## The Home Reading Circle

### **NEAGOE:**

A STORY OF THE SALT MINES.

"CARMEN SYLVA,"

(Queen of Roumania.)

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### SYNOPSIS

Vlad is a life convict in the salt mines of Roumania, having as a young man, slain his master who had had his sister whipped to death. To the same mines is brought Sandule, who is the lover of Vlad's daughter, Neagoe, and who has stabbed a youth who had reproached her with being a convict's daughter. Vind and Sandule be-come acquainted. The same day the prince and princess of Wallachia visit the mines and in honor of their visit some of the convicts are set free, among whom is Viad. He bids farewell to Sandule, and returns to his native village. There he finds Neagoe, whose mother has died, and who is leading the life of a drudge. She joins him and they become strolling musicians,

### PART III.

So Vlad and his daughter, Neagoe set off together, as if that were the proper thing for them to do. They had scarcely left the village when a woman knocked at the window of Neagoe's stepfather's house, who, thinking it was Neagoe, began to upbraid her, calling out: "Make haste and put the 'mamaliga' on to boil, thou accursed good-for-nothing! thou murderer's cub! Come quickly or I will break thy bones;" then rushed to the door, clenching a piece of wood in his hands, an angry frown on his red face.

The woman who knocked at the window cried out: "Hold hard, my man! don't scold Neagoe, or uselessly infuriate yourself, for she has gone beyond "She is gone! and where to, neigh-

"She has gone out into the wide world in company with a thin, wizened old man, who told her that he was her father, Vlad, from the salt mines, He asked her of Florics, and of his home, and of his son Radu." The man seemed struck dumb with alarm, while the woman continued: "Why art thou so afraid? for sure it was no ghost, but Vlad himself. Vasilica's mother remembered him immediately."

After the stepfather had somewhat recovered himself, they asked him if he wished Neagoe to be brought back forcibly, but he answered that he never wished to see her again.

Soon many persons congregated together, both young and old; the women-already fatigued with their day's labor-could with difficulty pacify the children, who cried for Neagoe. Then they all gossiped together, and agreed that she was quite right to go away. for her stepfather scolded her, and often he even heat her, after he had put her mother under ground. The affair with Sandule also had made him very angry.

Meanwhile Neagoe and Vlad were far away on their tramp. As yet they had own will!"

Thou let

That night they slept in the open air, for Viad said that he preferred it so, as he had not seen the sky above, or breathed free, fresh air for so long a time. Neagoe sat all night with her arms clasping her knees. She thought, and thought again, of Sandule, What had become of him? Where had they takenhim to. He was so young, so handsome, surely no one would judge him harshly. The magistrates would understand that he had been provoked and was in a violent passion, and that he had not intended to kill the boy. And in this same way had Neagoe passed her nights since Sandule had

Viad watched her and heard her heavy sighs; he regretted that he could give her no consolation; he felt that she could have no respect for him, for the wife who had forgotten him and taken another husband could but have

spoken ill of him to their daughter. At length, weary of the prolonged silence, Vlad said: "Art thou sorry, girl, that thou hast come with me? 'Am I sorry? No! indeed, I thank God that I am free, and that no one in

the village knows where to find me." At length the day broke, the larks sang their joyful song, the sun rose in its solemn splendor. "Dost thou know, child, that I see

the sun rise today for the first time in sixteen years? Dost thou hear that lark, Neagoe? Thou, who are burnt by the rays of sun, know'st not how hard it is to be deprived of light and fresh

Vlad's pale lips smiled, and his wan face brightened. Neagoe trembled, and heavy tears rose to her eye-lashes, which the raised and let fall again. like wings, to prevent the tears from

"Father, I wish to ask thee something," she said at last. The old man listened, expecting to hear her speak of Sandule.

"Wilt thou tell me for what thou wert condemned?"

"Has no one, then, told thee?"

