He had worried enough in life, now it became rosier. He had two

supports. One of MarJanka’s from Piksa’s farm and the other from his own farm. The old ones didn’t mix into the young one’s affairs. Martin managed his own way except when he needed his father’s advice.

Old Grandma Pelikan had bought a piece of field and meadow behind the railroad station, which she worked for many years until one day the Pisek village claimed it as its own.

With tears she came to Cimbura. “Uncle, listen the Pisek gentlemen have taken my meadow as their own. What am I to do. (Note: The term “Uncle” was used as a sign of respect for someone older than themselves. My generation still used it, but not our children’s—too bad.)

“Defend yourself and don’t give up” decided Cimbura. I’m an old man and as far as I can remember the meadow always belonged to a field. Tell me, who is taking it. The gamekeeper brought me the news. The gentlemen found it on the map. When the railroad was being built they cut part of the fish pond and the meadow supposedly belonged to the pond.

That doesn’t just work that way. I will write you a litter and go give it to the mayor. And Cimbura, nicely in “Svabach” script, wrote this. “In the Psalms we read that the King Achab said to the poor Nabot: Give me your wine filed for it is near my field, and didn’t give up until he took it from the poor man.

In Putim we hear that the wealthy Pisek is taking a little meadow from the poor Grandmother Pelikan because you say it belongs to the town pond. I am writin gin order to erase this sin from heaven of those who persecute the poor. Your noble village is wrong. Here there are memory keepers, and I one of them, when there was no memory of a railroad and a meadow didn’t belong to a pond but to a field and a field to a meadow.”

Centkr, the mayor’s assistant, was grumpy the rainy day he had to come to Putim to measure out the little piece of meadow. It didn’t go well. He had to measure from the church from one side and from Smrkovice to the other side, to find the angles. The “old lady” was right. The city offie was wrong. He was one not to choose his words. “Old lady, millionaire”, who advised to go directly to the mayor? The wisest man in Putim, she replied. That must be the priest then. No, no, old Cimbura she smiled and ran to tell Cimbura she had won. Everyone knew he was wise and all went to him with their problems.

Honzik came one winter day, daddy come and look at my horse, he is staggering. Whoever heard of that in winter, summer maybe. The horse stood in the yard with bridle on and held by the hired man. Cimbura examined every part of it, then looked at the iron bit. Fool, he said to the man, but looking at Honzik. The bit is burning him like fire. It must have hung outside in the frost all night. Here

take it between your teeth. With grandpa there is no fooling around and put the cold metal in his hand. Honzik quickly ran with it to the house and put it into warm water. A caring farmer has his harness in the barn and Honzik without a word swallowed “a bitter pill”.

Cimbura is always called on to come to village meetings. “Grandpa” we have a proposal to build a poor house in the village. What do you think? “Tell me more about it boy.” There is to be a large home built, with district money, where the village poor could be sent. Cimbura, listens and listens, turning his head this way that way before he makes up his mind.

“And that, mayor, talk them out of in Pisek. Stand against it so it wouldn’t happen. It wouldn’t be wise. So far we don’t have those kind of poor in Putim. “How so, we don’t?” Because we take care of our own and the district wants it for the poor who have no one. We can’t shame ourselves by sending someone there. Why, we are all poor. There is no difference between us, nothing is ours, we come naked on earth and leave almost naked. What I have isn’t mine but only to use for a time. That is why we can’t deny any of us bread or clothing because it isn’t from our own we give. We divide among ourselves and live in peace. Who works with me all my life, let him live, suffer and die with me. Why should we tear them out of their home and put them somewhere else just like into a prison and then put a gold plaque over the door “District poor house”. Wouldn’t you be ashamed to humiliate those poor? That is unchristian. Do you have neighborly love in your heart? Do you think the poor from the villages would go there except for death? Let them die where they grew up. Let them know they are still worth something. Like our sons say “We don’t eat our bread for nothing”. Let them take care of children, graze geese, pick mushrooms and strawberries in the woods, take care of the trees, pull weeds, sein for fish, pick fruit so they could think that they are supporting themselves with their own strength and not that we’re giving them alms. There isn’t a beggar of them. When strangers come begging to your door, give them bread, flour, peas because God blesses us that that, give on one money, since money doesn’t grow in the field and paper gold doesn’t rustle in the trees instead of leaves—you have all know festival beggars who sat by the church and you threw money in his cap and when he died what was determined? That he earned more money begging than another with his respectable word—thell them in Pisek that even beggars are our brothers and sisters. Why should we throw them out of our village and society? Tell them, that what they want, our wives have long done—take care of the poor and we won’t mix in Pisek affairs”. (What a mouthful.)

The best would be, grandpa, if you would go there yourself and nicely tell the gentlemen there. The whole remembers how Cimbur can with his nice language and truthfulness, convince everyone, since he can be a fiery speaker. But grandpa’s incentives were atanend??. He

thought of the poor’s situation a long time and realized this was a seed of socialism which was beginning to move among people. He recognized this kind of poor home could be good and should be built, but then, he thought if people lived like Christians this home would be unnecessary. He debated many things with himself, new things were coming, copying others, the abandoning of old ideas, customs.

About the politics between the Czechs and Germans he couldn’t understand and thought how easily with good will it could be solved. Instinctively he knew he was right in many things but somewhere he may be wrong. He didn’t have books which could have helped him understand. Only one book he had, the Holy Book. This guided him in all things and the older he got the more he liked reading about the life of the Lord, the holy ones, especially the Blessed Virgin Mary. So it was that in his old age he was I would say—a prophet. He was losing interest in the people around him who were losing the old traditions. He was happiest among children who understood him best. Those grown up stayed out of his way. “He’s preaching again.” As though we haven’t heard enough preaching the priest in church. But Cimbura, as though he hadn’t heard, He stayed on “guard” and if something arose he was like he had grown out of the ground. His voice would roar like thunder.

