
**ST. PETER'S
UMBRELLA**

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Publio Publishing

2013

The Legend PART I

CHAPTER I. LITTLE VERONICA IS TAKEN AWAY.

The schoolmaster's widow at the Haláp was dead. When a schoolmaster dies there is not much of a funeral, but when his widow follows him, there is still less fuss made. And this one had left nothing but a goat, a goose she had been fattening, and a tiny girl of two years. The goose ought to have been fattened at least a week longer, but the poor woman had not been able to hold out so long. As far as the goose was concerned she had died too soon, for the child it was too late. In fact, she ought never to have been born. It would have been better had the woman died when her husband did. (Dear me, what a splendid voice that man had to be sure!)

The child was born some months after its father's death. The mother was a good, honest woman, but after all it did not seem quite right, for they already had a son, a priest, a very good son on the whole, only it was a pity he could not help his mother a bit; but he was very poor himself, and lived a long way off in Wallachia, as chaplain to an old priest. But it was said that two weeks ago he had been presented with a living in a small village called Glogova, somewhere in the mountains between Selmezbánya and Besztercebánya. There was a man in Haláp, János Kapiczány, who had passed there once when he was driving some oxen to a fair, and he

said it was a miserable little place.

And now the schoolmaster's widow must needs go and die, just when her son might have been able to help her a little. But no amount of talking would bring her back again, and I must say, for the honor of the inhabitants of Haláp, that they gave the poor soul a very decent funeral.

There was not quite enough money collected to defray the expenses, so they had to sell the goat to make up the sum; but the goose was left, though there was nothing for it to feed on, so it gradually got thinner and thinner, till it was its original size again; and instead of waddling about in the awkward, ungainly way it had done on account of its enormous size, it began to move in a more stately manner; in fact, its life had been saved by the loss of another. God in His wisdom by taking one life often saves another, for, believe me, senseless beings are entered in His book as well as sensible ones, and He takes as much care of them as of kings and princes.

The wisdom of God is great, but that of the judge of Haláp was not trifling either. He ordered that after the funeral the little girl (Veronica was her name) was to spend one day at every house in the village in turns, and was to be looked after as one of the family.

"And how long is that to last?" asked one of the villagers.

"Until I deign to give orders to the contrary," answered the judge shortly. And so things went on for ten days, until Máté Billeghi decided to take his wheat to Besztercebánya to sell, for he had heard that the Jews down that way were not

yet so sharp as in the neighborhood of Haláp. This was a good chance for the judge.

"Well," he said, "if you take your wheat there, you may as well take the child to her brother. Glogova must be somewhere that way."

"Not a bit of it," was the answer, "it is in a totally different direction."

"It *must* be down that way if I wish it," thundered out the judge.

Billeghi tried to get out of it, saying it was awkward for him, and out of his way. But it was of no use, when the judge ordered a thing, it had to be done. So one Wednesday they put the sacks of wheat into Billeghi's cart, and on the top of them a basket containing Veronica and the goose, for the latter was, of course, part of the priest's inheritance. The good folks of the village had made shortbread and biscuits for the little orphan to take with her on her journey out into the great world, and they also filled a basket with pears and plums; and as the cart drove off, many of them shed tears for the poor little waif, who had no idea where they were taking her to, but only saw that when the horses began to move, she still kept her place in the basket, and only the houses and trees seemed to move.

CHAPTER II. GLOGOVA AS IT USED TO BE.

Not only the worthy Kapiczány had seen Glogova, the writer of these pages has also been there. It is a miserable little place in a narrow valley between bare mountains. There is not a decent road for miles around, much less a railway. Nowadays they say there is some sort of an old-fashioned engine, with a carriage or two attached, which plies between Besztercebánya and Selmeczbánya, but even that does not pass near to Glogova. It will take at least five hundred years to bring it up to that pitch of civilization other villages have reached.

