

Gilse

By Vincas Kreve

Translated from the Lithuanian under the supervision of Alfred Senn

For information on Vincas Kreve, the foremost living poet of the Lithuanians, see the portrayal given by the Italian critic Giuseppe Salvatori in the journal *Studi Baltici*, Vol. II (Rome, Italy, 1932), pp. 23-34, and Antanas Vaiciulaitis, *An Outline History of Lithuanian Literature* (Chicago, Ill., 1942). A study of the folklore elements Kreve's tale was published by Alfred Senn in *Corona* (Duke University Press, 1940), pp. 8-22, under the title "On the Sources of a Lithuanian Tale". A first draft of the present translation was prepared as a classroom assignment by Mr. Robert G. Thompson and Miss Helen D. Lipcius whereupon the final text was established by Miss Elfrieda G. Senn.

I

Long, long ago, our fathers don't remember when, perhaps a thousand years ago, or maybe two thousand have already passed, there was a high mountain. On that mountain stood a large palace. In that palace loved a proud nobleman, powerful and so wealthy that even he did not know the amount of his wealth. Around the palace his fields swayed and were as blue as the sea; the woods hummed, filled with wild beasts; the fields were full of cattle. Through the woods, among the leaves, the bees flew buzzing. The white palace was fenced in by high walls. By the gate guards were stationed so that a man could not enter, a beast could not run in, a bird could not fly in without the nobleman's knowledge.

The nobleman was well-known throughout the whole world for his wealth, and no one, neither walking, nor riding, nor driving passed by his high palace without entering, enjoying his wealth, and spending a night. Kings, noblemen, princes and common people spent the night and enjoyed themselves with him. All were taken in, given green wine, and fed. He did not turn away or harm anyone, neither big nor small, neither child nor poor orphan girl.

Dearest to the nobleman of all his uncounted wealth, of which he boasted proudly, was his daughter, the most beautiful girl in all the world— complexion like milk, mixed with blood; hair like yellow gold, sprinkled with sparkling pearls; eyes blue as the cornflower, hands white as paper. She moved like a swan; she spoke as the nightingale sang. In the daytime she bloomed like

a lily, at night she shone like the moon. In all the world no one ever saw anyone like her. As she grew up, matchmakers came streaming from all parts of the country on foot and in carriages. Noblemen and princes and even kings sent them, but she did not want to marry anyone.

The nobleman lived like a real king. He kept many servants, both old men and young lads. There was one who was the handsomest of all, the most skillful of all horsemen. When he rode his steed, the roan raced with the wind, and under it the earth trembled moaning; the woods, the forest bowed their treetops. His iron bow sent arrows swifter than thought, wherever his eyes glanced, wherever his thoughts went. He shot ducks and turkeys and gray geese. His sword, like lightning, killed bears and stags.

When he rode horseback, the earth rumbled. When he went on foot, the trees trembled. His yellow hair flew in the wind; his eyes were as blue as the heavens when he looked at girls. All loved him, both common people and the nobleman, who never let him go a step from his side. Wherever he went he took the lad. Where he himself should have gone, he sent the lad instead. But more than anyone else, the nobleman's pretty daughter, the white lily, fell in love with him.

Her bright eyes, like stars in the depths of heaven, like the sun, often looked at the handsome lad, the good-looking horseman, until they disturbed his piece of mind and kindled the fire of unhappy emotions in his breast. He fell completely in love with those eyes, and, having fallen in love, he did not sleep a wink, did not dream a dream, but thought all day and night. The gray steed became sad, neighing in vain in the courtyard; the bow and sharp sword rusted while hanging on the wall; the saddle became dusty, lying on the beam of the stable. The young man did not sit on his nimble horse, did not take his pliant bow in his hands, did not shoot the wild turkeys, nor the gray geese, nor the crying ducks, nor the small birds. Instead, sighing and wandering about the white palace and the high bower, he sang songs and thought of his young sweetheart, the fair lily. He pondered for a year, reflected for another, and finally reached his decision to send a matchmaker to his young sweetheart.