If he saw someone was mean to his livestock, he stepped in; someone throwing rocks into a tree, tramping in wheat, a God’s gift, or crumbs on the floor, making fun of someone, swearing, right away Cimbura spoke up, whether it was his own or a stranger he was reminded of a wrong.

And so—you lazy farmer. One day he stopped cottage owner Babak. “What kind of business is this? You don’t go into the field until 9 o’clock, and coming back at noon for dinner. Your potatoes are covered with snow and you didn’t seed your winter wheat until November. What kind of farmer are you? Yul’ll rot before you die, you your wife and house. You farm from nine to five! “And why should I work? I have no one to leave it to. I have no children.

“Oh! You Bum”—we don’t work for our children but because our Lord God created us for work. Give some of what I you earn, but don’t cheat God of his time. The poor want bread, the king wants taxes. Don’t lull around and waste time. Anyone who put on airs, he didn’t tolerate either. In time he was called to court in Pisek. The judge reminded to speak the truth. “I have one foot in the grave, but I can say in all of my life I have never lied.”

Daddy, said his children and wife, what is it to you what others do. “I can’t, I can’t, said the old one. I have to step in when I see someone stronger harming a weaker one.” Then go by and look the other way. “You yourself, one swallow, can’t fly.” That’s easy to say, but hard to have

eyes and not see, hard to have ears and not hear, have a tongue and not talk. My inner voice tells me I have to go against it.

He became a person of a “different world” and people stayed out of his way. I would say—this is inborn. Even crows all want to be black. If one was white they would pick her to death or chase her from their flock—the old one was in the way, in the village.

But Cimbura didn’t become repulsive—the opposite—he liked talking with strangers from whom he heard of new things, he listened carefully, picking out truth from untruth, he kept in mind the wise things. This is the way he was all his life. That’s why travelers were attracted to him.

Martin is Cimbura’s son—how could he be any different than father. That is why at Martin’s farm the traveling salesmen and smiths gather. They are never refused hay for their horses, even beggars and gypsies aren’t turned away. All of those “world travelers” are welcome in winter. They eat and smoke together, talk about where they were, what they saw, how other people live in different areas.

Around Praha, Rip along the Labe River to pardubice the land is productive and the people rich, the farmer as well as the gentlemen.

The old man listened to the great abundance of wheat threshed, making the sign of the cross at the wonder. Then why, asked old Cimbura of old Smid “Why then don’t you stay there for the winter? Why do you move here in the fall? Old Smid was the patriarch of a comedian family, otherwise a carnival and circus. The oldfather was true to their family tradition and in winter put on plays. Smid traveled all winter around the Sumava Mountains and for about two weeks he and his wife came by horse to put on a puppet show at Srnka’s in Putim.

“Ach! Dear grandpa” Smid replied to Cimbura. That is a different land and different people. Truth must come out. Ask whatever traveler you want and he will tell you that “the more productive area and wealthier people, the harder and unfeeling they are to their own countrymen. They won’t give anything for nothing. If you need relay horses and show a gold piece “he’ll pull you up a hill”. If you need clover you couldn’t beg out a handful if you were on your knees. When you put on your show Saturday or Sunday we pick up 10 or 15 gold pieces. Everyone has money but no one will give you an egg, bread or flour, not even a bit of hay. There you have to pay for everything. That’s why we go there only in summer, when we can sleep in the wagon and have the horse tied to the front wheel. In winter we have to leave and come this way or under the Sumava Mountains. That is why I say the poorer the people the kinder they are, especially

around the Sumavas and Krkonos Mountains. Good, religious people living by the word of Christ.

Look, who would ever believe this said Cimbura and wondered over it a long time.

Other nights were dark as in a sack, the wind wailed in the chimney, a snow hard as a rock is fall a sweeping across the windows which are stuffed with moss. At Cimbura’s sits Jira from Domazlice and tells about the bloody tragedy of the Chodsko farmer Kozina, their leader. They know the story in Putim. The priest, a native of the Chodsko area, read it in the paper Kvet. He says the author Jirasek tells it nicely. They all listen quietly goosebumps on their backs. Jira tells about the historic past then starts on the scary part. “He stood under the gallows with a strap around his neck, this farmer Kozina. There among the gentleman stands Lomikar who won the trial in court at Pizen. Kozina calls Lomikar, Lomikar, I will call you before God’s court within a year. The drum roll starts the trumpets blare so he couldn’t be understood anymore. The trap door snaps down—the strap tightens around his neck—Kozina swings. The year passed by like a jump. Lomikar continued to torment the farmers—on Kozina’s death anniversary the whole village went to pray for their dear martyr. Lomikar was celebrating in his own castle in Trhanov. From far and wide, princes and lords were invited. He ate for two people, drank for four. At midnight he arose from the table, held up a glass of wine. “Where are you Kozina”, false prophet? The day the year is done but Lomikar didn’t finish. On the table uncut lay a roasted rooster. It suddenly stood up and crowed. The doors opened and a black dog with fiery tongue stood in the doorway. Lomikar swung the glass after it and fell dead. That “Bad one” himself came for him—God be with us—and took his soul to court. Jira wipes his eyes tells further of the burial of Lomikar in the church crypt and what happened during the funeral. The listeners right away think of another south Czech hero—Kubata—who gave his head for Blata (a village). All of these events bring birth to songs, poems, stories.

Cimbura is equal to any of these heroes. He liked to meet with the young students who went to church daily during summer vacation and sang in the church choir, and after mass waited for grandpa. There was Zofka who was already a lawyer, mistr Simek a ferryman, Mika, who studied for a teacher in Praha, Hala a real estate agent and nephew of our priest. Cimbura liked all of them. “Boys, I tell you, study”. When they were going back to school. Your fathers are paying until they bend over. They wouldn’t forgive you if their investment didn’t pay off. If you get spoiled don’t come home if a horse doesn’t turn out well, he gets sold, but what about a son that doesn’t turn out?

