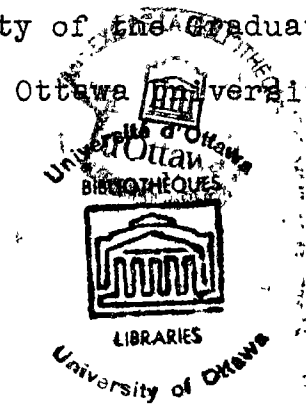


## WOMAN IN LITHUANIAN FOLKLORE

A Dissertation

Presented to

the Faculty of the Graduate School  
of Ottawa University



In Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree  
of Doctor of Philosophy

by

Maria Paplauskas-Ramunas

1952

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## INTRODUCTION

From the thirteenth to the fifteenth century Lithuania was a mighty state stretching from the Baltic to the Black Sea. Today Lithuania is a small, peaceful, Baltic country whose sons have died by the thousands in heroic defense of their holy native soil, and which now languishes under the crushing heel of Soviet domination.

This small idyllic country is a sort of island among other European nations. It is one of the oldest nations of Europe, and has preserved to a remarkable degree both its ancient language and customs. Its language is the closest to the old Indo-Aryan Sanskrit (Sanskrit, Lithuanian, Greek, and Latin are the four sister languages of the primeval Indo-European language, which has not yet been discovered or reconstructed). Due to a deeply rooted conservatism and relative isolation, the Lithuanians have preserved very ancient traditions, customs, and lore. Historical events and geographical factors had a great deal to do with this. For ages the Lithuanian nation was separated from the other European nations by the Baltic Sea and the great forests. It was a time of security and peace. Then the Lithuanians fought for three hundred years against the Teutonic Knights, who cruelly pillaged and enslaved the people under the pretense of spreading

the Gospel of Christ. It was partly in a violent reaction to these depredations that the Lithuanians clung all the more tenaciously not only to the soil of their fatherland, but to their ancestral religion and customs.

After Christianity had been embraced by Lithuania, it did not eradicate the old ways and customs: for at least two hundred years the old religion survived peacefully under the supremacy of the Cross. Even up to the First World War, the villagers still kept alive most of the old pagan superstitions and traditions handed down by their forefathers. As a result of all this, there is a rich and varied abundance of Lithuanian folklore, which beckons, almost irresistably, the serious researcher in these fields. Much of the material has been gathered and classified, but the greatest part of it is still unrecorded. Fortunately, however, it lives even today upon the lips and in the hearts and minds of the country folk, and reflects the philosophy, psychology and cultural history of the nation.

It should be useful to enumerate the following typical elements of folklore: (1) The telling of legends, tales, narratives, anecdotes, and jokes; (2) Musical compositions with lyrics and melodies; (3) Recitation of orations, lamentations, riddles and proverbs; (4) Mythology, demonology, superstitions and chants; (5) Customs and habits from practical

everyday life and comprising three subdivisions (a) customs connected with the most important moments of human life -- birth, baptism, matchmaking, wedding, death and funerals (b) customs connected with annual feasts (c) customs connected with communal or collective work -- harvesting, etc. (6) Folk dances and pageants.<sup>1</sup>

The study of folklore as such is a comparatively recent branch of science, but it has made great progress and promises to be a signal aid in the unravelling of the tangled story of mankind. Through its contributions to history, archeology, and linguistics, we are constantly coming closer to an understanding of the cradle of European culture and racial stock. Partly because of its comparative novelty and partly because of the difficulty in terminology, the subject matter of the science of folklore is somewhat general and its exact boundaries in regard to related sciences are difficult to define.

English-speaking scientists have done a great and laudable work in investigating even the smallest and most uncivilized races, and their speculations and hypotheses erected to reconstruct the patterns of development of cultures have been a great contribution to the ethnological sciences.

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<sup>1</sup> Jonas Balys, Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai. Tuebingen: Patria, Vol. I, p. 5.

Lithuanian folklore, however, has been almost ignored in previous English research. The author has consulted all the books and periodicals from 1804 to the present, available through the Parliamentary Library, the Library of the University of Ottawa, and the Congressional Library; and she found in these surprisingly few mentions of Lithuanian folklore, and even these were often garbled and inaccurate. The journal of the Ethnological Society of London several times confuses the Lithuanian and Slavonic races, and therefore it skips over Lithuanian folklore in almost complete silence. Hutchinson, Natt, Newell, Dendy, Bedoe, and Babington are guilty of the same error. Not even the antiquity of the language is mentioned. Taylor, not only includes Lithuania among the Slavic nations (which are younger offshoots of the Indo-European parent stock) but he lumps together the Latvians (which are the closest relatives of the Lithuanians) and the Finns<sup>2</sup> (which belong to the Uralo-Altai Mongoloid race).

Lithuania is one of the oldest European nations, and consequently an investigation of its folklore reveals a great deal and helps to lift the curtain of ignorance which has for so many thousands of years obscured the works and ways of our earliest ancestors. Foreign scholars have not

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<sup>2</sup> Griffith Taylor, Environment and Nation. Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1936, p. 24.

been slow to probe this rich treasure. German linguists have made the most outstanding research. Although they started out to investigate only the language, their interest soon widened to include many elements of Lithuanian folklore. The work of these German scholars remains unsurpassed, but it has been very well supplemented by Polish, Russian, Finnish, French, Czech, and Italian scholars. Although Lithuanian scholars themselves have recorded many collections of folk-songs, tales, proverbs, etc., they have not had sufficient time and tranquility to analyze all this material in such a way as to cast light upon the dominant national characteristics. Lithuania is on the unfortunate borderland of friction between East and West, and the many wars which have swept over her have depleted her material goods, undermined her culture and disturbed her scholars.

At present we have at our disposal only collections and classifications of folklore matter. The author has attempted to go beyond this first stage and to draw from the available material and her own first-hand research a picture of the Lithuanian national character, in which we may find many clues about the culture and traditions of our earliest European ancestors. We have limited ourselves to the treatment of "Woman in Lithuanian Folklore". Much material yet remains, and even some of our chapters could easily and

profitably be developed into theses on their own right. Such subjects, for instance, as Lithuanian wedding customs, the Lithuanian ideal of virginity, and the Lithuanian mother, deserve to be given fuller treatment.

It is the woman who is the principal educator of the children, and through them, she is the educator of the nation. She was the first agriculturalist, and through her efforts, the agricultural age was ushered in.<sup>3</sup> She has greatly enriched man's spiritual consciousness by her intuitive awareness of the Mighty Power Beyond. Consciously or unconsciously she generates high ideals in those whom she loves, and they in turn actualize these ideals, fight and die for them.

Man has the dominant part in creating culture, but culture is a fragile thing, it must be taken care of, it must be watched, and loved. It is the women who nurse and preserve culture. In her life, in her family and social status we find a clear mirror of the cultural level of a race. Highly cultured races have a higher regard for the physically weak but spiritually and sensitively strong and subtle. Barbarian races give recognition only to physical power.

Because women are the most careful custodians and perpetuators of national and family traditions, the author hopes

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<sup>3</sup> Zenonas Ivinskis, Dr., "Lietuviu Kulturos Tarpsniai," in Aidai, Schwaebisch Gmuend, June, 1949, No. 23.

that this thesis will cast into relief Lithuanian national and family life throughout its long history. The investigation has not been restricted to women from any particular class or any particular period, but to woman as she lives in the heart and mind of the nation and as she is represented in folklore. However, from time immemorial, Lithuania has been chiefly a peasant country, and therefore its concept of woman stands principally for the peasant woman.

We have divided our work into four chapters. The first three deal with woman in her three chief roles as virgin, wife and mother. The fourth deals with the position of the woman in the nation. The first chapter is based mainly on the folk-songs which praise the virtues of the virgin. We see the girl being educated by her mother and being prepared for her future life, her vacation. The second chapter, based mainly on wedding customs and songs, shows how the family was created, how the marriage was decided upon, and how the bride enters the family of her husband. The third chapter depicts the mother at her lifelong task of sacrificing herself for her children. Since motherhood is seldom the object of poetry and songs, the material for this chapter has been taken mainly from tales, legends, and descriptions of customs. The last chapter discusses the state of the woman in the nation. Her role in religion is described through the

preponderance of female deities in the pagan religion, and the great devotion to the Blessed Mother since the introduction of Christianity. Moreover, woman is discussed as the great supporter of folklore, and her social status is shown to be very high as a result of the influence of primitive matriarchy. Therefore, in this modest work the picture that the author draws of Lithuanian woman should depict at the same time the life of the Lithuanian family and nation.