The soil is poor, a sort of clay, and very little will grow there except oats and potatoes, and even these have to be coaxed from the ground. A soil like that cannot be spoken of as "Mother Earth," it is more like "Mother-in-law Earth." It is full of pebbles, and has broad cracks here and there, on the borders of which a kind of whitish weed grows, called by the peasants "orphans' hair." Is the soil too old? Why, it cannot be older than any other soil, but its strength has been used up more rapidly. Down below in the plain they have been growing nothing but grass for about a thousand years, but up here enormous oak-trees used to grow; so it is no wonder that the soil has lost its strength. Poverty and misery are to be found here, and yet a certain feeling of romance takes possession of one at the sight of it. The ugly peasant huts seem only to heighten the beauty of the enormous rocks which rise above us. It would be a sin to build castles there, which, with their ugly modern towers, would hide those wild-looking rocks.

The perfume of the elder and juniper fills the air, but there are no other flowers, except here and there in one of

the tiny gardens, a mallow, which a barefooted, fair-haired Slovak girl tends, and waters from a broken jug. I see the little village before me, as it was in 1873, when I was there last; I see its small houses, the tiny gardens sown partly with clover, partly with maize, with here and there a plum-tree, its branches supported by props. For the fruit-trees at least did their duty, as though they had decided to make up to the poor Slovaks for the poverty of their harvest.

When I was there the priest had just died, and we had to take an inventory of his possessions. There was nothing worth speaking of, a few bits of furniture, old and well worn, and a few shabby cassocks. But the villagers were sorry to lose the old priest.

"He was a good man," they said, "but he had no idea of economy, though, after all, he had not very much to economize with."

"Why don't you pay your priest better?" we asked. And a big burly peasant answered:

"The priest is not our servant, but the servant of God, and every master must pay his own servant."

After making the inventory, and while the coachman was harnessing the horses, we walked across the road to have a look at the school, for my companion was very fond of posing as a patron of learning.

The schoolhouse was small and low, with a simple, thatched roof. Only the church had a wooden roof, but even the House of God was very simply built, and there was no tower to it, only a small belfry at one side.

The schoolmaster was waiting for us. If I remember rightly his name was György Majzik. He was a strong, robust-looking man, with an interesting, intelligent face, and a plain, straightforward way of speaking which immediately awoke a feeling of friendship in one. He took us in to see the children; the girls sat on one side, the boys on the other, all as tidy and clean as possible. They rose on our entrance, and in a singing voice said:

"Vitajtye panyi, vitajtye!" (Good-morning, honored sirs!)

My companion put a few questions to the rosy, round-faced children, who stared at us with their large brown eyes. They all had brown eyes. The questions were, of course, not difficult, but they caused the children an amount of serious thinking. However, my friend was indulgent, and he only patted the schoolmaster on the back and said:

"I am quite contented with their answers, my friend."

The schoolmaster bowed, then, with his head held high, he accompanied us out to the road.

CHAPTER III. THE NEW PRIEST AT GLOGOVA.

The new priest had arrived in the only cart the villagers had at their disposal. Two cows were harnessed to it, and on the way the sacristan stopped to milk them, and then offered some of the milk to the young priest.

"It's very good milk," he said, "especially Bimbo's."

His reverence's luggage was not bulky; it consisted of a plain wooden box, a bundle of bed-clothes, two walking-sticks, and some pipes tied together with string. As they passed through the various villages the sacristan was often chaffed by the inhabitants.

"Well," they called out to him, "couldn't you find a better conveyance than that for your new priest?"

Whereupon the sacristan tried to justify his fellow-villagers by saying with a contemptuous look at the luggage in the cart:

"It's good enough, I'm sure. Why, a calf a month old could draw those things."

But if he had not brought much with him in the way of worldly goods, János Bélyi did not find much either in his new parish, which appeared to be going to wreck and ruin. The relations of the dead priest had taken away every stick they could lay hands on, and had only left a dog, his favorite. It was a dog such as one sees every day, as far as his shape and coat were concerned, but he was now in a very unpleasant position. After midday he began to wander from house to house in the village, slinking into the kitchens; for his master had been in the habit of dining every day with one or other of his parishioners, and always took his dog with him.