When they all left he was lonesome for them, and couldn’t wait till they were back.

Finally, when they come grandpa looks them over. What is this, is it lent? Why do you ask? Grandpa. What do you have on your heads? Berets, students' caps and beards. Don't laugh at us. This is a sing of our national thinking. "Listen, boys, it seems to me Praha is raving. Remember, nationalism isn't reflected in pipes, canes, ribbons and caps isn't worth a broken penny. That must be in your heart. Tell them that in Praha and don't let me see your clothes anymore. Wear that, by God, in Praha, but her in Putim go stand in the cabbage patch with that.

The Germans wear them "Fit" whistled Cimbura—that's it. I should have thought you're aping someone in Praha. Praha, I say is a crazyhouse. Caps won't help you. Learn—so a monument could be built to each of you. Like was built for Palacek in Pisek. Now, run home, I can't look at you anymore. The caps disappeared, not because of Cimbura but because the Putim boys made fun of them. The mothers and sisters scolded so the berets disappeared to the bottom of the trunks. Grandpa made up with the boys and talked about Praha. He'd ask about the taverns "Uturka", Uzlate Husy, U Zlate Lodi; Mala Strana part of town, St. Vaclav Square, and when they traveled back to Praha they paid more attention what was growing in the fields and joked about grandpa.

The Monday after St. Jacob's Day in Netolice. There is a large horse auction. Wednesday after mass the students were waiting for Cimbura by the cemetery. Grandpa, granpa did you hear that yesterday in Netolice there was not one horse at the auction. "That's impossible. What could have happened. No, they laughed only geldings, stallions, bred mares and colts not horses. I don't even feel like laughing—you don't know what I know. "What happened" our priest lent me the newspaper this morning.

The king's palace in Praha burned out. "Hradcany" burned out? That is horrible. The students are blessing themselves. Yes, the whole castle and church of St. Vitus. And you don't that stormed Cimbura. It happened the 2nd of June 1541. Now go home to learn your history. When the priest is finished with the book I will ask him to let each of you read it. The students all laughed over this and grandpa walked contentedly back to his house.

The older Cimbura gets, the more hard-headed he becomes. He wants to be atop of everything. His soul is full of experiences and memories, clear as a wood's spring. He reaches in to pull out many stories, some experience in his life which is educational to others. The young speak up to him until arguments start, then the old one becomes sad. He knows life is taking a different road and he doesn't have the strength to turn things around.

"I'm a fool to them. No one listens to me or pays attention to me." Martin advised him "Don't pay attention to them." I can't Martin, I'm like a bird. A bird sings to himself and doesn't care who listens to him He sing the

way he knows how, a crow just caws. I'm already like that crow. But what adults couldn't fix, a child did. For their festival Marianna from Stritez brought her six year old boy. He was called Jan after grandpa, father and godfather. They called him Honzik and he wouldn't answer to any other. When the Putimers saw him, they couldn't believe how he resembled grandpa. "Like he fell out of his eye". MarJanka was petting him but he bolted right for grandpa. Granpa, grandpa, are you my grandpa. You sure are. Can you lift me? Cimbura picked him up like a feather, sat him on his shoulder, then on his knee. Then showed him the child's game on his leg how "little gentlemen ride", how big gentlemen ride, and how the Emporor rides. Honzik was such a friend to grandpa that the next day when marianna was going to leave he took her aside and said "listen daughter, leave me your little boy. He'll make me young again." "Daddy, gladly, we have three dragons like that at home yet." He has to start school but has such a bad road. Here he's right by. He can stay. Be without worry, said Cimbura and called the boy over. "Honzik, mommy is going home. Do you want to go with her or stay here with me. "You know grandpa, leave both of us here." That doesn't work. Mother has to go home. What would Francek, Lidka, Venousek and daddy say? "Then leave me here and after grandpa and grandma teach me everything I'll come home." Marianna made the sign of the cross of his forehead and went home.

VII

What's wrong grandpa? You don't even come among us when we gather to talk of old times. "I have better company now." And who is that company Cimbura gives preference to? They are the children. He's become childish since he got old, all of the Putim men decided. He was always surrounded by the Putim children. And it was so. He really was like a child. He shuffled around the yard doing little chores. Every once in awhile he would lean against something to rest. He repaired the garden fence, which was made of small branches, so the little chicks wouldn't crawl through. He'd go to look at the meadow, make little ditches to drain the standing water from the fields.

He'd walk to the edge of the woods just to smell the pine needles. He'd do the little things, as greasing the wagons, sharpening the tools. He couldn't do the heavy work anymore.

Behind his heels from morning till night would be little Honzik who would bring his friends along mainly from Piksa's, Sterba's and Srnka's (These were the other grandchildren) but children from the whole village to whom he was also known as grandpa. He feels like a child again among them. He can't always remember what happened yesterday or a week ago. In that his mind is leaving him but can remember what happened seventy years ago. He remembers all of the games he played, songs he sang. He wants to jump like a child.

Nothing attracts children like nature. From earth God created man, earth carries and supports him, to earth he will return. Cimbura understands the children and loves the earth, he builds little things in the ground for them. The children bring him stones, dig gardens, Cimbura walks around complimenting their work. The father of the earth is the air—God’s air. In no way can you keep a child in a room.