#### Sources

The following five kinds of sources are employed in this thesis:

1. Collections of folklore in periodicals and individual collections published in book form.
2. Collections of songs, tales, proverbs, customs, etc.
3. Descriptions of particular customs treated in journals and periodicals.
4. Historical books.
5. This writer's Collection of songs, proverbs and tales as well as those borrowed from unpublished manuscripts of others.

1. This first class of material has been prepared and edited by specialists in collaboration with university authorities and issued in the following publication: Tautosakos Darbai--The Works of Folklore, edited by Lietuviu Tautosakos Archyvas, Archive of Lithuanian Folklore, incorporated into the Ministry of Education, and later into the Academy of Science; this collection of seven volumes (1935-1940) may be considered the best reflecting the deepest analysis and the most recent investigation. The editor of this publication and of other of the most important research and works of Lithuanian folklore is Dr. Jonas Balys, professor of folklore and head of the Ethnological Department of the University of Kaunas (1935), University of Vilnius (1942), University of Hamburg (1946), University of California (1949).

Another publication of this type is Tauta ir Zodis or Epe Litwana--The Nation and the Word (vol. 1-7, 1923-1931). It was published annually by Lietuviu Tautosakos Komisiija--Lithuanian Committee of Folklore at the University of Kaunas and edited by the renowned Lithuanian linguist Professor Karys Ruga, and after his death, by Professor Vincas Kreve-Mickevicius who has recorded a wealth of folklore material from his native region.

Other publications are the following: Musu Tautosaka--Our Folklore, published by the Committee of Lithuanian Folklore,

vol. 1-10, 1930-35; Gintasai Krastas--Native Country, containing ethnographical material and published by the Society of Ethnography of Siauliai, vol. 1-10, 1934-43. This publication is important not only for its collection of ethnographical material, but also for its well documented and classified descriptions of customs proper to various parts of the country.

The following are valuable folklore collections compiled by scholars of Lithuania Minor and by German scholars: Mitteilungen der Litauischen Literarischen Gesellschaft, published by the Lithuanian Literary Society, vol. 1-6, 1883-1902; Sitrungsberichte der Altertumsgesellschaft Prussia, Vol. 1-25, 1900-25, containing rich collections from Lithuania Minor and Prussia (Among the German scholars first showing great interest in Lithuanian folklore were Goethe, Herder, and Lessing); Erleuchtetes Preussen, edited by Gesellschaft fuer Geschichte und Altertumskunde, vol. 1-11, 1812-24.

2. In the second class of sources, one must consider the great service and contribution to Lithuanian folklore of Dr. Jonas Basanavicius. His Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniu, incorporated the first serious study of Lithuanian necromancy, and his collection of tales, songs, and surviving superstitions is outstanding and inestimable. Die Bestattung in Litauen,

by Dr. Marija Alseikaite-Gimbutiene is the most recent study of Lithuanian funeral customs and necromancy. The study is well documented and reveals a critical evaluation.

The collection of Dr. Jonas Balys is compiled on a highly scientific basis.

3. The third class of sources drawn from the great and almost inexhaustible wealth of folklore, since it has been recorded and published only in part, is represented by articles written by folklore specialists now living in the United States and Canada. The most prolific contributor of these articles appearing in various periodicals and journals is Juozas Buga, who has recorded in vivid descriptions many old Lithuanian customs.

4. Among the historical sources, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre by Wilhelm Mannhardt is the best and chief work on Baltic mythology and comparative folklore. His work embodies the material of the oldest and most reliable sources together with all the ancient documents, bibliographical references and a critical evaluation. This book, therefore, is of primary importance for specialists of Lithuanian folklore. Lietuvos Istorija, written by Dr. Adolfas Sapoka, is the best documented history on the Lithuanian nation. Naujausiu Praistoriniu Duomenu Tyrinejimas, by Dr. Jonas Puzinas, is especially noteworthy for establishing the date of the

Lithuanian race's first settlement and for his emphatic view placing this earliest settlement on the shores of the Baltic Sea.

All the old chronicles containing data on Lithuanian customs and mythology from neighboring countries were consulted in this thesis. Not all of this material is of equal value, for while some authors were objective, others were not and recorded Lithuanian life in a false and biased light to vilify its racial character.<sup>4</sup> Among the latter, the chronicles written by the Teutonic Knights, who tried to justify their cruel conduct by showing the Lithuanians as barbaric and even savage, must be sifted very cautiously. Such chronicles are the following: Adam Bremensis (1075), Ecclesia pontificum, L.IV c.18; Thomas von Chantampre (1263); Ditlev von Alpeke (thirteenth century), Livlaendische Reimkronik; Lucas David (1290), Preussische Chronik; Petrus von Dusburg (1326), Chronicon Terrae Prussiae; Nicolaus von Jerochim (1331-1345), Die Kronike von Pruzzinlant; Wygand von Marburg (1336-1389), Chronicon Livoniae, Chronicon Dubicense (1345/55-1479).

The most objective and complete descriptions of Lithuanian life are found in the following writings of scholars

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<sup>4</sup> Jonas Balys, Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai. Tuebingen: Patria, vol. 2, p. 229.

and protestant ministers of Prussia and Lithuania Minor: Hieronymus Maletius, Sudauerbuechlein; Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae; Paul Einhors, Wiederlegung der Abgoettery; Erhard Wagner, Vita et mores Litvanorum in Borussia sub districtu Insterburgiensi et Ragnitensi degentium; Johannes Maletius, Epistola de sacrificiis et idolatria de veterum Borussiae; Caspar Hennenberger, Kurtze und wahrhaftige Beschreibung des Landes zu Preussen; Salomon Henning, Der wahrhaftige und bestendige Bericht...

Other descriptions are contained in the records of the following travellers: Wulfstans reisebericht ueber Preussen (890); Lubenau Reinhold (1506-1613); Sigismund Herberstein (1557); Johann David Wunderer (1589-1590); Johann Arnold Brand (1673-74).

Valuable data can be gleaned from the chronicles of the following Russian and Polish writers: Wolynische Chronik (1253-1255); Kadlubek Vicentii (1223); Johannes Dlugosii (1415-1482); Matys Strykowski (1582).

The following documents are of primary importance: Der Friedensvertrag des Deutschen Ordens mit den Preussen vom 1249, Februar 7, and several Paepstlichen Bullen and Kirchvisitationen.

The best collection of old chronicles and documents are recorded in the following publications: Scriptores rerum

Prussicarum, Scriptores rerum Livonicarum, and Acta Borussica.

5. The fifth class of sources consists of collections which the author started in her high school days. At a very early age she was fascinated by the rich lore of her home countryside. She spent many summer vacations travelling through the villages and hamlets to collect her material. Unfortunately, a great deal of this material was lost during the war. In some cases the bibliography and references obtained at the universities of Kaunas, Koenigsberg, Tuebingen, and Vienna are incomplete, for according to the European custom only the name of the author and the title of the book are required. The Iron Curtain has rung down upon some historical sources, but the author feels that enough material is presented here to give a well-rounded and informative picture.

## CHAPTER I

### THE VIRGIN

The Lithuanian folklore is very old and very rich. The folk songs constitute its most important element. The historians concerned with the history of culture and the folklorists have valued them very highly for their deep lyrical spirit, high morals, tender feelings, which are expressed in beautiful symbols and simple words, and the beauty and variety of the form and the melody.<sup>1</sup>

Since the main object of the folk songs is love and the virgin, we shall consider first the ideal of virginity, the main qualities of a virgin and the all-important place that she occupied in the heart and in the mind of the people. This first chapter will deal with the following topics: 1) "mergele"--the maiden, 2) the sister, 3) the orphan, and finally the main virtues of the virgin, namely 4) chastity, 5) modesty and 6) diligence.

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1 "Das litauische Volkslied gibt alles in einem, Klang, Seele, Symbol, im Zauber der einfachsten Worte, der natuerlichsten Mittel. Das litauische Volkslied is keusch und verhalten." Victor Jungfer, Dr., Litauischer Liederschrein. Tuebingen: Patria, 1948, p. 8.