The dog's name was Vistula, but his master need not have gone so far to find the name of a river, when the Bjela Voda flowed right through the meadows outside the village. (The Hungarian peasants generally give their dogs the name of a river, thinking it prevents hydrophobia.) The dog had already

begun to feel that he and the priest together had been better received than he alone, though, until now, he had always imagined, with his canine philosophy, that his master had in reality been eating more than his share of the food. But now he saw the difference, for he was driven away from the houses where he had once been an honored guest. So altogether he was in a very miserable, lean condition when the new priest arrived. The sacristan had shown him his new home, with its four bare walls, its garden overgrown with weeds, its empty stable and fowl-house. The poor young man smiled.

"And is that all mine?" he asked.

"All of it, everything you see here," was the answer, "and this dog too."

"Whose dog is it?"

"It belonged to the poor dead priest, God rest his soul. We wanted to kill the poor beast, but no one dares to, for they say that the spirit of his old master would come back and haunt us."

The dog was looking at the young priest in a melancholy, almost tearful way; perhaps the sight of the cassock awoke sad memories in him.

"I will keep him," said the priest, and stooping down he patted the dog's lean back. "At all events there will be some living thing near me."

"That will be quite right," said the sacristan. "One must make a beginning, though one generally gets something

worth watching first, and then looks out for a watch-dog. But it doesn't matter if it is the other way about."

János Bélyi smiled (he had a very winning smile, like a girl's), for he saw that old Vistula would not have much to do, in fact would be quite like a private gentleman in comparison to his companions.

All this time people had been arriving in the yard to have a look at the new priest; the women kept at a distance, and said: "Dear me! so young and already in holy orders!"

The men went up and shook hands with him, saying, "God bless you! May you be happy with us!"

An old woman called out, "May you be with us till your death!"

The older women admired his looks, and remarked how proud his mother must be of him.

In fact the new priest seemed to have taken every one's fancy, and he spoke a few words with them all, and then said he was tired, and went across to the schoolmaster's, for he was to live there for a time till he could get his own place a bit straight, and until he saw some signs of an income.

Only a few of the more important villagers accompanied him to talk over the state of affairs: Péter Szlávik, the sacristan; Mihály Gongoly, the nabob of Glogova; and the miller, György Klincsok. He began to question them, and took out his note-book, in order to make notes as to what his income was likely to be.

"How many inhabitants are there in the village?"

"Rather less than five hundred."

"And how much do they pay the priest?"

They began to reckon out how much wood they had to give, how much corn, and how much wine. The young priest looked more and more serious as they went on.

"That is very little," he said sadly. "And what are the fees?"

"Oh, they are large enough," answered Klincsook; "at a funeral it depends on the dead person, at a wedding it depends on the people to be married; but they are pretty generous on that occasion as a rule; and at a christening one florin is paid. I'm sure that's enough, isn't it?"

"And how many weddings are there in a year?"

"Oh, that depends on the potato harvest. Plenty of potatoes, plenty of weddings. The harvest decides it; but as a rule there are at least four or five."

"That is not many. And how many deaths occur?"

"That depends on the quality of the potato harvest. If the potatoes are bad, there are many deaths, if they are good, there are less deaths, for we are not such fools as to die then. Of course now and then a falling tree in the woods strikes one or the other dead; or an accident happens to a cart, and the driver is killed. You may reckon a year with eight deaths a good one as far as you are concerned."

"But they don't all belong to the priest," said the nabob of Glogova, smoothing back his hair.

"Why, how is that?" asked the priest.

"Many of the inhabitants of Glogova are never buried in the cemetery at all. The wolves eat them without ever announcing it in the parish."

"And some die in other parts of the country," went on György Klincsok, "so that only very few of them are buried here."

"It is a bad lookout," said the priest. "But the parish fields, what about them?"