Cimbura built them a little mill which the wind runs. You can hear it all over Putim, soon he builds a 2nd, 3rd, 10th. He’s always building something. Aha! He’ll build a squirting pump—but who will he give it to? Will he make another? He sits in the sun making a willow whistle (Note: In spring the bark on a willow twig is tapped which will then loosen and slide along the twig. A V cut is made in and by sliding the bark over it, it forms a whistle.) When he blows into it you can hear it behind the “ninth hill”. He also can whistle on his fingers—on two, even four. But he doesn’t like to whistle since the time he whistled three times by Hurky for Martin. The brakemen on the train set the brake. The train stopped and threatened Cimbura with a fine and jail—they though an oncoming train was coming towards them.

Mother earth and father wind have a son called fire. He tempts the children. They like nothing better than to look into its flames or stand in the doorway of a blacksmith to watch the sparks as he’s pounding out the red hot iron. At home they like to blow at the coal to bring it to life. Cimbura tells them “take care of the lamp and fire so it doesn’t become harmful”. He reminds them of a fire in Putim started by children. Put matches up high out of reach. Don’t use matches in front of children. He does show them how to use fire when the time comes to turn weeds, how to roast and eat potatoes.

“Fire has a sister and she is water.” That is no better, no worse than fire. Children love water. They like to swim, skate and slide. They like when ice is thin and cracks and its dangers. Cimbura takes them to the pond, fishes jump there, when it rains on it, “heavenly”. He tells them all the ways the pond can be used. To be dammedsp?, when partly drain the shores can be seeded. He teaches them how the ponds are seined, the names of the fish. He has built a little mill which is powred by water. He teaches how not to start a hundred jobs and then abandon it. He doesn’t play with them as soldiers, thieves or robbers. He teaches them better games. “I will turn my back and guess what Honzik is holding in his hands. Little sharp eyed Prokupek watched so grandpa wouldn’t peek. They all took turns for grandpa to guess. Grandpa seemed to through the back of his head. Grandpa showed us how you do it. Sure, and he showed them the mirror hanging on the wall. But, I can guess even without a mirror. Just go behind the corner and life something. I’m lifting called Venclik. “Your tongue in your mouth” called grandpa and they all laughed hilariously. But children are children and

can’t get by without arguing. They must be taught to calm down or be punished. Cimbura is a mistr at that (master) all the village children know a bird is God’s singer and musn’t be caught.

Grandpa, your Honzik has a bird in his pocket—called the girls. So, and where did he catch it? We don’t know but he has it. As though nothing—Honzik walks by grandpa then feels his hand on his collar, but before Honzik realized what happened grandpa opened the cow shed door and shoved him in. Grandpa, what have I done to you? Let me out. I will, but first leave the bird out. For a bird—how does grandpa know this. He knows, I dan’t get away anything holding the bird in his hand. He wanted to build him a cage and feet it—all for nothing. The battle goes on for awhile—then a small hand reaches out through a small window hole in the door and—frrr—the bird is gone. “Now, fly away too”, he said to Honzik.

Soon another tale came to his ears. Little Jiricek cut off a pear twig to make a whistle. Oh! You silly boy—a dry twig. Then teach me begs Jirik. Me too, me too, they all call. “First me”, demands Jirik. Yes, first you replies Cimbura. He picks up the dry twig, cuts it in two the length of a finger. “Now turn around, put your hands in back of you. He puts his fingers between the two pieces of wood. “Now, careful Jirik and squeezes the two pieces. He let out a yell and jumped like a colt. He’s whistling, he’s whistling they all call. (The Czech word for squeal and whistle is the same.) Grandpa dear, let go, I won’t do it anymore. “Now, what kind of twig should you use for a whistle? Willow, willow! He won’t be spoiling a little tree anymore.

Some children like to brag and the worst was Matejcek Benes. Look everyone how strong I am, carrying a small rock. Grandpa says, why you couldn’t even carry a tablespoon. “I could carry fifty or a hundred”, says Jirik defiantly. Well, then tomorrow we’ll see replies grandpa.

The boys all came the next day to see what grandpa has up his sleeve. Grandpa will give you a spoonful of water. Woe be, if you spill a drop. The boys all laughed. But grandpa was in the kichen behind the window. He had made the spoon good and warm on the stove, but not to burn. Hurry grandpa, give me the spoon, so he handed him the spoon through the open window. Matejcek grabbed the spoon and the same moment it fell to the ground. Matejcek lost—smiles grandpa. Matejcek was ashamed for bragging.

Children have an inborn curiosity. They try anything. The fathers look after the boys, the mothers after the girls. Cimbura doesn’t worry about the girls, that’s grandma’s job, but boys, they belong to him. As soon as they’re walking they want to climb on everything. Horses, wagons, plows, a wheel to roll down a hill. The bigger boys want to drive the horses no matter what. That’s a

dangerous toy, but it's necessary to create a love for animals not deny them.

On Christmas eve all animals have to be fed even birds because at midnight all animals talk and they will tell on everyone who mistreats them animals need to be understood.

Grandpa sits with the children. Around himself he has a piece of wood, jack knife and starts carving. What will it be? They all try guessing. A rake, a plow, dog? No, it will be a sheep? No, a horse—right. All boys have a wooden horse but this one will be the best. It'll be like Sterba's "Pepicka". Sometimes the boys bring their horses to Cimbura's, line them up and grandpa examines them. Then teaches how to take care of them, what their body parts are called, how to harness them. He makes small farm wagons for the small boys and teaches them how to take them apart and repair them.

Children get older, new ones replace them and the older Cimbura gets the more occupied he is with them. He takes them to Steba's farm to show how the bees produce honey. They're God's little workers. Grandma Sterba comes out and each get a piece of bread spread with honey. Thank grandma now and remember honey is both food and medicine. But spending your money on candy is a sin. He teaches them to start a flower and herb garden. Chamomile is a healing herb, sunflowers to feed the birds in winter. To raise their own foods and not to buy unnecessary foreign foods like coffee, pepper, saffron, mustard. If God had wanted us to have it, He would have put it here to grow. (Note: If He could see world trade now.)