## 1. "Mergėle"--the Maiden.

In Lithuanian folklore a maiden is usually called "mergėle"--the virgin. "Mergėle" is derived from "merga", plus the diminutive suffix "ėle", which implies tenderness and loveliness. For small girls there is another suffix "aitė" v.g. "mergaitė"; for a maiden, "ina" v.g. "mergina". The term "merga" with time has changed its meaning. Until the 17th century, it meant virgin; in the old prayer books the Blessed Virgin is called "Merga Marija".<sup>2</sup> In the 18th and the 19th centuries, due to the Polish influence, she is called "Panna", or "Panna Marija".<sup>3</sup> In the 20th century, when the language was purified from foreign influences, the old form--"Mergėle Marija"--was reintroduced.<sup>4</sup> In the 18th and the 19th centuries, merga meant a peasant maiden, a hired peasant

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<sup>2</sup> Mikalojus Dauksza, Postilla, p. 68, in Sofija Ciurlionienė, Lietuviu Literaturos Chrestomatija. Voronez; Kulturos ir Svetimo Sekcija, 1918, p. 10. "O mergawima teip pagerbe, ir numileio, iog... ir motina sawa mielaie noreio turet amzina merga..."

<sup>3</sup> Vaclovas Birziska, Lietuviu Rasytoju Kalendorius. Tuebingen: Patria, 1946, p. 53. "Gyvenimas Szv. Marijos Panos, 1883".

<sup>4</sup> Syasys Yla, Rev., Apsaugok Auksciausias. Tuebingen: kun, Antanas Juska, 1945, p. 53. "O, Skaisciausioji Mergėle Marija, juri is Austos Vartu sviete!"

maiden, a servant girl. In the last fifty to seventy years "merga" has a more vulgar meaning; it means a big, very strong maiden, more mannish, without feminine kindness, or a girl with a bad reputation. "Zydmerge" means a servant girl in a Jewish family. "Zydmerge" is considered as a disgrading name for a maiden. (The Jews, since they do not believe in Christ, are considered by the common people as the lowest class).

In Lithuanian folklore there are many diminutive endings for the maidens' name: "mergele", "merguzele", "mergyte", "mergina", "merginele", etc.: usually she is called "mergele jaunoji"--young virgin, "mergele rutele"--virgin rue (rue is the symbol of youthful chastity). Her most frequent name is "mergele lelijele", "mergele baltoji lelijele"--lily-girl, white lily-virgin. From this name alone, the lily which is the traditional symbol of virginity, we can recognize the high moral conception of a girl in Lithuanian folk wisdom. To them she is pure and chaste as the lily bathed in the first shafts of the morning sun, whose snowwhite petals shining with crystal dew, gladdens all with pure beauty and fragrance. In the songs the unwed youth is called "bernuzelis dobi-lelis" meaning youth-shamrock. The young man--"bernelis",

speaking to a maiden, usually addressed her as "mergele lelijele":

"Vai, mergele lelijele,  
Ko taip puikavoji?  
Jei tevelio didziais turtais-  
Tai Dievulis dave."<sup>5</sup>

Oh lily maiden,  
Why so proud?  
If it is of your father's wealth-  
It is God Who has endowed.

Very often the "bernelis" calls his girl "mergele", "mergele mano, balta lelijele":

"Oi mergele mano,  
Balta lelijele,  
As aptversiu darzeleli  
Rutelei paseti."<sup>6</sup>

Oh lily maiden mine,  
I shall fence your flower garden  
To plant the rue therein.

Not hundreds but thousands of such examples abound in Lithuanian folklore. Many attributes are connected with the term young girl, and all of them symbolize her main quality, virginity;<sup>7</sup> "Mergele, baltoji gulbele", "mergele

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5 Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai. Tuebingen: Patria, 1948, p. 127.

6 Ibid., p. 128.

7 Kaspar Hennenberger, "Kurtze und wahrhaftige Beschreibung des Landes zu Preussen," in Erscheinung der preussischen, groesseren Landkarte, ed. by Georg Osterberger, Koenigsberg, 1576, p. 23. "...besonders ueber die Keuschheit der Weiber".

kvietkelis", "merguzele skaisti saulele", girl-white-swan, girl-flower, girl-pure-sun.

"Eiks mano mergele,  
Baltoji gulbele,  
Eisim paziureti  
Plaudianciu zuveliu."<sup>8</sup>

Come, my girl,  
My white swan,  
We shall go  
To look at the swimming fishes.

The adjectives "white" and "pure" identify not only Lithuanians but also most Indo-European races. "Skaidrus"--clear is related to the word "skaistus"--pure:<sup>9</sup> "Skaidrus dangus"--clear sky, "skaidrus vanduo"--clear water, "skaidrus rytas"--clear morning. "Skaistus" means shining white, pure; "skaisti ugnele" bright fire, "skaisti saulele" the brilliant sun, "skaistus veidas", "skaisti mergele" pure, untouched girl; "skaistybe" chastity.

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<sup>8</sup> From this writer's Collection of Songs, recorded from a fisherman, Anas Tydekas, in Klaipeda, 1936.

<sup>9</sup> Adalbert Bezzenberger, Dr., Litauische Forschungen, Beitrage zur Kenntnis der Sprache und des Volkstums der Litauer, Goettingen, 1882, p. 182.

"Isvydau mergele  
Keleliu einancia,  
Kaip rytu saulele  
Skaisclai uztekancia."<sup>10</sup>

I have seen a girl  
Stepping on a path,  
As the morning sun,  
Brightly dawning.

To describe a girl or a maiden it is customary to compare her appearance to that of the lime-tree, fir-tree, lily; the maiden is slender, strong and straight. "Nuaugusti esi, it liepele",<sup>11</sup> "it eglele zalioji",<sup>12</sup> "liekna it lelijele".<sup>13</sup> She has grown up straight as the lime-tree, strong, always gay, even tempered as the green fir. To express her health, freshness and youthful vigour a maiden is ordinarily spoken of as "merga kaip uoga",<sup>14</sup> "zydi it

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<sup>10</sup> Vincas Greve, "Dainos", in Tauta ir Zodis. Kaunas: Humanitariniu Mokslu Fakultetas Press, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 292.

<sup>11</sup> Vincas Kreve, Dainavos Salies Senu Zmoniu Padavimai. Schweinfurt: Teviske Press, 1948, 5th edition, p. 54.

<sup>12</sup> R. Meulen, Dr., von, Gamtos Prilyginimai Lietuviu Dainose ir Raudose. Vilnius: Lietuviu Mokslo Draugija, 1919, p. 38.

<sup>13</sup> Vincas Kreve, "Dainos", in Tauta ir Zodis, 1923, Vol. I, p. 228.

<sup>14</sup> Vincas Kreve, Dainavos Salies Senu Zmoniu Padavimai, p. 129.

pinavija",<sup>15</sup> "kaip roze rutu darzely"<sup>16</sup>--a maiden like a "berry", she flourishes as a peony, as a rose in the rue garden.

Since the Lithuanians are a nation with peasant traditions dating from antiquity, they have a deep appreciation of health. The young country girls have rosy cheeks, which are washed by the rain, dried by the wind and kissed by the sun - "lietaus nuplautais, vejo nudziovintais ir saules nubuciutais skruostais".<sup>17</sup> Only a sick or unhappy girl has cheeks pale as linen: "veidai pabale, it drobe".<sup>18</sup>

Lithuanian family life was very simple and severe, according to Johann David Wunderer in his Reisen, written at the end of the 16th century: "...haben barbarische mores, essen sehr uebel, rohe milch, schwartz kleyn brodt und ein duerr ungekocht fischle ist ihr best speiss, liegen auf harter erden halten fuer schandt,

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<sup>15</sup> From this writer's Collection of Proverbs and Sayings, rec. from Ona Pieteriene, Ilgakiemis, 1938.

<sup>16</sup> R. Meulen, Dr., von, op. cit., p. 21.

<sup>17</sup> From this writer's Collection of Proverbs and Sayings, rec. from Katryna Makauskiene, Lekieciai, 1932.