Now they all wanted to speak at once, but Klincsok pulled the sacristan aside, and stood up in front of the priest.

"Fields?" he said. "Why you can have as much ground as you like. If you want one hundred acres ..."

"One hundred acres!" shouted Szlávik, "five hundred if you like; we shall not refuse our priest any amount of ground he likes to ask for."

The priest's countenance began to clear, but honest Szlávik did not long leave him in doubt.

"The fact is," he began, "the boundaries of the pasture-lands of Glogova are not well defined to this day. There are no proper title-deeds; there was some arrangement made with regard to them, but in 1823 there was a great fire here, and all our documents were burnt. So every one takes as much of the land as he and his family can till. Each man ploughs his own field, and when it is about used up he looks out a fresh bit of land. So half the ground is always unused, of course the worst part, into which it is not worth while

putting any work."

"I see," sighed the priest, "and that half belongs to the church."

It was not a very grand lookout, but by degrees he got used to the idea of it, and if unpleasant thoughts would come cropping up, he dispersed them by a prayer. When praying, he was on his own ground, a field which always brought forth fruit; he could reap there at any minute all he was in need of—patience, hope, comfort, content. He set to work to get his house in order, so that he could at least be alone. Luckily he had found in the next village an old school friend, Tamás Urszinyi, a big, broad-shouldered man, plain-spoken, but kind-hearted.

"Glogova is a wretched hole," he said, "but not every place can be the Bishopric of Neutra. However, you will have to put up with it as it is. Daniel was worse off in the lions' den, and after all these are only sheep."

"Which have no wool," remarked his reverence, smiling.

"They have wool, but you have not the shears."

In a few days he had furnished his house with the money he had borrowed of his friend, and one fine autumn afternoon he was able to take possession of his own house. Oh, how delightful it was to arrange things as he liked! What pleasant dreams he would have lying in his own bed, on pillows made by his own mother! He thought over it all when he lay down to sleep, and before going to sleep he counted the corners of the room so as to be sure and remember his dreams. (The Hungarian peasants say, that when you sleep in a room for

the first time you must count the corners, then you will remember your dream, which is sure to come true.) He remembered his dream the next morning, and it was a very pleasant one. He was chasing butterflies in the fields outside his native village, looking for birds' nests, playing games with the boys and girls, having a quarrel with Pali Szabó, and they were just coming to blows when some one tapped at the window outside.

The priest awoke and rubbed his eyes. It was morning, the sun was shining into the room.

"Who is it?" he called out.

"Open the door, Jankó!"

Jankó! Who was calling him Jankó? It seemed to him as though it were one of his old schoolfellows, from whom he had just parted in his dream.

He jumped out of bed and ran to the window.

"Who is it?" he repeated.

"It is I," was the answer, "Máté Billeghi from your old home. Come out, Jankó, no, I mean of course, please come out, your reverence. I've brought something."

The priest dressed hastily. His heart was beating fast with a kind of presentiment that he was to hear bad news. He opened the door and stepped out.

"Here I am, Mr. Billeghi; what have you brought me?"

But Mr. Billeghi had left the window and gone back to the cart, where he was unfastening the basket containing little

Veronica and the goose. The horses hung their heads, and one of them tried to lie down, but the shaft was in the way, and when he tried the other side, he felt the harness cutting into his side, which reminded him that he was not in the stable, and a horse's honorable feeling will not allow of its lying down, as long as it is harnessed to the cart. There must be something serious the matter to induce it to lie down in harness, for a horse has a high sense of duty.

Máté Billeghi now turned round and saw the priest standing near him.

"Hallo, Jankó! Why, how you have grown! How surprised your mother would be if she were alive! Bother this rope, I did make a firm knot in it!"

The priest took a step toward the cart, where Billeghi was still struggling with the knot. The words, "if your mother were alive," had struck him like a blow, his head began to swim, his legs to tremble.

"Are you speaking of my mother?" he stammered. "Is my mother dead?"