And, tell me Francek what does a bunting sing in spring when there isn't a grain of feed outside? "Farmer, farmer, come and seed." He teaches them what all the birds say. One must just learn to understand them. And cannot bells speak? How many languages do they speak? Each day differently—Sundays, holy days, week days. At weddings they're different, funerals, only the death bell is the same. The one o'clock bell on the day of the wake is different. The children hadn't heard this before until grandpa told them about it. When winter comes watch the sparrows gathering feathers to make warm winter nests. Finally winter came on a white horse. Neighbors would come to visit. Cimbura would sit the children on his sheepskin coat on the floor. The bigger sat on the big over. Children want to hear what's talked about. He didn't like when children were sent outside or the elders whispered. "Aha! You're saying something that isn't nice." And since the adults didn't pay attention to him, he'd turn to the children. He tells them Bible stories. How the rooster crowed when Peter denied Christ. You shouldn't make fun of an ass. He carried Jesus to Egypt and carried him to Jerusalem. The shepherds with their sheep the first to be with Jesus when he was born. They knew of the birth from the angels, even before the kings did.

The evening was over. He walks out with the guests. Looking up at the sky he says—"Safra", there'll be a frost. How can you know that? ask the children.

According to the stars. Look, how many have come out and how clearly they shine. They aren't flickering. You can see bulls, chickens, a wagon, scales, a dog, fish—all farm names. There isn't as much sand on earth as there are stars in the heavens. From the time God lit them, they're hanging there. The stars saw Christ in the garden, praying. They saw JanZizka, Bonaparte, they see us. They all part, hearing Cimbura's voice, and can't wait to come visit again.

The next time grandpa tells the children about the castle ruin of Helfenburk. How in Mlaka under the castle horse thieves dyed the horses different colors, then took them to Netolice to the horse fair to sell. Of the assuary of Putim and the French buried there. God is everywhere, only fools believe in ghosts. Beware, and fear bad people but nothing else on earth.

My father, "God give him heaven", didn't like spiders. He used to think—why did God create them? One night when he was sleeping, a spider fell from the ceiling right on his cheek! He jumped up saw a light in another part of the house. Hop, hop, he was out and saw burglars jumping out of the window. "We would have been robbed", if it wouldn't have been for that spider.

And grandpa, says Honzik, will there be horses in heaven? "That's for sure", full of fire. I can't wait to get there so I can tame them. First I will look for those who took Elias, the prophet, to heaven. And then the horse on which rode St. Vaclav against the Germans in Chlum, a purebred I've always heard. If the hired men there don't have him well kept, they'll get a tongue lashing from me. That will be good grandpa. And how about oxen? They'll be there too, and asses. Why, they were at the manger of Jesus. And how about the dog who ran alongside Tobias?—and bees? Grandpa opens the Bible and shows them Peter with all the animals that were taken to heaven. When God created everything, He not only created for himself but for us also. The only things that won't be there will be the things man created, like whiskey, beer, machines, swords—those were created by the devil. Why won't there be arms there if there are soldiers there?, asked Venclik. Cimbura thought "darn those kids, they're a cross to me already". Well, the soldiers have the lightning but nothing else.

So, ended the winter in Putim. By St. Dorothy's day a shirt should dry on a fence. Spring is coming and Cimbura's time to train the children starts.

Tonicek Zezulka, the youngest of their children, is tapping on Cimbura's window. Grandpa, grandpa, come out. I have a new horse to show you, a white one. The window opens but it's grandma. "Come in, don't stand by

the window. Grandpa isn't feeling good and is in bed. Tonicek comes in pulling his toy horse on wheels. Aha! I see him under the feather tick, only his white head peeking out. Grandpa what are you doing? The sun has come over Hanzlik's pond and you're still sleeping. The swallow has flown over nine fields and you're still sleeping? Ach! Little boy, I'm lazy. I could sleep all the time he says in a weak voice. "You're just like I am, says Tonicek. My mother chases me out of bed. Grandma take a broom and chase grandpa out too. Visits were like this every day and MarJanka's heart was aching, because the little ones didn't understand that Grandpa Cimbura is waiting for death.

Sometimes on sunny days they would get him to come out. He would shuffle with his cane and grandma would bring a pillow to put on the bench so it would be soft for grandpa to sit. The children soon tired. Grandpa couldn't hear or see well and would forget himself. His stories would get mixed up. So the children would stay only awhile and frrr—run somewhere else. So, grandpa mainly sits alone and enjoys listening to the sounds of the village. The squeak of wheels, the rattle of wagons, the rustle of leaves, the splashing of the river. He can recognize whose wagon it is going by, the people whose footsteps he knows, the horses. This is the daily music he hears. He gives the little chicks crumbs. When they hear a hawk there isn't a peep out of them. The mother hen, he thinks can be a good example to people mothers. An ant crawls on his leg and he remembers how he went into the woods and stuck his hand into an ant nest and how the ants perfumed his hand better than any Paris perfume. He remembers other smells—the smell of stack of hay or clover. How he would lift a handful to his nose. Where are those times? A swallow flies by his head circling. You are a bird of God. No other bird can fly like that, the foolish sparrow goes frrr frrr away, the pigeon flops its wings and you like a soul quietly swoops.

He looks at his old apple tree. How many birds have already hatched in you? and swung in your branches. How many sweet apples have you given us. He looks at the clouds floating by. Where are you hurrying—where did you come from? He knows all of the clouds and what they bring. The change of day which is different in the morning, noon and night. Different in the seasons. He never tires of it. Cimbura like a true born artist sees what others don't. He likes sitting alone and not be bothered and hopes they leave him alone. What charm aloneness has for him and what treasures open up for him. Oh! Why didn't he know this sooner. What do you think of all the time grandpa? Say his visitors. I pray, he replies but doesn't lie because all his thoughts now are witness to what he used to say: the heavens tell us the glory of God. The earth isn't dead but the spirit of God is over everything. Cimbura sees His steps, His wisdom, sees His love. "Glory to God the father, the Son, the Holy Spirit." He Cimbura could not tell God no better words than that.