<sup>18</sup> Vincas Kreve, Dainavos Salies Senu Zmoniu Pavadimai, p. 82.

auff einem bett zu liegen, von statur seind sie stark, gross..."<sup>19</sup>--"...they have barbaric customs, they eat badly; fresh milk, black bread, smoked fish is considered as their best food; they sleep on hard ground and consider it shameful to sleep in a bed. They are tall and strong in stature." Like all old chronicles, that traveller's description must be subjected to a critical examination. The author could not have become familiar with Lithuanian life and customs in the few weeks that he spent there on his return trip (in 1589 he started his trip from Strassvurg, through Denmark and Sweden to Russia and came back through Lithuania, Zemaiten, Riga and Luebeck). The food he describes, must be that of a poor fisher-folk, because every peasant family had its own cattle, pigs and fowl and at least for feasts (later we shall see that there were many feasts with their traditional meals--meat and beer) used to butcher some of its animals. And moreover, in Lithuania, there were many vast forests in which, until the 17th century, one could hunt.<sup>20</sup> Both nobles

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<sup>19</sup> Johann David Wunderer, Reisen durch Dennemark, Russland und Schweden, 1589 und 1590, in Frankfurtischer Archiv fuer deutsche Literatur und Geschichte, Frankfurt, 1812, p. 189.

<sup>20</sup> Adolfas Sapoka, Dr., Lietuvos Istorija. Tuebingen: Patria, 2d ed., 1951, p. 96. Also Simanas Daukantas, Budas Senowes Lietuwiu Kalnienu ir Zamajtiu. Petrapilie, 1845, p. 56.

and peasants, in addition to their farming, hunted game; thus they could procure meat.<sup>21</sup> As to sleeping on the hard ground, it was the respectable custom of the times. In the 13th century, if a noble man had many guests for a hunt or feast, "sveciai suguldavo menej ant uslanu, mesku kailiais usklotu"<sup>22</sup>--"the guests slept in the hall on benches, covered with bear furs." In the Wolynische Cronik v. 1258 (Hypatijevskaja Kronika), in the Russian supplement, appendix to the Chronography of Johannes Malala in the description of Lithuanian gods and mythology--"Zapadnorusskoje svidetelstvo o Litovskich bogach"-- one can read: "...i stvori emu loze i pogrebe i ez zemli..."<sup>23</sup> "Loze" means a place made soft and comfortable for sleep. This shows that the Lithuanians of long ago used to sleep in a soft place. In Sudauerbuechlein, which was written about the middle of the 16th century, 1547-1555 (about 50 years earlier than Wunderer's

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21 Constantine R. Jurgela, History of the Lithuanian Nation. New York: Lithuanian Cultural Institute, 1948, p. 33.

22 Simanas Daukantas, Budas ir Apsiejimai Lietuviu ir Ziamaicziu Senoveje, in Sofija Ciurlioniene, Lietuviu Literaturos Istorijos Chrestomatija. Voronez: Kulturos ir Svietimo Sekcija, 1918, p. 35.

23 Wolynische Chronik 1252-1258 und Zuzatz zu Chronographie des Johannes Malalas, bearbeitet von A. Brueckner, in Archiv fuer slavische Philologie, Berlin, 1886, Vol. I, p. 10.

Reisen), in the part "Von jhren Sponsalien und vorlubmissen", the conventional bed is mentioned there three times: "Mit dem fuesswasser besprenget man die geste, brautbette, wich haus und hausgerethe"<sup>24</sup>--"The guests, the young couple's bed, the house and the house utensils are sprinkled with the water used to bathe the bride's feet," "Wan die braut soll zu bett gan..."<sup>25</sup>--"When the bride had to go to bed..." "Darnach fueret man sie zu bette und schlagen sie und bringen sie dem braeutigam..."<sup>26</sup>--"After that they bring her to bed, give her a slight blow and put her besides the bridegroom. The beds were very soft, with many pillows and down mattresses and quilts. In the long fall and winter evenings, when all the family, with servants and neighbours were together for work, the children and the shepherd used to pluck the goose-down: "Rudeni ir ziema ilgai vakarojama...vaikai ir piemuo pleso plunksnas..."<sup>27</sup> And in the home there

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<sup>24</sup> Hieronymus Maletius, Wahrhaftige Beschreibung der Sudawen auf Samland samt ihrem Bockheiligung und Ceremonien, oder Sudauerbuechlein, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, pp. 253-308; also in Erleutertes Preussen, 1742, Vol. I, Cap. VI, 11.

<sup>25</sup> Ibid., Cap. VI, 22.

<sup>26</sup> Ibid., Cap. VI, 29.

<sup>27</sup> Stasys Daunys, "Moteru Darbai," in Gimtassai Krastas. Siauliai: Krastotyros Draugija, 1942, Vol. 9, p. 74.

must have been a good quantity of down, because the dowry of each daughter included 6 to 24 pillows and 2 to 12 down-mattresses. Much, of course, depended on the wealth of the farm. The dowry was always a very important factor in the life of a maiden and it plays a big role in the wedding customs from the very old times: "Der Bruder des Brautigams muss der Braut Kubel, d.i. Lade, der Brautigam die Betten mit einigen Groschen ausloesen. So werden sie wenn ihrer viel sind, auf mehrere Wagen gepackt, nur die Betten legt der Braeutigam auf den Wagen, auf dem selbst sitzt"<sup>28</sup> "The brother of the bridegroom had to ransom the tub or trunk of the bride" (the bride puts her dowry into a big tub or trunk, but the bedding and pillows more frequently were put into sacks).<sup>29</sup> The bridegroom himself had to ransom the bedding with a token sum.

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<sup>28</sup> Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, or Preussische Schaubuehne, Section "Nachricht von der Litauer Art, Natur und Leben," in Acta Borussica. Koenigsberg, 1731, Vol. 2.

<sup>29</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai. Kaunas: Lietuviu Tautosakos Archyvas, University of Kaunas Press, 1935, Vol. I, p. 251.

It can be seen then that Wunderer's testimony about the sleeping on the hard ground cannot be considered too accurate. Perhaps the author wanted to express briefly the life of the Lithuanian peasants, filled with hard labour, simple and severe in its customs.

The girl was brought up under her mother's guidance and from very early childhood was accustomed to help her mother in the menial household tasks. She was taught to be a housewife and mother. And she was happy at her mother's side. Following her mother she assumed the burden of household tasks, large and small alike, with a heart full of joy and song, like a young humming-bird flitting freely through the sky. She sang all the while she worked. Her song sometimes expressed her feelings, her happiness, her cheerfulness, her loneliness, her dreams and sometimes imitated the songs of birds, the murmurs of the streams and of the gentle breeze. She sang as nature in the spring, because she herself was only a part of an awakening and radiant nature--the blossoming of spring.

The girl is usually compared with the flower, with the bright sun and with the sunny day. The girl was considered as something very pure, clear, bright,

gay, very tender and holy. The mere appearance of a virgin makes everybody tender and gay; she is a joy to the heart and the eyes. In the presence of a virgin nobody dared say anything indecent, indelicate, rough or coarse. She was respected.<sup>30</sup>

The gayest festivities of the nation, the feast of spring, of awakening nature and the feast of Saint John the Baptist--"Jonines"--can be considered as a feast of girls. The old Lithuanian spring feast "Trimpos" or "Jores" coincides with Easter:

Sniegui nutirpus, pirmomis balandzio dienomis, mergaites, pasipuosusios, anksti ryta iseidavo i giria rytu link. Lig pasirodydavo pirmieji saules spinduliai, jos persirengdavusios baltais drabužiais ir basos grizdavusios i namus. Dainuodamos ir sokdamos jos skelbdavo sugrizusi pavasari...parnesdavo linksma zinia, kad sutikusios linksmaja Jore-pavasari.<sup>31</sup>

After the snow melted, in the first days of April, the girls adorned themselves and went to the forest in an easterly direction. As soon as the first beams of the sun rose, the girls donned their long white dresses

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<sup>30</sup> Simanas Daukantas, Budas Senoves Lietuviu, Kalnienu ir Zamajtiu. Wilno, 1845, p. 81.

<sup>31</sup> Aloyzas Dangerutis, "Velyku Sventes Lietuvoje," in Jaunoji Karta. Kaunas, 1938, No. 15, p. 310.

and went home barefooted. Singing and dancing, they announced the arrival of spring... they brought the message to the adults and the youths who were waiting for their return on the village road. They said they had met the "Jore", the spring, and had brought it with them.