When the matchmaker with his escort rode up to the great palace, the black dogs started to bark, the gray steed to neigh, so that the nobleman's young daughter heard. Her eyes sparkled like the rising sun, her lips glowed like roses and she spoke like a bird sang: "My father, dear father, let me marry the young horseman. If you do not let me marry him, then I will marry no one.

Rather let the green rue wither in my hand before I marry another for my eternal misery, before I give my hand with aching heart to another while loving this one".

Somber clouds darkened, thunder rumbled, waves roared. How the old father scolded his young daughter for her immature words! He called the young lad and spoke to him with these sad words: "When you have an estate as large as mine, then I will let you marry my daughter, then send your matchmakers to me. Now, however, sit on your swiftest steed, ride as far as possible from my palace into the wide world, as far as your eyes can see, as far as your steed can carry you".

The lad sighed heavily and saddled his steed; the maiden cried bitterly, sitting at the window, pleading with her old father.

The lad rode out of the estate on the highway and started to think what he should do, where he would ride, where he would stop and spend the night. He had been riding for two days when he saw merchants, transporting uncounted wealth, coming from the city of Alytus straight to the nobleman's palace.

At that moment it occurred to the young man where he would ride, where he would stop and spend the night. He turned his steed back to the swift stream and released him on the green meadow, shackling him with silk fetters. Then he himself lay down under the high bridge, stretched his pliant bow with white hands, put on a reed arrow, and waited for evening and the night. He spent the night motionless. The sun had already risen, but the lad had not yet closed his eyes. He was still sitting there waiting. The bitter dew had not yet fallen when he saw a merchant riding with his wealth. As the merchant approached the high bridge, the lad released a swift arrow. Never uttering a word the young merchant fell from his coach and his wealth. The lad buried the merchant under the high bridge, and the wealth he hid in the green woods.

He lay in wait for one night, and another, and a third. He murdered three merchants and buried them under the high bridge in the yellow sand. He killed three merchants and took for himself their uncounted wealth.

He took his steed from the green meadow, saddled him with a saddle of saffian, rode into a distant land, built the highest palace possible, chopped down the oldest woods, plowed the widest fields and sent matchmakers of his

sweetheart, to the palace of the old nobleman. He waited one day, and another, and on the third day the earth started to tremble, and then the old father-in-law rode up to view the estate. He looked and was amazed at what he saw. His own palace was high, but the lad's was higher. His fields were wide, but the lad's were wider. His forests were dark, but the lad's were darker. His steeds were swift and nimble, but the lad's were much more nimble.

"Tell me, son-in-law, where did you get your wealth? Did sprites carry it, did hurricanes blow it?..."

"Dear old father, the sprites brought it and the hurricanes blew it out of the land of the Russians, from great castles, where a river of gold flows...."

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The young lad was strutting along like a cock; beside him walked his lily-like sweetheart. They spoke endearing words. While walking and talking, the maiden said: "Where did you ride at that time and where did you stop, in what lands did you drive your steed? Was it in the land of the Poles, or in the country of the Russians, that you rode and searched for riches?"

The young lad hung his head and turned as red as a beet. "My darling, my white swan, do not ask your young horseman where he rode, where he stopped; where he sought wealth. I rode cursing my lot; I took the wealth trembling; sighing, I carried the uncounted riches; and now, swallowing my shame, I will tell you. Whether you marry me or not, I will tell you the truth. I will not speak one untrue word, even though I may never see you again. I did not seek wealth in a foreign land. I rode only to the swift-flowing stream and spent the night under the high bridge. There I found my wealth".

The maiden wrung her white hands and spoke, weeping bitterly:

"Oh, where did you learn this? In the land of the Russians, in a distant country? You did wrong, dear one, you provoked the gods. You killed people. If I marry you, the gods will send dire punishment on the heads of the two of us. They will destroy us both while we are young".

The maiden wept bitter tears, wrung her white hands, speaking somber words: "I will not marry you, lad, until I know what punishment the gods have in store for us two. I fear the august gods... I fear angry tongues".