"Yes, poor woman, she has given up the ghost. But" (and here he took out his knife and began to cut the rope) "here is your little sister, Jankó, that is, I mean, your reverence; my memory is as weak as a chicken's, and I always forget whom I am talking to. I've brought your reverence's little sister; where shall I put her down?"

And with that he lifted up the basket in which the child was sleeping soundly with the goose beside her. The bird seemed to be acting the part of nurse to her, driving off the

flies which tried to settle on her little red mouth.

The autumn sunlight fell on the basket and the sleeping child, and Máté was standing with his watery blue eyes fixed on the priest's face, waiting for a word or a sign from him.

"Dead!" he murmured after a time. "Impossible. I had no feeling of it." He put his hand to his head, saying sadly, "No one told me, and I was not there at the funeral."

"I was not there either," said Máté, as though that would console the other for his absence; and then added, as an afterthought:

"God Almighty took her to Himself, He called her to His throne. He doesn't leave one of us here. Bother those frogs, now I've trodden on one!"

There were any amount of them in the weedy courtyard of the Presbytery; they came out of the holes in the damp walls of the old church.

"Where shall I put the child?" repeated Mr. Billeghi, but as he received no answer, he deposited her gently on the small veranda.

The priest stood with his eyes fixed on the ground; it seemed to him as though the earth, with the houses and gardens, Máté Billeghi and the basket, were all running away, and only he was standing there, unable to move one way or the other. From the Ukrica woods in the distance there came a rustling of leaves, seeming to bring with it a sound that spoke to his heart, the sound of his mother's voice. He listened, trembling, and trying to distinguish the words.

Again they are repeated; what are they?

"János, János, take care of my child!"

But while János was occupied in listening to voices from a better land, Máté was getting tired of waiting, and muttering something to himself about not getting even a "thank you" for his trouble, he prepared to start.

"Well, if that's the way they do things in these parts, I'll be off," he grumbled, and cracking his whip he added, "Good-by, your reverence. Gee-up, Sármany!"

Father János still gave no answer, did not even notice what was going on around him, and the horses were moving on, Máté Billeghi walking beside them, for they had to go uphill now, and the good man was muttering to himself something about its being the way of the world, and only natural that if a chicken grows into a peacock, of course the peacock does not remember the time when it was a chicken. When he got up to the top of the hill he turned round and saw the priest still standing in the same place, and, making one last effort to attract his attention, he shouted:

"Well, I've given you what I was told to, so good-by."

The priest's senses at last returned from the paths in which they had been wandering, far away, with his mother. In imagination he was kneeling at her death-bed, and with her last breath she was bidding him take care of his little sister.

There was no need for it to be written nor to be telegraphed to him; there were higher forces which

communicated the fact to him.

János's first impulse was to run after Máté, and ask him to stop and tell him all about his mother, how she had lived during the last two years, how she had died, how they had buried her, in fact, everything. But the cart was a long way off by now, and, besides, his eyes at that moment caught sight of the basket and its contents, and they took up his whole attention.

His little sister was still asleep in the basket. The young priest had never yet seen the child, for he had not been home since his father's funeral, and she was not born then; so he had only heard of her existence from his mother's letters, and they were always so short. János went up to the basket and looked at the small rosy face. He found it bore a strong resemblance to his mother's, and as he looked the face seemed to grow bigger, and he saw the features of his mother before him; but the vision only lasted a minute, and the child's face was there again. If she would only open her eyes! But they were firmly closed, and the long eyelashes lay like silken fringes on her cheeks.

"And I am to take care of this tiny creature?" thought János. "And I will take care of her. But how am I to do it? I have nothing to live on myself. What shall I do?"

He did as he always had done until now, when he had been in doubt, and turned toward the church in order to say a prayer there. The church was open, and two old women were inside, whitewashing the walls. So the priest did not go quite in but knelt down before a crucifix at the entrance.

CHAPTER IV. THE UMBRELLA AND ST. PETER.