Where are you going Martin? He asks one day when he sees him hitching the oxen to the wagon. What has happened to grandpa, does this mean a change for the better? It's been a long time since he's inquired about anything. I'm going to plow down the clover. MarJanka went ahead of me. She will cut along the edge and I will bring that home. Throw some straw in the wagon. I'm going with you. "Daddy the oxen work good for me. There is no need to come along to urge them on. Sit and be comfortable." "I'm not going—to walk by the oxen. I'm going to part with the fields, throw some pea straw in the wagon." Martin knows his father. He knows what he once says he won't back down.

"Go, slowly across the whole village and don't talk to me." The oxen plod slowly. "Just once more before I die, I want to see everything. They drive by the church, the cemetery, he nods his head. It won't be long they'll carry me there. They'll sing nicely for me. Aha! There they are—the houses standing in a row. Look, at Hubacek's they built a new room, Jan Piksa has a newly white washed house, at Srnka's a new roof. So, so, they will all carry me so they can say—I too carried old Cimbura to the cemetery. The wagon rattles loudly over the bridge. "We're over the bridge and chapel where he doffs his hat. There is an elderberry bush by the chapel and everyone should put his hat in his hands. Everything from the bush is useful, the blossom, the root, leaves, the branches for a garden fence. They go into the cabbage field and all the growing plants greet him. Cloves, good for all sore, strawberry leaves for cough, chamomile for tea. He sees young MarJanka cutting and the old one behind her raking. Cimbura smiles mischievously. "Look who I'm bringing you" calls Martin. Oh my, grandpa. "Pay attention to your work and don't bother with me. Martin took the plow off the wagon. The damp earth turned black. Cimbura's eyes teared. He wanted badly to plow. I don't have strength in my legs or arms, clover is hard to plow. I love the smell of fresh dirt. Well, they'll lay me there soon. He's plowing well, his plow is well sharpened, the furrows are turning over nicely. That's why Cimbura used to plow. Then he would seed winter winter wheat. Often he would check to see how it was wintering. When the spring rain came he would jump out of bed quickly—everything was green. One May rain is more dear than Praha. He thought of all the summer work, the ripe grains. "Even I am like grain." Death a wonderful reaper, it will cut me down and God in His heavenly barn will test the grains, the good deeds he'll take away from the sins. Well, I will still think about that. What He will ask, what I will reply. I'm not ready for that yet. I will have to call the priest.

Time flies, the women are done, good, I will ride home with Martin alone when he finishes. They go, grandpa deep in the clover. He sees old Mrs. Pelikan grazing her cow along the border and smiles. Smart cow, she leaves the weeds stand. Who taught that cow long long ago to know the difference between the good grass and the bad

weed. She knows it as if she had opened Jan's botanical book and flipped the pages with her tongue to look at the poisonous weeds. Ja! That Lord God is a fine teacher. Cimbura smiles. Old Pelikan thinks he's smiling at her, instead it's the cow. They came over small hill with a wonderful view. Stop, Martin, stop. He raises up from the clover. In the west over Steknice the sun was setting, parting with the area. He looks towards Pisek. He sees the Hradiste forest, Boubin, he looks towards Semice. (There must be an error on Boubin which is many miles south, unless there was a Boubin there which doesn't exist now.) He sees Mehelnik, the Hurky, he turns toward Herman, Protivin and Vodnan, Drahonicky castle, Chvaletice, Krtetice, Stozice. He has to shade his eyes to the west. Behind Strakonice the Sumava mountains are in the background. "My birth home" he cries, noble and beautiful, I see you for the last time. As you supported us you will support our children, don't let yourself be sold and stay ours forever and ever. Amen. He finished his prayer. The sun had set.

Martin wiped his tears and hurried his oxen on. Cimbura realized that life was the greatest gift of God—the end is nearing. "Aja" I haven't left the earth yet. I still can hear the voices of life in me. I enjoyed life again. But all is useless. Almost 90 years the Lord has left me here, but no more. They helped him from the wagon into his bed. Nothing interested him anymore, he just liked being alone. He felt the ties between his body and soul loosening. Cimbura now understands things which previously he hadn't understood. Now he knows that Kudrna will get drunk only he has a bad wife. Kratočvil goes into debt because he is vain and braggish. Skucek is always suing because he is envious. Sobec and not Bezdeka plowed part of my field to his own. Bezdek just does what Sobec tells him. Love would straighten everything out. That is a spring from which people would drink, all bad things would fall away. We wouldn't need soldiers, police, gamekeepers, and lawyers. Why is all of this for? Like from a drama he said: "Children, I tell you this, love each other." For several days after he didn't talk.

People are necessary to be taken care of just like trees that need to be staked so they wouldn't grow crooked, the soul needs to be weeded just like a field of bad weeds. That can be only done the teachings of Christ. Nothing grows well in a shade. Lord, now I understand. I see things differently. If only the Prince would be here we would understand each other.

That understanding made his heart lighter. A great celebration came into his soul as though she grew wings and would fly away.

But she can't fly yet. He isn't ready with everything. He's made his peace with the earth but he still hasn't everything in order with God. He can't die now. There is too much work to be done, winter wheat has to be sown,

potatoes dug, the field then plowed, there wouldn't be time to bury Cimbura—die now—that wouldn't work! He reminds everyone to hurry with their work, snow will soon be falling. "But daddy you won't die yet"—comforts Martins yet. Foolish that's the way you talk to sick people. You should say "Daddy, you are really old, almost too old, you might die on us. We should send for a priest. We're arranging for eternity here. Dress right away, jump and go tell the priest when he goes by to stop here. Why, he's asked about you many times said MarJanka. He misses you in church.