III

In the dark forests, in the green woods, along Lake Gelovine, which was not then as small as it is now, but had flooded all of Krantas, Krokiskis, Klampis, Balinas, and Nozagaris, and was the longest, the widest lake possible, and surged like the sea; there by that lake grew a great oak, which was so thick that even a hundred men, clasping hands, could not span it. Under this oak lived an old man, so old that even the oldest people could not remember having seen him younger. He was always gray, always with long hair reaching to his waist, his beard down to the ground, like a tree overgrown with moss, only his eyes sparkled like embers. And people said, that he would die when the Gelovine dried out, and the Gelovine would dry out when the end of the world came. They say that even now this old man lives in a palace on the bottom of the Gelovine and he comes out on shore at midnight of St. John's Eve to pick the fern blossom. Two hundred years ago lightning rent the oak, but people still have not forgotten it and to this day call this place "The Oak Horn".

This old man knew everything, what happened in heaven and on earth and under the earth, what the men and the gods did. He was so very powerful that the sun, the wind, the stars, and the clouds listened to him; if he wished, he could produce a storm or raise a wave; if he ordered it, even the sun was darkened and the stars flashed. He knew how to talk with the beasts and the birds; he understood what the grass said and the trees. . .

Although the old man could do all this, yet he harmed no one. If someone's bees died, or wild beasts attacked his stock, that person brought the old man honey and a jug of milk and everything improved again for him. The lost animals were recovered and the bees revived. If someone's legs or arms ached, he brought the old man wool or linen and he returned healthy. And this ancient was famous through-out the entire world; from all countries people rushed to him in streams and to all he did good. . .

Therefore the lad also went to him to find out what the gods had destined for him for having murdered three traders and made their little children weep.

Ere he had yet reached the oak, the old man met him and said: "Go under that same bridge and spend three nights there, and you will find out what you need to know".

Frightened, the lad returned and told everything to his beloved. And the maiden bade him go, spend three nights under the bridge.

The lad spent his first night under the bridge; throughout the long, long night he did not close his eyes, but cursed his fate, ever awaiting death. Ere the cocks had crowed, the bridge started to tremble, a grave opened up, the young merchant rose, mounted on the high bridge and, raising his white hands toward the high heavens, calling to the most mighty gods, he begged:

"O wise gods, take revenge on him who killed me, made my young wife a widow, and put me into great distress so that I have neither day or night".

There came a voice from high heaven and flowed through the mountains, through the valleys, through the dark forests, and the green meadows: "After ninety-nine years".

Like the leaves on the aspen tree, the lad's heart trembled in his young bosom; like the tall birch, his head bowed to the black earth.

He told his beloved what he had seen during the night, what he had heard, that the mighty gods had postponed his punishment for ninety-nine years.

The maiden spoke these words: "Ninety-nine years will not come today or tomorrow, perhaps we two will not be here, perhaps we two will not live that long. What is to be, let it be, but I will marry you".

The lad lay another night; he did not close his eyes; he cursed his ill fate. Ere midnight had yet come, the ground trembled; the water of the river became turbid; the second merchant rose from his grave, and rising, begged woefully of the august gods:

"Remember and punish, o august gods, him who has made me in my youth tor forever in the deep earth and has made the gravel gnaw my eyes, and driven my young wife and little children into great misery, into hard days".

As if the earth trembled, as if it thundered, a voice floated from heaven though the forests, though the high mountains, through the low valleys: "After thirty-three years I will remember all and repay for the tears of sorrow".

The merchant's slayer was saddened, he turned pale, he began to tremble like an aspen leaf blown by the wind. He ran toward the high palace to his young beloved and told her the woeful words of the gods.

"Thirty-three years—that is a long time! Perhaps we will not live that long, perhaps we will be dead by that time, and will have lived many a day in happiness. What is to be, let it be. I will marry you dear".

As the young man spent the third night, in the evening he trembled like a leaf, at midnight he was as stiff as a stone; ere the evening glow had gone, ere the dark night had engulfed the earth—the flat meadows started to tremble, the green forests started to sway their tops, the clear water grew turbid; the third merchant rose from his deep grave, mounted the high bridge and in an eerie voice, as if the forests were moaning, he begged the august gods:

"Remind him, o mighty gods, that he killed me in my youth. He shortened my young days, he stained my yellow hair, he spoiled my blood and he made my old mother weep though long days, he left her gray head in great misery, in bitter tears".