Father János remained kneeling a long time and did not notice that a storm was coming up. When he came out of the church it was pouring in torrents, and before long the small mountain streams were so swollen that they came rushing down into the village street, and the cattle in their fright ran lowing into their stables.

János's first thought was that he had left the child on the veranda, and it must be wet through. He ran home as fast as he could, but paused with surprise before the house. The basket was where he had left it, the child was in the basket, and the goose was walking about in the yard. The rain was still coming down in torrents, the veranda was drenched, but on the child not a drop had fallen, for an immense red umbrella had been spread over the basket. It was patched and darned to such an extent that hardly any of the original stuff was left, and the border of flowers round it was all but invisible.

THE CHILD WAS IN THE BASKET

"THE CHILD WAS IN THE BASKET"

The young priest raised his eyes in gratitude to Heaven, and taking the child into his arms, carried it, under the red umbrella, into his room. The child's eyes were open now; they were a lovely blue, and gazed wonderingly into the priest's

face.

"It is really a blessing," he murmured, "that the child did not get wet through; she might have caught her death of cold, and I could not even have given her dry clothes."

But where had the umbrella come from? It was incomprehensible, for in the whole of Glogova there was not a single umbrella.

In the next yard some peasants were digging holes for the water to run into. His reverence asked them all in turn, had they seen no one with the child? No, they had seen the child, but as far as they knew no one had been near it. Old Widow Adamecz, who had run home from the fields with a shawl over her head, had seen something red and round, which seemed to fall from the clouds right over the child's head. Might she turn to stone that minute if it were not true, and she was sure the Virgin Mary had sent it down from Heaven herself to the poor orphan child.

Widow Adamecz was a regular old gossip; she was fond of a drop of brandy now and then, so it was no wonder she sometimes saw more than she ought to have done. The summer before, on the eve of the feast of Sts. Peter and Paul, she had seen the skies open, and Heaven was before her; she had heard the angels sing, as they passed in procession before God, sitting on a throne of precious stones. And among them she had seen her grandson, János Plachta, in a pretty red waistcoat which she herself had made him shortly before his death. And she had seen many of the inhabitants of Glogova who had died within the last few years, and they were all dressed in the clothes they had been buried in.

You can imagine that after that, when the news of her vision was spread abroad, she was looked upon as a very holy person indeed. All the villagers came to ask if she had seen their dead relations in the procession; this one's daughter, that one's father, and the other one's "poor husband!" They quite understood that such a miracle was more likely to happen to her than to any one else, for a miracle had been worked on her poor dead father András, even though he had been looked upon in life as something of a thief. For when the high road had had to be made broader eight years before, they were obliged to take a bit of the cemetery in order to do it, and when they had opened András's grave, so as to bury him again, they saw with astonishment that he had a long beard, though five witnesses swore to the fact that at the time of his death he was clean-shaven.

So they were all quite sure that old András was in Heaven, and having been an old cheat all his life he would, of course, manage even up above to leave the door open a bit now and then, so that his dear Agnes could have a peep at what was going on.

But Pál Kvapka, the bell-ringer, had another tale to tell. He said that when he had gone up the belfry to ring the clouds away, and had turned round for a minute, he saw the form of an old Jew crossing the fields beyond the village, and he had in his hands that immense red thing like a plate, which his reverence had found spread over the basket. Kvapka had thought nothing of it at the time, for he was sleepy, and the wind blew the dust in his eyes, but he could take an oath that what he had told them had really taken place. (And Pál Kvapka was a man who always spoke the

truth.) Others had also seen the Jew. He was old, tall, gray-haired, his back was bent, and he had a crook in his hand, and when the wind carried his hat away, they saw that he had a large bald place at the back of his head.