The feast of St. John the Baptist in North Africa and Central Europe is associated with the festivity of spring.<sup>32</sup> This is a survival of an old pagan religious feast. The pagan feasts are usually limited: they are observed either in one nation, or in ethnically related nations. Both this feast and Christmas were celebrated in all old nations as feasts of the changing of the sun. In the feast of St. John the Baptist, "Jonines", in Lithuania, there are three dominating factors: the fire, symbol of the sun; the greens and flowers, symbol of the spring; and superstitions, the magical powers of invisible beings.<sup>33</sup> The fire, symbol of the sun, as a purifying, sacrificing and saving power,<sup>34</sup> had the most important place in old

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32 Juozas Lingis, "Ugnis, Kupuolis ir Paparcio Ziedas-Joniniu Paprociai," in Pragiedruliai. Stockholm: Lietuviu Draugija Svedijoje, IX (June, 1948), p. 14.

33 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Prietarai, Burtai, Legendos," in Tauta ir Zodis, Kaunas, 1927, Vol. 5, p. 232.

34 Marija Gimbutiene Alseikaite, Dr., Die Bestattung in Litauen in der vorgeschichtlichen Zeit. Tuebingen: C.B. Mohr, 1946, p. 238.

Lithuanian religion and superstitions, as in the traditions of all old nations. Among the most significant celebrations, we find the "Valpurgy" fire or Easter fire (the last night of April), the "Peregrin" fire or the Pentecost fire (the 16th of May), and the most widespread one, the fire of St. John the Baptist. The fire of St. John the Baptist is well known in all Scandinavian countries<sup>35</sup> (now it is postponed to the end of April). In Germany they celebrate "Johannes feuer", "Sonnenwende-feuer", but this celebration is more popular in the south, in Sudetenland, Schwabenland, in Austria and in Switzerland. It is also observed in Baltic countries and in all Slavonic and Roman nations. The Spaniards brought it to America. It is known in Marocco too.<sup>36</sup>

The customs of the St. John the Baptist fire are to-day the same as they were in mediaeval time; the children, youths and adults jump through the fire; even the cattle are driven through the fire in order to be protected against sicknesses and evil charms.<sup>37</sup> The ashes from the

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35 Juozas Lingis, op. cit., p. 13.

36 Ibid.

37 Juozas Buga, "Jonines", in Teviskes Ziburiai, Toronto, June 25, 1951.

bonfire are scattered on the fields, meadows, gardens and stables, in order to shield them from evil charms and to assure fertility,<sup>38</sup> Even in the East, in the 4th century, Bishop Theodoretos of Syria mentions that he has seen in some cities and places fires through which the adults and the children were jumping. In France they burned wild and domestic animals, sometimes alive too. In Metz and Vogez high sticks were put in the fire. On the sticks was hung a basket or sack with live cats and snakes. Caesar mentions that in Gaul they burnt in big baskets live people and animals.<sup>39</sup> In some places of Lithuania, in Zemaiciai, Linkuva, they made a big doll of a witch, hung it on a stick, and burnt it. In this way all evil charms were burnt.<sup>40</sup> The custom of bringing some fire from the St. John the Baptist bonfire to the homes in order to make new fire was common in Lithuania. In Germany it was known in the 8th century.<sup>41</sup>

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38 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. VII, 16.

39 Juozas Lingis, op. cit., p. 12.

40 Juozas Buga, "Jonines Lietuvoje", in Draugas. Chicago: Lithuanian Catholic Press Society, XXXV (June 23, 1951).

41 Juozas Lingis, op. cit., p. 13.

The greens and the flowers are supposed to have a magic power, if they are plucked or dug up on St. John the Baptist evening.<sup>42</sup> The Lithuanian girls customarily dress up and go to the meadows to look for flowers and special kinds of greens--"kupoliuoti". When the girls from several villages meet together, they greet one another with special songs. In the districts of Ragaine, Pilkalnis and Klaipeda, one group of girls asks singing: "Kur buvai, Jurguti, kur tu keliavai?"--"Where have you been, George, where have you traveled?"<sup>43</sup> The other part answers by giving the name of the neighbouring villages, and so on, until they come to the name of their own village. Then they sing:

‘O kuom tave tenai vaisino? Kur pagulde?  
 Kur naktele nakvino?<sup>44</sup>--Where have they lodged  
 you? What have they served you?  
 Kepsniu as valgiau, vynelio geriau. Pui-  
 kioj, margoj lovelej miegojau.<sup>45</sup>--I have drunk  
 some wine, I have eaten some cakes. They have  
 lodged me in the guest house. They have put  
 me into a nice bed.

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42 Juozas Buga, "Papartis Zydi sv. Jone," in Draugas, June 24, 1950.

43 Juozas Lingis, op. cit., p. 10.

44 Ibid.

45 Ibid.

In the district of Klaipeda, it is the custom to pluck flowers from seven neighbours' meadows, but different flowers from each. With those flowers the girls dress a "Kupole"--a high pole--erected before the gate or on a hill. The old women--"ziniones"--gather many herbs and greens for medicine.<sup>46</sup>

Praetorius, one of the old chroniclers, who has given the best data on old Lithuanian habits, customs and religion in describing what he saw with his own eyes, tells us:

... vorzueglich die Maegde sammela am Johannistag auf den Feldern die Kraeuter. Der Hauswirt steckt fuer jede Person im Hause den Kraut in die Wandt...das uebrige stecken sie auf eine lange Stange, die man am Torwege aufstellt. Den Busch nennen sie Kupole und das Feuer Kupoles.<sup>47</sup>

... Especially the maidens pick greens from the meadows on St. John the Baptist day. The housekeeper puts some greens on the wall for each person in the house. The remainder of the flowers and greens they put on a pole, which is erected before the gate. The foliage, the flowers and the greens on the pole are called "Kupole" and the fire "Kupoles".

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<sup>46</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Sekmes", in Tautosakos Darbai. Kaunas: Lietuviu Tautosakos Archyvas, University of Kaunas Press, 1937, Vol. 3, p. 29.

<sup>47</sup> Matthaeus Praetorius, "Von Kraeuter und Vieh-  
teste," in Preussische Schaubuehne, Cap. V, 1-3.

A part of the foliage is used for medicine, another part against the charms; nine kinds of weeds are thrown on the roof of each building. With some kind of weed the doors of all the stables are tied in order to protect the buildings and the cattle from charms and evil spirits.

In the district of Klaipeda the wreaths are thrown over the head on a birch or a willow branch; if the wreath stays on the branch, the girl who threw it shall marry within the year. The number of times the wreath falls off reveals the number of years she has to wait.<sup>48</sup> In the eastern part of Lithuania the girls make wreaths and garlands, and they let them float in the river. If two of the garlands come together, the girl will marry within the year.<sup>49</sup> In the district of Panevezys, the wreaths are thrown into a well or a spring, whereas in Austria, garlands,<sup>50</sup> and in Russia, small branches of birch, are thrown into the fire.<sup>51</sup>

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48 Juozas Lingis, op. cit., p. 13.

49 Ibid.

50 Ibid.

51 Ibid.

Around the "Kupole" the maidens, and later, all the youths dance in circles and sing:

Ein saulele aplink dangu,  
 Ei Kupuoliau, kupuoleli,  
 Aplink dangu menulio kelti,  
 Ei kupuoliau, kupuoleli.<sup>52</sup>

The sun goes around the sky,  
 Oh kupuoliau, kupuoleli,  
 Around the sky to waken the moon.

When the sun sets and darkness covers the earth, the hills and the valleys, small and large fires begin to sparkle on the shores of the lakes and rivers. The maidens and the swains, holding hands, jump through the fire and sing. This "Joninui" night is wonderful. Darkness changes nature; the flowers, the foliage, the trees, the streams seem enchanted. In the forest, in the lakes and in the streams all kinds of fairies and demons, good and bad, emerge from their daytime hiding. Mounted on brooms they fly to the mountains and they prowl about the homes. They come through doors and through open windows to reward the good people, to punish the bad ones and to foretell the future of the maidens. At midnight the maidens run three times around the house in the direction in which the dogs are barking. From this direction "Prince Charming"

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<sup>52</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai. Tuebingen: Patria, 1948, p. 100.

will surely come (district of Marijampole).<sup>53</sup> Then each maiden overturns a piece of sod or turf. Early the next morning she looks to see what she will find underneath; a worm means she shall have a child; a piece of a branch means death and an early grave; a bug or chafer means a bridegroom (district of Alytus).<sup>54</sup> There are many kinds of spells, charms and superstitions, but the most important custom of the "Joniniu" night concerns the bloom of the fern.