Good, good, waved Cimbura. He wanted to be alone again. After dinner the priest came. Cimbura was waiting. He wasn't in bed but sitting at the table dressed up.

"I'm thinking neighbor" said the priest that the Lord God is calling you to himself to retirement. "I think so too" replied Cimbura. "And are you happily waiting for this?" You know, Christ the Lord loves farmers and has them in his best regard. "That, yes" nodded happily Cimbura. Day and night I think about it, what I should say when I come to heaven and judgement. "What have you decided on?" "I think I will say Jan Cimbura from Putim, a farmer and I will box my head, low, but I will mention to them that down there on earth I never bowed to anyone, not even the Prince, the mayor, or judge, not even Miltner or his lady, or the priest. I just greeted them all but here I bow. You will do good. If I were you, I would kneel. "Well, not yet." That will come. As soon as I greet them, my little angel Venclíček will come running towards me. Right away I will ask after my father and mother, then old Cernoch and Kovanda and if they wouldn't have time then for sure Píkša. Either the angel will call them or show me the way. I will ask all of them how I'm supposed to act. They have to go with me to our Czech saints like St. Vaclav and grandma St. Ludmila, then to St. Prokop, Vojtech, Jan Nepomucky, Cyril and Methoděj, and I won't quit begging until they take me to St. Vavrinec, patron saint of our parish then with him I will go to see the Blessed Virgin Mary. I will be full of fear whether she will hear me out and take me to her son.

"I think she will surely take you for it hasn't been heard that she wouldn't hear when someone asks for her help, and you have called on her and adored her with your rosary." If she will go with us, I won't be a bit afraid but shake with joy. Then when I see Jesus Christ I will fall on my face and say: Lord Jesus, you know all but I, Jan Cimbura, am telling on myself. I was no drinker or fighter but when we gathered for our "memories" I had something to drink and when necessary fought and my memory tells me that in the war at Solferina, I likely killed. I could have done more good works, scold less, pray more and talk less.

The parish priest now begins to talk. They go through the Ten Commandments, the five religious rules, his main sins. He then parts with him say: Yes, yes, you have taken

truth a person doesn't assure himself a road to heaven by many "our fathers", masses, festivals, money, but living well throughout your life. Tomorrow after mass I will come to give you the last sacraments.

IX

Strengthened by Holy Communion, Cimbura waited for the festival to eternity. At Christmas time all his children and relatives came to part with him.

Whatever big parting we have now, we will soon meet again. Whoever comes from Putim after me, I will ask about, and I tell you, I don't want to hear anything bad about you. Love each other, give alms, farm as though you will be here forever, pray as though might die tomorrow. He traced the sign of the cross on each one's forehead and they kissed his hand. They all cried but Cimbura's soul stayed peaceful and strong. "Don't cry, foolish ones, reminding them "the body dies but not the soul". The body is fertilizer, dust and ashes and from that grows a blossom—the undying soul. I'm an old creation of God and am waiting for the curtain to part and will see with my own eyes all that I've believed throughout my life—just let me go quietly.

It was the 17th day of January, the year of our Lord 1898 on St. Antonin's Day when Cimbura clearly and truly felt his last hour was coming. "Call Martin, and take me off the bed and lay me on the bare ground" he said to his wife and then as though a fog rose from far away waters and spread around him. The people, pictures, window, door, ceiling, the candle which they carried around him, the little bell they rang, the smothered crying. Why are you crying, pray the rosary—now—out loud. Sterba started the prayer. When he finished the tenth bead and said "He carried the heavy cross for us", grandpa lifted his head and said "pst—do you hear?" All the bells are ringing, the most St. Vavrinec Church. His hand wiped the hair from his forehead, his hand fell and moved no more.

Death had surrounded him and kissed him. They dressed him in his Sunday clothes. Laid him on the long wooden bench. Everyone in the whole village goes about their work on tip toes. They know the dead one, while under his roof, hears everything as if alive and if he heard all the noise would get up to scold. The women are busy baking "God's gifts" for the poor, braided bread for the relatives and friends who will gather for the funeral. Martin arranged for necessary things, the priest, at the school, the grave digger. Guests are coming, the coffin maker comes to measure grandpa for shroud and coffin.

Children come with pictures to lay on grandpa's body. Martin lifts the little ones so they can make the sign of the cross, the brush of wheat heads to dip into the holy water to bless him. The older ones explain to the little ones.

"Grandpa isn't sleeping, he is dead, they will carry him to the cemetery and lay him in his grave.

The day in winter is like and?? Inch and the night like six feet. In the evening the villagers will come to part with grandpa. Half the villagers from house #1 to 30 will come one evening the other half the next evening.

Sterbe, Verunka's husband, started the rosary. When he finished he started to sing.

"Yound, nice, strong
now I am dust, ashes, bones
my body they are dividing
the frogs, worms"
"After death we are strong
rich or poor
lord, Prince or student
they're no different than a farmer."

Everyone talks of Cimbura's deeds, how he rode into the fiery woods on Belacek to save the children. Or when Roucek's horses were sinking under the bridge. Sterba says the Lord's prayer, trims the wick on the oil lamp. The songs start again.

"Now, with you I'm parting
I'm giving you to our Lord God
I'm leaving you with the Lord
I'll not see you anymore.
What good was my strength against death
Like a small sleeping child
On a board you behold me
You're preparing to follow this road
Prepare your battle for a clean soul
to be wed to your Lord Christ."