"They have left thee to believe, then

that I was an every-day murderer?" She sighed assent. "Yes, child, I committed murder, but

it was for the sake of an innocent

Before Neagoe's eyes passed the vision of Sandule's crime; the meadows and the forests seemed to be turning

round with her; she listened to her

father's story, and when he had fin ished she remained silent. Her eyes had grown deep as night, so dark was the shade thrown on them by her long lashes, and there were such hard lines around her mouth that she looked ten years older; still, she did not like to

open her heart to her father. In a hamlet through which they had passed, Vlad had sold some trifling articles which he had carved from the rock salt, and from morsels of wood. during his leisure hours, by the feeble light of his small lamp; with the money which they produced he purchased a set of bag-pipes, intending to earn a living for himself and his daughter, by playing upon them from place to

Thus they wandered, and when they reached a village Vlad played the "Hora," and the villagers danced to Afterwards, sometimes Neagoe would sing some of their pathetic national songs. Occasionally, she met with work in the fields, then her poor old father rested quietly near her. She never complained, though often she knew not if they would have bread for the morrow. They lived from hand to mouth, like beggars; and when Vlad pitied his daughter, she shrugged her shoulders, saying: "It is better thus,

It chanced one day that they reached a large village, which had evidently put on a festive attire; its flags and garlands showed signs of a coming wedding. Everywhere were people in motion, and especially at the innkeeper's, opposite the church.

Vlad sat himself down in the churchon a fallen stone, Neagoe stood near to him, frowning at all these preparations, the garlands and the streaming ribbons, and thinking of the last wedding "Hora" at which she had been present. Then she asked in a

"Can one be sent to Slanic for murdering another person by accident?" Vlad looked calmly at her. "Yes, my daughter," he said. Then he continued: 'Neagoe, I have seen thy Sandule!" "Thou bath seen him?" she shrieked then fell on her knees at her father's

Vlad made no attempt to console her At last she raised her head.

"Father, didst thou see my Sandule in those mines?' "I did, my child: he is a good fellow, and he thinks but of his sweetheart. From his own words I gathered that he spoke of thee!"

"And thou camest away, and left him "Alas! my daughter, one does not go

in and out of the salt mines at one's "Thou left him there!" she repeated,

from her mind. "He is but young, hardly more than a boy! Perhaps they will have pity on

"Were not you young also? "No! for I was married, and I had children, and I planned, and I lay in wait for the man whom I killed, whereas Sandule committed murder in a moment of fury and excitement." "I was for me, for me, that he killed

him," moaned Neagoe. She crossed her hands over her shoul ders, and recked herself to and fro, termented by grief.

Soon they saw a crowd of youths coming towards them, dressed in their gayest holiday clothing-shirts of daz zling whiteness, thickly worked with colored thread at the bottom the chest and the sleeves; their hats, with streamers of many-hued ribbons, were

decked with flowers. They were gay and full of fun. "Listen to me, thou old man with the bag pipe I pray thee come hither,

for we must, at any rate, wait until the bride shows herself! Come, play us something; and your pretty lass, can you sing us a song?" Neagoe nodded her head in assent.

Vlad began at once to play, so that the girl might have time to recover her self possession, but the youths clamored for her song. In a sweet, touching voice she sang thus:

With bitter tears I greet the day, For cold is the pillow on which I dream. And I find him not.

"My temples throb my heart it burns, I am well nigh blind from my weeping, I have no one to whom I can tell my No one who will console me."

"That is too sad," cried the young "Sing us something gaver. fellows.

my pretty one; see, here is money for They thought that the sight of money would cheer her, but she was unac-

customed to sing like & mendicant, and she seemed to be ashamed. Vlad looked anxiously at her. "Listen to me," he said, "and follow as I sing 'Green Leaf of the Nut Tree.' "

"No, no, that won't do; all the songs about nut trees are like dirges. Vlad then played his pipes while Ne-

"Green leaves, and dry wood, Dost see my steed, fleet and proud?

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Dost see my little dun grey, And how he neighs with giee? Then let us sing, and make merry.

"As slim as a reed, and as graceful, Is my little horse, hi! hi! Hi! my little horse, hi! hi! us sing and make merry!"

She sang at first gayly, and with animation, but gradually her voice took more melancholy tone, and her sadness seemed to take possession of those who listened to her.

The young fellows could not understand by what feeling their hearts were They all surrunded Neagoe, and one

of them said: "Thou art slim and graceful, and thou hast eyes like burning coal, thou darling with the jetblack hair!" and he tried to put his arm around her, but she slipped out of his reach, and pushed him aside with such a threatening look in her eyes that the youth

was abashed, and drew back. 'Ah ah!" cried the others laughing one must not even attempt to touch her, she takes fire so quickly." Some young girls then approached, and one of them said to Vlad: "Will you sing us a song-something which

will make one's blood creep?"
"If you wish," the old man answered, and he sang them a song as mourn-

In the centre of the wagon, seated on piles of household linen, was the bride, wearing the "beteala," or long ually replace the bridal veil.