As if whirlwinds started to roar, as if a storm began to arise, as if a threefold thunder started to rumble, though the highest mountains, through the darkest forests, through the level fields, through the wide meadows a voice floated, as if a whirlwind were sweeping: "After thirteen years I will bring everything home to him".

His face ashen, the lad rushed home, to his high palace, to the white bower, to his young sweetheart, telling her the sad news.

"In thirteen years much time will pass, we will spend many joyful days and happy nights, and afterwards we will perish and suffer together, we will see fortune and misfortune together. I will marry you, darling".

And so the nobleman's daughter married the young lad. . .

IV

Year after year passed swiftly, many already had slipped by, much water had flowed in the rivers from the time that the young lad had married the fair daughter of the nobleman. The old father-in-law had died, leaving them his wide estate, his high bowers, and they both lived alone joyfully and happily, like

two pigeons cooing. They loved, they enjoyed the greatest happiness, life flowed for the two like a succession of dreams, like a lulling reverie; and today was better than the night before, and tonight happier than this morning and so day after day there was nothing but happiness. Their wealth increased not by years, but by hours; their forests swarmed ever more with beasts, their fields swayed and surged like the blue sea blown by the wind. And nothing got lost, perished vainly, vanished without profit, neither in their forests, nor in their fields, nor in their home, neither wild beasts, nor cattle, nor grain, nor a crumb of bread.

And these two became famous throughout the world, like the bright sun in the blue sky, far more than their fathers or forebears had been. The squire's young wife bloomed like a lily, and he himself was as proud in his high palace as the speckled falcon in his green sycamore tree.

Although they both lived well, both dressed well, one care always pressed the lad's heart, pierced it like spears by day, burdened it like a stone at night. A spectre haunted the young squire, that his high palace was ripped apart, his orchard of green cherry trees destroyed, his young wife killed. The day approached when he would have to answer for his crime, would have to pay for the great wealth of the merchants, not with gold, silver, or brightest pearls, but with his handsome head, with his greatest distress. Thus the lad pondered to himself and, pondering, sighed heavily, wherever he went, wherever he rode, wherever he walked.

As the years passed by, his griefs grew, never giving him a day to breath freely, never a night to close his eyes peacefully. The young man was tormented and weighed down thus by these sad thoughts both day and night.

He did not fear the hardship so much for himself, he did not mourn so much for his youth as he did for the young maiden, the white lily, she who had never uttered a hard word to anyone, who had never stood in anyone's way. Through his heavy sin the maiden would have to suffer such misery.

And wherever he rode, wherever he went, wherever he walked, he always thought and pondered how to free the maiden of great hardship, how to save his young wife from great unhappiness.

The squire rode out into the green forest to hunt, to exercise his gray steed, to run his black dogs, to stretch his pliant bow, to shoot swift arrows, thus to quiet his sad heart.

The squire rode through the green forest, along the black swamp, and while riding he saw a raven cawing. The raven was flying, rapidly beating his black wings.

The squire stretched out his pliant bow, put on a swift arrow. He was about to shoot the cawing raven.

"Caw, caw, young lad. Don't stretch your pliant bow. Don't set the swift arrow. Don't shoot me, the cawing raven. I know your heavy thoughts, your great unhappiness. Don't shoot me, lad, and I will tell you how to fall asleep without fear, how to awake in peace".

The young horseman was astonished upon hearing the voice of the raven. So many years he had hunted, so many days he had lived, never before had he heard a raven speak, express a man's thoughts. The young lad was struck with endless fear, he dropped his white hands, his pliant bow fell down, his swift arrows scattered.

"Caw, caw, caw, young lad, don't fear me, famous squire. Just saddle your swift steed with a green silk saddle, and put on the dark roan a halter of pure gold and a silver bridle, shoe him with golden shoes, then ride to a distant country, toward the blue sea, the land of Prussians. There you will find a large grove, and in that grove an old, old man sitting under a broad-leaved oak, kindling a bright fire. Tell him of your deeds, tell him of your miseries, then he will show you where to find peace, how to appease the angered gods".