So, so it's most important to die like Cimbura. Neighbor Vasat: prepare your body not only with a shroud but your soul in your Sunday best, so they wouldn't say up there "how did you get here, you aren't dressed in your best." That's what Cimbura was concerned about. Remember how he used to remind us—feel with your heart towards the poor, even the priest couldn't compare to Cimbura in preaching—feed the hungry, give water to the thirsty, cloth the poor, welcome them to your home. He not only preached it but himself carried it out. The night watchman is blowing ten o'clock. "Dear daddy" it's time to end our visit with you, to say good night and give you peace. All the villagers stand around the coffin. The men stand around stiff as stone. Their cheeks cleanly shaven, long hair, their hands folded. Sterba starts a song:

"The last hour is striking
death is approaching us,
with the will of God
we are slowly dying
to a place we all know
there with you we'll meet again."

They each made the sign of the cross over Cimbura and one by one they left. The next day, a day before the funeral, the church bells rang what is called “Hrana”, at midday. Everyone who came MarJanka gave each a small loaf of bread call “Bozidar”, (God’s gift). It had the cross cut into it. The poor call it “Dusicka” (little soul). In the evening the second half of the villagers came. They prayed, sang and parted the same as the night before. Snow lay on the ground up to one’s knees, the air crispy cold.

Did you hear? It was hard digging the grave. They had to thaw the ground. But it’ll be nice tomorrow. They all looked towards the heavens.

Came the third day, the day of the funeral. Only strangers came to bless him with holy, then left, to make room for the relatives. Cimbura was laid out in a black coffin, with a shroud around him. The children had put holy pictures around him and the family had made a wreath around the coffin. Whoever entered said “Potes vas Pan Buh” (Let the Lord God comfort you) and Martin replied for the family (“Dejz to Pan Buh”) (return it to the Lord God). He did not look at anyone so it wouldn’t be thought he’s looking to see who all is here. The horse bells tinkled, the squeak of the sleigh runners was heard. Someone is coming. They all wondered who it could be since every villager was here. Strangers don’t drive to a funeral, they just walk. It isn’t a farmer Martin knows. He has a city fur coat, long. He can hardly walk through the door. He has a gray beard, everyone steps back. A servant carried a bouquet of fresh flowers. He stpes by the casket and lays a fresh flower on his chest instead of a holy card. He blessed Cimbura with the sign of the cross, knelt, prayed, then went not to Martin, but to MarJanka first to give her his sympathy. Martin doesn’t know what to reply so says “return it to the Lord”. He finally recognized him. “Oh! My dear Lord it’s the Prince himself and starts to cry loudly. Just then the singers and priest come and sing in the yard.

“I am finishing my last road
to eternity from far away,
Im’ hurrying to the Eternal City
To my dear father land.

Martin kisses his father’s hand once more and nails the lid of the coffin down. Little snowflakes are falling. Martin and Jan (Honzik) carry the casket. They make the sign of the cross three times on the casket as they pass through each doorway. The women quickly turn the bench feet up on which the casket stood and hurry out.

Everyone from the whole wide area stands in the yard. Especially the farmer-horsemen like to a horse fair. From Kotrch came old Boubal and from Busanovic. The big farmer Sima and with him little Novak the jockey, the horse doctor and Psutka, who avoided people, came from

his farm away from the village. They all stand in fur coats and when they see the casket, doff their fur hats. The Prince stands out a head taller and the gentlemen from Pisek stand around him.

When the mass and singing was over and church bells rang, they buried Cimbura. The neighbors carried him, the sons and sons-in-law lowered the casket. The black casket is lying in the yellow clay, only the cross shines form that depth as if made of gold, not tin.

When the priest is finished praying he says now, Martin, give thanks.

“Our father dear—he himself can’t go to funerals anymore. All of you came leading him. That’s why in your name daddy, I say to all of you “return it to the Lord”.

“He was a good man who wouldn’t harm a little chick much less would he hurt man or child. If he angered anyone, he gave me strict orders when he last talked to me that from his grave I ask his forgiveness, when his eyes and mouth are closed. That is why I beg men, women, oldsters, the birds in the air, fish in the water, forgive all his worldly errors.

Martin put his cap under his arm, folded his hands and knelt on the clay “forgive him Lord God”. Then each threw three handfuls of clay on the coffin, so that each took his turn the coffin was covered. From the church could be seen the Prince in his wolf’s furcoat heading for Pisek and how the crowd of people is hurrying after big Sima towards the tavern to “get drunk”.

So, he lived well, died and was buried still strong, farmer from South Cechy Jan Cimbura.

*At the Putim Cemetery, in its old part, near the door and church stands a cross. A large cast-iron cross in a granite base. It is gold and silver-plated. The body of our Lord glistens. You will recognize the new cross. Below the nailed feet of the cross is a tablet with this:

“Zemrelemu v Panu
Cimburovi January (in
rhyme)

Postavil nyini
Kriz ten jeho syni

Byl to Sedlak silny
Bohaty a Pilny
Rad mel v ziti shone
Lidi a pak kone

Odpocivej v Pokoji

(translation)

died in the Lord
Cimbura Jan
Built now
This cross his sons

He was a farmer strong
Rich and hard working
He liked activity in his life,
People, and then horses
rest in peace

“Yes, rest in peace Jan Cimbura, even we breathe a sigh
of relief when we finished after years this South Czech
idol.

From page 419

In ending “Jan Cimbura” I am grateful to my assistants.

First of all my Uncle Josef Baar, adviser, bishops notary,
parish priest of Putim. He had introduced me to Jan
Cimbura in 1886 and during many of my school vacations
I was his guest when I interviewed him. However he died
before the book was finished.

For the good people of Putim let this be a memorial to
him and to myself. My days spent between the people
there are the happiest in my life. To them for their love
belongs my appreciation and thanks above else.

My book was edited, corrected, by my loyal friend, good
son of this old noble area of Prachatice, Mr. Frantisek
Teply archivist and historical writer in Jindrichove
Hradce. (Jindrichuv Hradec)

In Klenci day 6 July 1921

Jindrich Simon Baar