Around her were laughing, chatter-ing maidens. Her father and mother

groom sprang from his horse to assist the bride to descend from her car. "Do not forget, when thou passeth by me in church, to touch my foot with thine, so that I may be married next

year," whispered the girl, the bridegroom, crying out: and led the old man forward. "Look! See! This is Radu, thy son! Now we are out of all trouble. We need fear no more suffering. Oh! Radu, how lucky

But she stopped suddenly, for she saw that Radu looked aghast and spoke tonishment from one to the other, Then she smiled in derision. "What, Radu, these beggars by the roadside are thy father and thy sister?"

lied to thy Lleano! Did'st thou ever tell me that thou wert the son of a wayside beggar? Or, it may be, that this girl is not thy sister, but, perhaps, thy sweetheart? Say, did'st thou promise to marry her and then send her adrift when thou found'st that I was richer?"

### PART IV.

"Oh! Radu!" cried Neagoe, "wilt thou allow thy sister to be scorned and laughed at thus?"

"Yes, I go on the highway, and I sing for money, and I am not ashamed of doing it," said Neagoe, proudly.

her part, while Heano said:

"Thou hearest me, Radu, I will not enter the church with thee until I know if these beggars be thy kin, or not." "Heano, have I not told thee that I

do not know them?" Suddenly a heavy storm gathered, it

Viad approached his son, saying: Radu, willingly will I beg my way in

"Oh, no!" cried Heano. "That would not suit me at all. Never mind, Radu. you, girl, wish to steal him from me you, and teach him to play on the bag-

'speak the truth, or I will." The perspiration trickled down Radu's face as he said: "I do not know

"So let it be," said Vlad, "Then listen all of you, to me. Know that I have test thy hand may it turn to poison No man can free thee from thy fath

Again a loud clap of thunder was heard, which seemed to roll from one end of the firmament to the other, and the people withdrew to their homes, horror-stricken, leaving the old man and his accursed son. Vind turned aside, and leant heavily on Neagoe's

shoulder. The wind blew through his long beard, and penetrated the girl's scanty clothing. They were enveloped in a cloud of dust, which did not dis-perse until the rain fell in torrents, when Viad and Neagoe had disappear ed. Radu remained on his knees, aban doned by all, for none of his acquaint-

ances would speak to him. Leano was led into a neighboring shricking and weeping, and tearing from her head the costly golden "beteala," which she trod under foot. Her friends sympathized with her, but they asked: "Why had she fallen so deeply in love with Radu, of whom one knew nothing, not even whence he came, or who his family was? So it is when one does not marry a man from one's own village, and when one's parents spoll one, as Heano's parents spoiled her! Her father should have beaten her, and have lock ed her up in the house, and then this misfortune would not have happened." So they spoke amongst themselves while the wretched Radu sought to find shelter within the porch of the church, but the verger closed the door quickly, and did not allow him to en ter. He was in despair, for he knew not where to flee-every one would look coldly on him, and despise him. Suddenly he heard rapid steps coming through the darkness, and soon a oung man approached the church, He was at first much frightened on seeing Radu, but after a time he approached him, saying:
"I pray thee, friend, for God's sake,

do not betray me! I have but just escaped from the Salt Mines, and I know not where to conceal myself.

Poor Sandule-for it was indeed heknew not that Neagoe, his beloved Neagoe, had stood on the same spot but an hour ago!

"How can I help thee?" said Radu for I also am persecuted, and know not which way to turn for peace. A wild beast could serve thee better than I! Yet, stay, up there is a way to the mountains—a steep path winding through the rocks; no one will be likely to discover thee there; I can give thee no other advice save this."

Sandule departed quickly, without waiting for further conversation. Un-der cover of night, he was able to enter his own cottage, and pack up and take with him the little property which he possessed, before he disappeared from the village.

On the other side of one of the lofty Carpathian mountains there is perched a small monastery high as an eagle's nest. A young monk, clad in woolen vestments, comes outside and begins to beat the 'Toaca." After doing this he ascends the belfry tower and rings a bell, at the sound of which the monks emerge from their cells, and drag themselves slowly towards the church. Many of them are very aged, with long white hair and beards, and wear tall black hats enveloped in long crepe vells. After the monks, followed very old man, who walked with much difficulty. This' was Vlad, who had grown weak and feeble; Neagoe courageously helped him to climb the steep ascent.