"He was just like the picture of St. Peter in the church," said the sacristan, who had seen him without his hat. "He was like it in every respect," he repeated, "except that he had no keys in his hand." From the meadow he had cut across Stropov's clover-field, where the Krátki's cow, which had somehow got loose, made a rush at him; in order to defend himself he struck at it with his stick (and from that time, you can ask the Krátki family if it is not true, the cow gave fourteen pints of milk a day, whereas they used to have the greatest difficulty in coaxing four pints from it).

At the other end of the village the old man had asked the miller's servant-girl which was the way to Lehota, and Erzsi had told him, upon which he had started on the footpath up the mountains. Erzsi said she was sure, now she came to think of it, that he had a glory round his head.

Why, of course it must have been St. Peter! Why should it not have been? There was a time when he walked about on earth, and there are many stories told still as to all he had done then. And what had happened once could happen again. The wonderful news spread from house to house, that God had sent down from Heaven a sort of red-linen tent, to keep the rain off the priest's little sister, and had chosen St. Peter himself for the mission. Thereupon followed a good time for the child, she became quite the fashion in the village. The old women began to make cakes for her, also milk puddings, and

various other delicacies. His reverence had nothing to do but answer the door all day, and receive from his visitors plates, dishes, or basins wrapped up in clean cloths. The poor young priest could not make out what was going on in his new parish.

"Oh, your reverence, please, I heard your little sister had come, so I've brought her a trifle for her dinner; of course it might be better, but it is the best such poor folks as we can give. Our hearts are good, your reverence, but our flour might be better than it is, for that good-for-nothing miller burned it a bit the last time—at least, that part of it which he did not keep for his own use. May I look at the little angel? They say she's a little beauty."

Of course his reverence allowed them all to look at her in turn, to pat her and smooth her hair; some of them even kissed her tiny feet.

The priest was obliged to turn away now and then to hide the tears of gratitude. He reproached himself, too, for his hard thoughts of the good villagers. "How I have misjudged them!" he thought to himself. "There are no better people in the world. And how they love the child!"

At tea-time Widow Adamecz appeared on the scene; until now she had not troubled much about the new priest. She considered herself entitled to a word in the management of the ecclesiastical affairs of the village, and based her rights on the fact of her father having grown a beard in his grave, which, of course, gave him a place among the saints at once.

"Your reverence," she began, "you will want some one to

look after the child."

"Yes, of course, I ought to have some one," he replied, "but the parish is poor, and ..."

"Nobody is poor but the devil," burst out Widow Adamecz, "and he's poor because he has no soul. But we have souls. And after all, your reverence won't know how to dress and undress a child, nor how to wash it and plait its hair. And then she will often be hungry, and you can't take her across to the schoolmaster's each time. You must have some one to cook at home, your reverence. The sacristan is all very well for sweeping and tidying up a bit, but what does he know about children?"

"True, true; but where am I to ..."

"Where? And am *I* not here? The Lord created me for a priest's cook, I'm sure."

"Yes, I daresay. But how am I to pay your wages?"

Widow Adamecz put her hands on her hips, and planted herself in front of Father János.

"Never mind about that, your honor. Leave it to God and to me. He will pay me. I shall enter your service this evening, and shall bring all my saucepans and things with me."

The priest was more and more surprised, but even more astonished was his friend Urszinyi when he came over toward evening and the priest related the events of the day, and told him of Widow Adamecz's offer.

"What!" he exclaimed, "Widow Adamecz? That old witch?"

And without payment? Why, János, a greater miracle never yet happened. An inhabitant of Glogova working for payment from Heaven! You seem to have bewitched the people."

The priest only smiled, but his heart was full of gratitude. He also felt that a miracle had taken place; it was all so strange, so incomprehensible. But he guessed at the cause of the change. The prayer he had said at the entrance to the church had been heard, and this was the answer. Yes, it really was a miracle! He had not heard all the stories that were spread abroad about the red umbrella, and he only smiled at those that had come to his ears. It is true he did not understand himself how the umbrella came to be where he had found it; he was surprised at first, but had not thought any more about it, and had hung it on a nail in his room, so that if the owner asked for it he could have it at once, though it was not really worth sixpence.