Having spoken thus, the cawing raven flew away.

The squire drove his gray steed by leaps and bounds out of the green forest into the high palace and, not speaking a word to anyone, he saddled and bridled his swiftest roan and rode into the distant land where a great grove grew, and in that grove was a broad-leaved oak under which sat an old, old man, kindling a bright fire.

He rode for a long time and was exhausted by the time he reached the blue sea, and the land of the Prussians.

Asking his way and riding near, the lad found among the dark pine forests, among the green woods, a broad-leaved oak standing, swaying its green top, waving erect its wide branches, tinkling its green leaves, surrounded by little birds singing.

Under that broad-leaved oak lay a great stone. On it was sitting an old, old man, white as the blooming apple tree. He was kindling a bright fire.

Ere the young man had alighted from his gray steed, ere he had reached the bright fire, ere he had bowed his handsome head before the old, old man, before his gray old age, ere he had uttered words of greeting, the old man began to speak in a melancholy voice like the leaves rustling, blown by the evening breeze, washed in the sharp dew:

“I have long been waiting for you, lad, I have long been thinking about you. You are late many a year; you have made many a day hard for yourself. Now sit on the stone; tell me your troubles”.

The lad sat down on the great stone, told him of his deeds, told all his miseries. The old man listened, bowing his white head to the ground.

“Heavy is your lot, young horseman, great your sin, not easily will you appease the gods, not immediately will you relieve the souls of the merchants. Far, far away from this palace, in the west, not in the east, beyond three forests, beyond three mountains, beyond three swift rivers, beyond three great waters—vicious people have settled. Like dogs they bark at us, they flout our august gods and mighty *Perkunas*, digging pits for our bodies everywhere, chopping down our sacred forests, and they intend not to sleep a wink, not to eat bread, only to feed upon our warm blood, until they have driven out our gods, extinguished our Sacred Fire, chopped away our sacred forests, torn open the graves of our fathers. Now saddle and bridle your gray steed, your swift roan, whet your sharp axe, your glistening cutlass, and ride to that land, in the west, not in the east, beyond three forests, beyond three swift rivers, beyond three great waters, and chop off the heads of those vicious, bloodthirsty people, like poppies in a garden, defending the graves of your fathers, pleasing the august gods.

Riding from the high palace, plant on the place where the merchants lie, a dry linden branch. Have it ordered that a falcon be sent to bring you the news when that branch blossoms forth, and lets out green leaves. If you are the

alive, you will ride home peacefully, fearing neither the august gods nor the revenge of the slain merchants; if you are dead, then your young bride will bloom like a rose and will often think kindly of you, her bridegroom".

VI

The squire gave orders to prepare as soon as possible the glistening swords, the pliant bows, the carve swift arrows and get them ready, to saddle the gray steeds, to arm his young lads, to ride to war into a distant land, to the west, not to the east, beyond three forests, beyond three mountains, beyond three swift rivers, beyond large waters, where vicious people had settled, who intended not to sleep a wink, not to eat white bread, only to feed upon our warm blood, until they would drive out our gods, extinguish our Sacred Fire, chop out our sacred forests, and tear open the graves of our fathers. And as he arranged to ride away to war, he planted a dry linden branch by the swift stream where lay the merchants in their eternal sleep.

The young squire's beloved came into the high court and asked her dearest:

"Tell me, dear, why do you saddle your gray steeds, why do you arm the young horsemen? Where are you going to ride, what road are you going to travel? Are you going into the green forest to hunt, or into a distant land to wage war?"

And the squire replied:

"Do not ask me, dear, ask the gray steed. If he speaks, tells you in words, then you will know where I ride, what road I travel, whether into the green forest to hunt or into a distant land to wage war".

And the wife sighed heavily and spoke kindly:

"You did not speak thus to me, you did not talk this way to me, I did not ask thus, I did not hear thus while you still loved me. The gods punish me, in that you have stopped loving me, and do not trust me anymore".