"Ah! my child! I am dead with fatigue, I can go no further, let me rest here What festival did'st thou say it is today?" "No church festival, father, but the

rince is to visit the monastery, and perhaps we may receive a gift of "I need no gift, let me sleep!" He

sat down upon a stone, and leaned his head on the side of the grey wall. Neogoe looked anxiously around her; the old man was pale as death, and his lips were blue. "Father," 'cried she, are thou not well?"

But she got poreply and looked about in vain, in search of a drop of water; robust, energetic girl, who had hith-then she ran towards the monastery. erto born her reverses and troubles The young monk was just leaving the so bravely, but she was soon herself church, and she fell on her knees, saying: "Holy father, I pray thee, in God's name, to help an unhappy girl, whose father is dying by the roadside

"Neagoe!" exclaimed the monk The girl drew back on hearing her

"Radu, thy most unhappy brother." "Who are you, that knows my "I know thee not." And she turned

o retrace her steps. "Neagoe, do not be so hard and "It is my life which thou hast made

hard. "My heart has died within me," said he, still following her. "There are many dead hearts," she

replied. "But if you wish to help our father, come quickly, for he is at the point of death, if he is not already dead!" "And he will have died without lifting his curse from me!"

On hearing approaching footsteps, the old man opened his eyes, disturbs me in my last hour?" asked

great sinner." replied the monk. and he fell down and kissed Vlad's

son! I beseech thee absolve me from



strength are increased a hun-dred-fold. A prospective mother cannot begin too early to look after her own health and phys

happy.

house, within the precincts. One day as he sat sunning himself

even want.

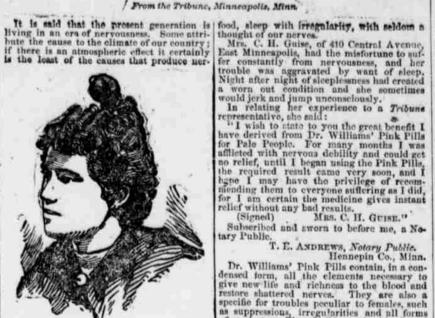
to him did the abbot recognize them and cry: "Neagoe! my sister, my sister!" Then he listened to her story of their sufferings, and she told him how it was Sandule who had asked him the way when they were both hiding from their enemies. Sandule was pardoned they were going back to live in their own village, and that through hard work they possessed a fair sum of money, after having en

Thus the children of the poor old Vlad were calm happy. The last blessing of their father had shed a benignant influence over their lives!

# Lost Control of Her Nerves FERN A HELPLESS, PAINFUL

From the Tribunc, Minneapolis, Minn.

CONDITION.



I know not the joy of wife or child: I do not wish to possess feelings which corrupt a man and I live to pray for The pale face of the old man flushed, and with a last effort, rising to his feet he said: "Forgive thee? I\* I \* I \* "." "Father," chied Neagoe, beseechingly, -" \* I -I bless thee!" And he fell back-

Radu sighed, and made the sign of the cross; his soul lightened of a heavy burden. Then he called other monks, and they performed the last offices, and buried Viad, the convict.

. . . . . . . . . Neagoe was sitting out in the moonlight, under the shelter of the pine trees; she was overwhelmed with the sense of her own loneliness. Where should she go? What could she do? Her brother would gladly have taken her to live with him, but, being a monk, the plan was impossible. The thought of entering a nunnery

was not pleasant to her, for once within its walls, she could hear no more of Sandule nor meet him when he was free from imprisonment in the Salt Sorrowfully she thought of her fu-

swiftly up the steep mountain path. and a much-loved voice cried out, eag-"Neagoe! Neagoe!" Sandule stood before her! She gave

wild scream of joy, and flung herself with rapture on his breast. Neagoe had grown so weak and feeble that she no longer resembled the again and asking Sandule to relate to her how he had escaped, and tell her

the dangers be had risked. She learned with what difficulty he had got away, and that he must quickly put the Danube betwixt himself and his pursuers, because that at any moment he risked being captured

and shot. "And now thou canst come with me, my dear girl," said he. "But my father is only just dead,

Sandule! We did not bury him yester-"He no longer needs thee. Come along with me. Neagoe, my darling." The girl looked back at the monastery, where her brother dwelt, where her poor old father was laid at rest, and taking firm hold of Sandule's hand, set out with him on his perilous path to an unknown land and pov-