The fern blooms only once a year at the stroke of twelve on St. John the Baptist night, when the cock's crow for a moment rends the midnight calm. The maidens and the swains go in search of the magic bloom, for whoever finds it can see all things even through the thickest walls and through the earth. He can discern all the treasures hidden in the depths of earth (it is a common belief of many nations that there are enchanted castles, fabulous treasures in lakes and rivers and in the earth) and know whatsoever he desires. But it is very difficult to find

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<sup>53</sup> Juozas Lingis, "Ugnis, Kupolis ir Paparcio Ziedas," in Pragiedruliai, Stockholm, June, 1948, No. 9, p. 9.

<sup>54</sup> Ibid., p. 12.

the blooming fern, because ghosts and witches guard it jealously, and frighten those who try to seize it; so only the very bravest can succeed. It may happen that the bloom of the fern falls unnoticed under the foot of an unsuspecting traveller.

As we have seen, the girl as virgin plays the chief role in all the joyous national feasts celebrating the triumph of the powers of light over the powers of darkness, spring over winter and the renewal of sun.

In the fishing villages of Lithuania Minor, two virgins, crowned with rue wreaths and holding white handkerchiefs, used to invite with appropriate greeting the guests of a wedding. In the wedding ceremonies themselves the "ziupone"--the woman matchmaker--has the place of honor.<sup>55</sup> In Lithuania Major, the "pirslys"--the matchmaker--plays a very active role.

The Lithuanian girl is educated by her mother in well preserved and frequently severe family traditions. From very early childhood she is taught all her domestic duties. She grows as the flower in the garden, for she herself is like a plant growing in the Garden of God,

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<sup>55</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., "Mazosios Lietuvos Tautosaka," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1937, Vol. 3, p. 21.

warmed by His sunshine. Everything is born, grows and dies under His care. A Lithuanian girl is a part of the Cosmos; she is in tune with nature and she is blended into the harmony of the Universe. She beguiles the working hours with melodious songs. Dr. Balys, the greatest Lithuanian specialist of folklore, has recorded the following words uttered by a simple Lithuanian girl from Vilnius, where the popular tradition is still living and where the folklore is well known for its richness, variety and almost unique primitiveness:

Whenever I passed through the forest I felt an overpowering desire to sing. When I sang, the little cuckoo began to sing in the green forest, grieving for an orphan without a true mother. I wept. Whenever a cuckoo sang, I also began to sing.<sup>56</sup>

Though the virgin living under her mother's care is the happiest of all beings, her life as a "mergele"--virgin--is short, as short as the blooming of the flower. Until the age of sixteen she is "pusmerge"--half-maiden--; she has not reached the fullness of youth, and she marries between the ages of twenty to twenty-six. The short days

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<sup>56</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., "The Folklore from the Territory of Vilnius," in Tautosakos Darbai, Kaunas, 1938, Vol. 4, p. 1.

of maidenhood--"Jaunos dienos, kai laisciau darze zaliaja rutele"<sup>57</sup> - "the days of youth, when I watered the green rue garden"--are so cherished that a woman never forgets them. Especially to those who must live with a disagreeable mother-in-law do the bygone days of youth glow like a bright dream of happiness:

Pas savo motinele,  
Pas savo sirduzele,  
Rutele žygau, meta kvepejau,  
Rozuzele Zydejau.<sup>58</sup>

At my mother's side,  
Close to her loving heart,  
I flourished as the rue,  
Breathed fragrance as the mint,  
And I bloomed as the rose.

Life in the home of her husband's parents is cold and full of toils and troubles; often she is not loved by her in-laws. They humiliate her. No longer is she called by the names of beautiful flowers:

Pas savo anytele,  
Pas savo niuronele,  
Usnele dygau, dygiu dygejau,  
Erskietrozių sketejau.<sup>59</sup>

The harsh tones I hear in my mother-in-law's home,  
She makes me grow like the thistle, like the horn,  
I grow up like the sweetbrier.

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<sup>57</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 211.

<sup>58</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 140.

<sup>59</sup> Ibid.

The poor young woman dreams in her songs that if she could return to her mother and regain her rue wreath (virginity), the past happiness would return to her.

Ten stovejo sena mociute  
 Tvoreles pasiremus.  
 Klausinejo pas dukterele  
 Ar suvisam parejo.

Ne suvisam, mociute,  
 Ne suvisai sirdele.  
 As atejau pas motynele  
 Ruteliu vainikelio.<sup>60</sup>

There stood the old mother  
 Leaning on the fence  
 She asked her daughter  
 If she had come to stay.

Not to stay, mother dear,  
 But I have come  
 Only to get my rue wreath back again.

Maybe her life would be easier, if she could tell her troubles to her mother, but because she is too far away from her mother or because she must look after her children it is impossible for her even to visit her mother. And so she changes to a cuckoo, or a duck and flies to her mother's windows or garden and, like the cuckoo, she laments over her miseries. The mother tells her she can come back if she returns her wreath of rue:

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<sup>60</sup> Grazina Krivickiene, Lietuviu Dainos, Vieux Chants Lithuaniens. Fribourg en Brisgau: Erdwin Burda, 1948, p. 85.

Grisk, dukrele, atgalios,  
 Grisk, jaunoji, atgalios.  
 Sugrazinki zalia ruta  
 Ir margasias skryneles.<sup>61</sup>

Come again my daughter,  
 Comeback my child,  
 But you must return the green rue  
 And all the coloured chests (the dowry).

Now the daughter tells her mother the conditions on which  
 she can give back the green rue and the dowry:

Kai sesele rutas ses,  
 Ant rytojaus jau zydes...  
 Kai brolelis rugius ses,  
 Ant rytojaus jau zydes,  
 Tai tada, o motinele,  
 As pas tave sugrisiu.<sup>62</sup>

When Sister shall sow the rue,  
 and tomorrow it shall bloom...  
 When Brother shall sow the rye,  
 And tomorrow it shall bloom,  
 Only then, O my mother,  
 Shall I return to you.

The longing for the far off days of youth and carefree  
 maidenhood throbs deep in the heart of Lithuanian woman  
 and finds expression in her songs. Thus the Lithuanian  
 girl appreciates and values very much her maidenhood--  
 "jaunas dieneles",--when she was loved in her family,

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<sup>61</sup> This writer's Collection of Songs, rec. from  
 Agota Ramonaitiene, age 73, Village of Ramoniskes, District  
 of Marijampole, 1930.

<sup>62</sup> Ibid.

honored by the people and usually compared with the flower, with the bright sun, with the sunny spring. In the folk tradition the virgin is put on a pedestal; with her cherished rue wreath on her head with a lyrical song in her heart, with smiling lips, sparkling freshness and tenderness, she unconsciously pleases the heart and the eyes of everybody.

## 2. The Sister.

The brother loves, honors, helps, teaches and guards his sister; he stands always at her side. He makes the loom for her weaving, the distaff and the spindle for spinning and the dowry trunk--"kraicio skrynia"--. He makes and repairs everything she needs: her rake, her washing beetle; he fences her rue flower-garden.

Begsiu greitai tekina,  
Pas broleli ureda,  
Mesk, broleli rasyti,  
Imk grebleli taisyti.<sup>63</sup>

I shall run very fast  
To my brother, my mentor.  
Stop writing, my brother,  
And, please, repair my rake.

When the sister is in trouble, her brother helps her.

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63 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 32.

Even when the sister is married, she goes only to her brother for help:

As paprasysiu savo broleliu,  
Kad sumindziotu mano vargeli.  
Kardais kapojo, kojom mindziojo,  
Mano vargelis nieko nebojo.<sup>64</sup>

I shall ask my brothers  
To trample and remove my hardship  
and misery.  
They struck with the sword and  
trampled it under foot,  
But my misery lingered.

A father had punished his daughter for losing her virginity by throwing her into the Danube. Her brother asked the father to have mercy on her:

Vai tevai, tevai, teveli,  
Uz ka trotijai dukrele?  
Jei uz ruteliu vainika-  
But nusipynus sau kita.  
Jei uz aukselio ziedeli-  
Buciau pardaves zirgeli.  
Jei uz neteisu zodeli-  
Buciau perprases teveli.<sup>65</sup>

O father, father, O father,  
For what reason have you thus  
punished your daughter?  
Is it for the rue wreath?  
She could wreath another.  
Is it for the golden ring which  
she gave to a strange lad?  
I would sell my steed and buy her  
another one.  
Is it for an untruthful word?  
I could apologize for her.