Wringing her white hands, she let her mournful voice be heard over the large palace. The squire took her by her white hands, led her to the high bower, sat her on the white table, spoke endearing words, speaking and trying to make her happy.

And the young noblewoman asked him again:

"Tell me, dear, where are you riding, where are you travelling? Are you going into the green forest to hunt or into a distant land to war?"

So as not to startle the young girl, the squire wanted to lie, to give her false information, that he wasn't riding into a distant land to war, but only into the green forest to hunt. However, the young wife looked him into his eyes so lovingly that his tongue froze, his heart felt as if pierced by a splinter, he forgot to lie and to tell an untruth. "O august gods. . ." with deep sorrow the young squire thought in his wounded heart, "perhaps I will never see her again. How can I leave without saying farewell, without speaking endearingly for the last time, using endearing names, kissing those fair cheeks, caressing those blond tresses?"

Thus he thought and dark grief darkened his light eyes, like a great storm in the west darkens a bright summer day; it weighed heavy on his heart, and he felt sorry both for his unfulfilled youth and for his beautiful sweetheart and those happy days lived. Lamenting, he told her what the raven had said, what the old man had bade him do.

"Wait for me, my beloved. When the dry linden branch sprouts and blooms, then I will ride home; then you will again make yourself pretty for me like the green rue".

"My dear, my beloved, why should I bloom like a green rue, why should I make myself pretty like a lily if you no longer are here? When you ride off to a distant land, I will fade and wither like a plucked rue, without you, dear".

And lovingly she asked the young lad not to saddle the steeds, not to halter them with pure gold, to wait at least one more year.

The squire did not listen to her loving words. He kissed her white hands and her fair face, went out of the high bower, away from the white table, out into the large court, sat on the saddled steed, on the haltered roan, rode out of the wide estate into the flat fields, into the dark forest, on to the highway.

Then the girl took her pliant bow into her white hands, set a carved arrow, shot at the swift legs of the steed. The steed stumbled on to his knees, and the squire's cap fell off.

"For me, dear, you angered the gods, through me, horseman, you killed the merchants, made their little children weep, through me you have ruined young youth, therefore I shall suffer with you, endure with you; as I have lived as I will die, together with you. My dear, my beloved, order your gray steeds to be led back".

"Why should you suffer, why should you endure hardship, you who have harmed no one, who have crossed no one's path?"

"If you ride away, I will ride along. If you go to war, I will be at your side. If you die in war, then I will be with you. We have loved and laughed together, so let us die together as we have lived. My beloved hero, what should we fear, what should we be afraid of, as long as we are together? Order the gray steed to be led back. Dearer is a day of happiness lived than a hundred years of misery and a hundred days of pining".

"Let it be as you wish," replied the lad and he ordered the gray steeds to be led back into the new stable and the glistening weapons and the shining swords to be returned to the wide walls. As the steeds were being led back to the stables, they trembled; as the weapons were being hung on the walls, they clanged sadly. The maiden alone was happy.

VII

Out of the high mountains, from a large palace, through a copper gateway, rode the famous prince Sarunas into the green forest to hunt wolves and bears, to chase bears and stags, to shoot gray ducks and wild turkeys, to stretch his pliant bows, to exercise his steed. While hunting, while chasing the swift beasts, while shooting ducks and turkeys, he rode up to the high palace of the squire, and when he approached, he was astonished. High as was his own palace, this one higher; wide as was his estate, this one was wider. And, astonished, he drove his steed to the copper gate, and blew his horn over the whole estate. The squire came out to open the copper gate, to receive his distinguished guest.

He opened the copper gate and Sarunas rode into the great court.

"Whose is this high palace?" asked the prince.

"This high palace, illustrious prince, is mine".

"I did not know, I never thought, that there lived squires in my country whose wealth was greater than mine, and whose palaces were higher than mine".

And the prince dismounted from his swift steed, and the squire led him into the high bower, and drank to him with the green wine. And the young lady came out sparkling like the sun, moving like a swan, and spoke loving words as the dove coos, welcoming and honouring the famous Prince Sarunas. In one hand she carried the green wine, in the other a golden goblet, when her foot slipped and she spilled the green wine.