Yet, she had never felt so supremely

When Sandule and Neagoe reached the banks of the beautiful blue Danube a hole herd of buffalos was just about to be drifted across to the opposite bank; making no more ado, they at once sprang astride on the backs of two of these animals and were soon safely forded across to the other side It was a picturesque sight. The herd consisted of more than a hundred buffaloes, whose black heads with their curved horns were seen emerging from this gigantic river, while the herds-men in their big white lambskin caps, bestrode some of them, and drove them onwards with their heavy staves. And then, the beautiful young maiden, with her uplifted skirts, her naked feet, wet by the wavelets, looked back to see if Sandu'e were following, to see if he were not pursued; to see if no bullet had followed to kill and bury him in the mighty stream, before he could gain a hayen of safety. At length they were safe. And they fell down and kissed the ground, and thanked Almighty God and made the sign of the Cross.

Years have past since that time Radu, the monk, has become the abbot of his monastery. He has gained the confidence and good will of his superiors by his excellent conduct and indfatigable work for the well-being of the monastery. He lives in his own

and playing with his chaplet on the baleony there came in sight a handsome woman and a good-looking man, in the flower of their age; before them ran two children, while the woman held a third by the arm, a fourth being carried in his father's arms. But not until they arrived quite close

dured for a length of time poverty and

(Signed) Mrs. C. H. Guise."
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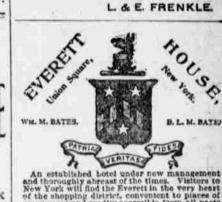
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ful as his own life. Before he had quite finished shouts of joy and the sound of the firing of guns were heard, announcing the approach of the wedding party, headed by a band of Tzigan musicians, who played on instruments as they walked along. Then came the children, strewing the path with flowers, then the bridegroom on horseback, escorted by other young men also on horseback, then the wagon of the bride, which was drawn by six milk-white oxen, whose ong curved horns were glided, and gay with ribbons and flavers.

streamers of gold thread, which uslooked bright and happy, but modestly decreed that she must keep her eyes cast down. Nevertheless, a gladsome looked escaped now and then from under her long lashes.

were also of the party-he wearing a snow-white shirt, and broad leather girdle, she with her long, fine veil embroidered with threads of gold, twisted round her head and almost reaching to her feet behind. The young men halted. The bride-

Neagoe had turned her back on this gay, rich wedding. She kicked a stone absently before her and frowned, while the old man collected the money which was offered to him. This "passing round the hat" was very bitter and painful to Neagoe; it hurt her pride, and she would have liked to fling the money away. Thinking that the wedding procession had moved on, Neagoe turned her head in that direction just as the bride had got down. She gave a sharp cry, and, making her way quickly through the crowd, she ran to "Radu! Radu! my brother, how glad I am to have met thee! Father, come here, father;" and she turned back rapidly

it is that we came this way!"

Radu kent silence. "What, Radu, thou has lied to me:

Then Radu, with a great effort, said; "I do not know this girl,"

"Peuh! thou goest on the highway, singing for money," said Ileano, the

The peasants around began to murmur amongst themselves, and to take

began to lighten, and the thunder seemed loud and near. None of these people had noticed the storm cloud, tanding as they were, facing the sunlight. They all began to make the Sign of the Cross, and looked on the storm as an ill omen for the young

the world, if thou wilt but recognize thy sister, and take her to live in thy I see that she is thy sweatheart! If on my wedding day, go! take him with

Papes and beg for pence."
"Radu," said Viad, very severely. this girl."

just been set free from the Salt Mines and that this maiden is my daughter, who, when she saw me, came to me at cace, although she knew that I had been a convict; she had a home in her step-father's house, but she preferred to gain her bread by singing and playirg with me. For thee, Radu, who wast my son, be thou forever accursed! May thy house fall to ruin! thy fields become a wilderness! thy wells be dried up! thy cattle die speedily! and if ever thou art the father of a son may he be a greater shame to theeyes, nine-fold-than that which I bear, as having come from the Saft Mines! At the hour of thy death may no hand be there to give thee even a drop of water! May thy wife deceive thee and forsake thee! To whatsoever thou put-

thy curse! See my monkish garments! welcomed into the world with loving care and forethought, his chances of health and

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