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<sup>64</sup> Vincas Kreve, "Dainos", in Tauta ir Zodis, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 412.

<sup>65</sup> Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 59.

In the oldest period of the history of the Lithuanian nation, in the nomadic period, it was the custom to steal the bride.<sup>66</sup> There are some old songs which mention this fact: the mother finds in the morning the room of her daughter empty and asks her sons to ride to the rescue of their ravished sister:

Vai sunelial mano mieli,  
Balnokit zirgelius,  
Vai jus jokit tais keleliais,  
Kur dukrali veze.<sup>67</sup>

O my dear sons,  
Saddle the steeds,  
Ride by these roads  
Where my daughter was carried away.

Here is another folk song of more recent origin, where the bridegroom is a noble man, for in the very old times there was no nobility;

Kelkit, sunus, veikiausia,  
Vykit dvarioka greiciausiai,  
Skaistu veida nedraskikit,  
Tiktai sesuli atimkit.<sup>68</sup>

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66 Zenonas Ivinskis, Dr., "Lietuviu Kulturos Tarpsniai," in Aidai, Schwaebisch Gmuend, June, 1949, No. 25.

67 Jonas Balys, Dr., "The Folklore from the Territory of Vilnius," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1937, Vol. 3, p. 135.

68 Ibid., p. 140.

Get up, boys, quickly, quickly!  
 Chase the courtling speedily.  
 Don't tear his bright face,  
 Only rescue your sister.

The sister loves her brother very much. She weaves his clothes for him. If he has to go to war, she shines his sword and spurs, saddles the steed and prepares everything he needs; she accompanies him through the fields and meadows to the road:

Viena sesele broleli renge,  
 Antroji zirga jam pabalnojo,  
 O si trecioji, pati jauniausia,  
 Vartus atkele ir palydejo.<sup>69</sup>

One sister prepared her brother (for  
 the war)  
 The second saddled his steed,  
 And the third, the youngest,  
 Opened the gate and followed him.

Before going away, the brother wakes his sister to say farewell and to tell her he no longer needs the fine linen and white shirts she made for him:

Kelk, sesyte, kelk lelijele,  
 Reiks man i kara joti.  
 ... As pamaciau savo sesele  
 Svirneli prie skryneles.

O kam tu vozei skryneles,  
 O kam tu rezei drobeles?  
 Nei as devesiu, nei as kur desiu.  
 Karely prie brolyciu.<sup>70</sup>

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69 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 147.

70 Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitynai, Vol. I, p. 153.

Get up, my sister, get up, lily,  
 I must go to war.  
 ... I have seen my sister  
 In the room near the chest.

Why have you opened the chest?  
 Why have you prepared the linen?  
 I shall neither wear it nor take it  
 with me  
 In the war among my brothers.

The sister cries at her brother's departure for war. The Lithuanians are a very peaceful nation. They dread adventures of war.<sup>71</sup> While they go faithfully to war to defend their independence, the Lithuanians are, in this respect, altogether different from the Germans.

The Lithuanians are very brave soldiers. They fought for 300 years against the Teutonic Knights who were helped by almost every country in Europe. They have fought like lions, even the women and children pitched in. They fought fiercely for every inch of their native soil, and there is no hill, no castle, no river, which was not drenched with the blood of thousands of unknown heroes and heroines.<sup>72</sup> War for them is an arduous and holy duty to defend the aged mother, the young sister and

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<sup>71</sup> "Dainose apie kara tikrai karingos nuotaikos nedaig terasime," ibid., p. 199.

<sup>72</sup> "...Gausiai atskiesdamas krauju gimtąją žemę." Vincas Brove, Dainavos Salies Senu Lmoniu Padavimai, 5th ed. Schweinfurt: Leviske Press, 1948, p. 187.



Verks verkus tur paliauti,  
Reiks man toliau keliauti.<sup>74</sup>

I have left my sister,  
Like a gillyflower in the garden.  
The gillyflower blooms in the garden,  
And my sister cries for me.  
She shall cry and shall dry her tears,  
Because I must go far away.

When the brother is taken prisoner, the sister goes to liberate him. In some other songs the parents and other brothers also go along:

Varsuvelej, Krokavelej,  
Sedi brolelis nevalioj.  
...Ir ateina jauna sesele,  
Ir atsinesa aukso ziedeli.<sup>75</sup>

Whether in Warsaw or in Cracow  
Her brother be taken prisoner,  
...The young sister comes,  
She brings a golden ring to ransom him.

When the young soldier dies far from his native home, on enemy soil--"svecioj salelej"--, he lies in the cold earth--"sieroj zemelej"--. Nobody knows where his grave is, nobody can plant flowers for him. Only three spotted cuckoos come to his grave and sing sad songs. They are: his mother, his sister and his beloved:

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<sup>74</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 148.

<sup>75</sup> Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 144.

Ir atleke  
 Trys raibos geges  
 Vidur tamsios nakteles.<sup>76</sup>

There came flying  
 Three cuckoos  
 In the middle of the night.

His mother mourns the longest, his sweetheart the shortest.  
 In folklore, the mother is faithful, she never forgets her  
 child; the sister remembers her brother very often, but  
 his sweetheart soon forgets him:

Sesuo gedejo tris metelius,  
 Mergele tris meneselius,  
 O motinele,  
 Gimdytojele  
 Visa savo amzeli.<sup>77</sup>

The sister mourned three years,  
 The girl three months only,  
 But the mother, who bore him,  
 All her life long.

When the sister marries and goes to live with her  
 mother-in-law who is usually unsympathetic, the brother  
 stays with his sister for the first three days to be a  
 comfort for her in her new life and new problems: "Isly-  
 dejus svecius, pajaunius, marti rauda. Visiems vestu-  
 vininkams is josios puses isvykus, lieka jaunosios bro-

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<sup>76</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skai-  
 tymai, Vol. I, p. 165.

<sup>77</sup> Ibid., p. 164.

liai dviem, trim dienom sesers raminti.<sup>78</sup>

At home the maiden is always in her mother's guardianship. When she is out of the house, the brother guards her. A girl, who has no brother, considers herself unfortunate. She asks in a folk song:

Tevelis senas, brolelis mazas,  
Kas belydes mane mergele?<sup>79</sup>

My father is old, my brother is still small,  
Who shall accompany me, a young girl?

The brother accompanies his sister when she goes to church; he would never let her go alone to the "geguzyne"--a kind of a picnic-- where young people sing and dance. Seldom does a maiden walk alone in the evening; it would be considered improper. The maiden may go for a walk only if she is accompanied by her brother, or some other girls. When returning late from her work in the fields, if she meets a young man and permits him to take her home, she is severely scolded by her mother:

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<sup>78</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 278.

<sup>79</sup> Albinas Konce, "Panevezio, ir Paystres Parapiju Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1926, Vol. 4, p. 596.

Puikus buvo vakarelis,  
 Aiskiai sviete meneselis.  
 Skubinausi nuo darbelio,  
 Laistyt ruteliu darzelio  
     Ir priejo bernuzelis,  
     Pioves lankoj doibilelius.  
     Zada pervest per liepteli,  
     Palydet iki nameliu.  
 Jei motule mane bartu,  
 Tai ruteles man uztartu,  
 O jei zmones ka sakytu,  
 Zolyneliai uztarytu.<sup>80</sup>

It was a very beautiful night,  
 The moon shone very bright,  
 I was hurrying home after my work  
 To water my rue garden.  
     Then a youth approached me,  
     One who had been cutting clover  
                                     in the valley.  
     He offered to lead me across the  
                                     footbridge  
     And escort me to my home.  
 If my mother scold me,  
 The rue (my chastity) shall defend me.  
 If the people talk about me,  
 The greens (flowers and lilies) shall  
                                     protect me.

On saturday night, when all the work of the week  
 is finished, the maidens gather at one end of the village.  
 After the girls have finished the first song, the young men  
 start with theirs. After a while, the rest of the villagers  
 and the two groups of the young people come together and

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<sup>80</sup> This writer's Collection of Songs, rec. from  
 Katrina Makauskiene, in Lekciai, district of Suvalkai,  
 1930.

join in singing and listening to the stories of the old story tellers. The old story tellers were loved and honored by the young people. And it is considered very proper that there would be some old respectable people together with the youth. Only at special feasts and ceremonies are the young people allowed to remain alone.