"The gods are sending misfortune; they give us evil omens," the lady said, not so much frightened as greatly saddened.

"Twelve years we have lived in this high palace. To this day a drop of water has not been spilled, nor a crumb of bread dropped, and now green wine is spilled".

"Do not fear anything, young lady," spoke Sarunas: "Misfortune will not come upon you even if you should see as many evil omens as there are stars in a clear sky. If the sky should fall down on you, we would prop it up with our weapons; if the earth should part under you, we would spread covers over it; if the whole world would rise against you, we would defend you with our swords".

Three days and three nights Sarunas drank, ate and made merry in the squire's palace. The green wine flowed in rivers, the sweet mead stood about in lakes. On the fourth night sleep overcame them all. Scarcely had guests and hosts fallen asleep, scarcely had Sarunas, the illustrious prince, closed his bright eyes, when he heard a great voice wakening him.

"Get up, Sarunas, don't lie there, and when you awake, don't wait, wake up your nimble servants, take up your tough bows, your shining weapons, your glistering swords, mount your steeds, ride away from this palace into the green forests to hunt".

The nobleman opened his eyes slightly, thinking his own people were awakening him, but looking around he saw no one, only the dark night. As yet the cocks hadn't crowed, so the prince again fell asleep.

Ere his eyes were completely shut, ere he had fallen into sound slumber, he heard again the great voice:

"Get up, Sarunas, don't lie there! Order the gray steeds saddled, and ride swiftly away from the palace, that you do not fall into misfortune, that you do not perish in vain".

The prince sat up, drew out his keen sword, and began to speak:

"Let the earth part here, let *Perkunas* strike here, I will not go. I will not ride away from this palace, until the bright sun rises, until the sharp dew falls".

And having thus spoken, he clapped his hands, calling his soldier-companion and awakening the young squire from sweet slumber; he ordered then to prepare the weapons and to search the whole palace, to look into every corner, to find who had tried to waken him thus, who had tried thus to arouse him. . . and he himself lay down again and fell sound asleep".

"Get up, prince, your high palace is burning!"

Sarunas opened his eyes slightly; he saw that his truest friend was awakening him, showing him a great blaze in the sky, in that direction where Sarunas' palace stood.

Sarunas jumped up from his soft bed, sat on his swift steed, rode from the high palace toward that place where a blaze brightened the sky. Ere he had ridden half the way, when he had just ridden into the green forest, he saw that the great fire had died away, only the stars sparkled in the clear sky like the bitter dew on the green leaves. The great Sarunas was saddened; his handsome head slumped.

"While we drank and made merry here, our foes started to burn our palace there, enslaved our friends and kinsmen. But my sword is not dull yet; what they took with the sword, I will take back with the sword; him who bought with the sword, him I will pay back with the sword".

But he saw that he did not have his glistening sword with him. He had left it on the white table in the large palace of the squire. Sarunas sent a soldier

back to the large palace to bring his glistening sword back to him. The horseman returned, but did not find the high palace; he only met a deep lake, a great pool of water. And, frightened, he drove his horse back and, overtaking Sarunas' great troop, he told him the woeful news.

Sarunas could not believe it. Grieving for his glistening sword, doubting the report, he rode back to see the palace, to see with his own eyes. When he rode up to that mountain, where the palace had stood, he saw a deep lake, a great pool of water. Near the shore a white table floated, on the table lay the glistening sword.

Thus the young squire and his fair love perished.

All mourned, not the large palace so much, as this young wife, her dainty footsteps, her blond tresses, her youth.

But each year at midnight when the cocks crow on that night when the great palace disappeared, the bright moon glistens, and raises white mists. In the middle of the lake by the light of the moon, a young girl and young lad play together, hidden by the white mists.

And deep, deep in this lake; no one can reach its bottom. Only on a hot day, when there are no waves beating, when the bright sun shines, deep, deep in the middle of the lake can be seen the high towers of a palace, but whoever swims there, whoever rows there, never returns. . . .

And people call this lake "Gilse".