On Pentecost Eve the cowherds bedeck the horns of the cows with wreaths of flowers and drape long garlands around their own shoulders.<sup>81</sup> The next morning the housewife lets the cowherds sleep late, while about three o'clock in the morning the maiden, the daughter of the house, drives the cows to the valley.<sup>82</sup> All the girls from one village drive the cattle together, and, as it is still dark, they make a big bonfire, sing songs and weave garlands. Then come the lads of the same village with music, and they all sing together and dance. Very often they perform a symbolic marriage ceremony.<sup>83</sup> About

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<sup>81</sup> Juozas Buga, "Sekmines Lietuvoje," Draugas, May 12, 1951.

<sup>82</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Sekmes-Rytagones," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1937, Vol. 3, p. 104.

<sup>83</sup> Ibid., p. 103.

ten o'clock in the morning they bring the cattle home. This custom is called "Rytagones"--the morning pasture--. When they return, the maidens are sprinkled with water so that the summer will bring abundant rain and the cows will give much milk. On the same evening the youths gather together to celebrate the "Rytagones." They fry eggs which the housewife gives to the cowherds for their good work-- "Bundininku pautiene"--. Then the cowherds drink beer, sing and dance all night long. They are joined by the old people, for the celebration takes place in the biggest house of the village. Usually the "Bundininkai"--the youths who tend the cattle on Pentecost morning--build a big cross on the road of the village.<sup>84</sup>

Between sisters and brothers there was always love and confidence and it lasted all their life long. The young wife of a fisherman from a distant district, having a hard time in her new family, asks her brothers:

Vai jus zuvejeliai,  
 Mano broleliai,  
 Ar nesuzuvot, nesujeskojot  
 Mano jaunu dieneliu?<sup>85</sup>  
 You fishermen, my brothers,  
 Have you not fished, have you not found  
 My days of youth?

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84 Ibid., p. 106.

85 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 79.

A girl bewails crying at her mother's grave her misfortune  
in being left without a brother who would have made life  
easier for her:

Kad as tureciau  
Nors Broleli,  
Nors sakaleli-  
Uztarytojeli.<sup>86</sup>

Would that I could have had  
At least a brother dear-  
A brother, falcon-like,  
To drive away all fear.

The brother stands always by his sister's side, as her  
chief protector. In folk songs, a girl never asks her  
lover for protection, nor does the young "marti"--  
daughter-in-law--go to her husband for help in her troubles:

Broleli sakaleli,  
Apginkie mane,  
Ir zodeli uztaryk  
Uz mane.<sup>87</sup>  
My brother-falcon,  
Protect me  
And give me some  
Words of reassurance.

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86 Vincas Kreve, "Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis,  
1923, Vol. I, p. 247.

87 Ibid., p. 237.

## 3. The Orphan Girl.

"Naslaite"--the orphan girl--has a special place in Lithuanian folklore. The family is the individual's comfort and support. The parents are not merely the children's guides and providers, they are the builders of the children's happiness. Life for the girl without the love of a sister, a brother or a lover is very sad, but the saddest life is without parents, especially the life of a motherless girl.

The Lithuanian cannot bear solitude and loneliness. He seeks human companionship and affection. He needs a friend to whom he can speak, to whom he can confide his feelings and his dreams, someone to lighten his troubles by sharing them. If the "mergele"--maiden--is sometimes alone, she speaks with her flowers, with the birds, with nature. The orphan girl opens her heart to nature, for she has nobody to listen to her. All the Lithuanian songs and tales are filled with pity for the woeful fate of the orphan.

The word "nasle"--widow--, "naslys"--widower-- and "naslaite"--orphan girl--are formed from the root "nasta", meaning burden and thus implies the heavy burden that the bereaved must carry. Another term for orphan is

"siratele", "sirata". This word is derived from Ruthenian (the Ruthenians during about four hundred years belonged to the Lithuanian state) and means slave, serf, bond-servant.<sup>88</sup> In the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, men hired by Russian monasteries and wealthy estate owners were called "siroty".<sup>89</sup> Both "naslaite" and "sirata" convey the notion of hard and burdensome life. And the poor orphan complains so often in her songs on her mother's grave:

Oi varge varge, vargeli mano,  
 Kada as tave varge isvargsiu.  
 Guli mociute aukstam kalnely.  
 Oi varge varge, mano vargeli.  
 Kelkis, mociute, kelkis, meilioji,  
 Padek, mociute, vargeli vargti.<sup>90</sup>

O you troubles, all the troubles I have,  
 When shall I see the last of you?  
 High on the hill my mother lies in her  
 grave,  
 O, my troubles, my troubles.  
 Get up, mother dear, your child needs  
 you so-  
 Help me, mother dear, and console me in  
 my woe.

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88 Jonas Baldauskas, "Sirateliu Dalia," in Gimtasai Krastas. Siauliai: Krastotyros Draugija, 1938, Vol. 5, p. 257.

89 Ibid., p. 258.

90 Antanas Vureliunas, "Kupiskenu Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1923, Vol. I, p. 281.

In the early springtime, the little orphan girl of six or seven had to get up to tend the cattle. Sleepy-eyed, and clad in a shabby dress and "klumpes"--wooden shoes--, without stockings, the child still without breakfast had to go out into the bitter cold. The little orphan would have liked to stay longer in her warm bed or even in the warm kitchen, but she was frequently driven out with harsh words or even blows. She had to spend the whole day outdoors, even in cold and rainy weather in order to tend the cattle. On her way to the fields, she would drink from the bottle of milk which was to last for the whole day and would share her piece of black bread with her only friends, the animals. In the cold she would huddle near them for warmth; the little lambs would lick the tears from her cheeks.

The orphan girl goes to her mother's grave to bemoan out her miseries:

Uzejau ant kalnelio,  
 Ant mociutes kapelio,  
 Tai toliej graudziai verkiau  
 Asei savo motineles.  
     O kas cia mani verkia,  
     Mano kapeli mindzioja?  
     Asz, asz, motinele,  
     Asz viena siratele.  
 Kas sukos man galvele,  
 Kas nupraus man burnele,  
 Kas kalbes mejles zodeli?<sup>91</sup>

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<sup>91</sup> Antanas Vireliunas, "Raudos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1923, Vol. I, pp. 281-306.

I came to the hill,  
 To my mother's grave,  
 And I wept very long  
 For my mother.  
     Who is crying here?  
     Who treads near my grave?  
     It is I, my mother,  
     I, a poor orphan girl.  
 Who shall comb my hair?  
 Who shall wash my face?  
 Who now shall speak lovingly to me?

There are many "raudos"--lamentations--by which the orphan girl expresses her grief from the very moment her mother dies. Lyrical and doleful are those complaints of a poor girl whose heart feels so cold without a beam of true love.

All the tales and legends about orphans express the strong friendship between them and domestic animals.<sup>92</sup> Many of these animals have been given wonderful powers by the true mother to enable them to help her children. The step-mother in the tales is always the "pamote-ragana"--the witch--. The old witch, the stepmother, hates her step-daughter for her beauty and she overworks her. "Anelyte nueja unt motinas kapa ir pradeja verkt, ka man mociaku ideja linu pundeli suverpt. Motina saka: aik pas karvyti, pakrapstytk ausi ir susiverps."<sup>93</sup> -"Anelyte (Angele) went

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<sup>92</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., "Pasakos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 14.

<sup>93</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos. Shenandoah, Pa.: Dirva, 1902, Vol. 2, p. 160.

to her mother's grave and began to cry, because the step-mother had given her a bundle of flax to spin. The mother says: 'Go to the cow (which her mother had left her), scratch its ear, and the flax shall be spun by itself.'" In some variants of the same tale, the cow has but to lick the flax.

In the stories the orphan girl and the animals help each other. The little animals can be very helpful, for they can reason and speak; they have strong sense of justice and they have great compassion for the misfortunes of others, especially of orphans. The puppy announces to the father the arrival of the daughter:

Kiau! kiau! atvaziuoja sania dukte!  
 Kiau! kiau! atziveza daug pyragu!  
 Kiau! kiau! duos man kur didesni!<sup>94</sup>

The small mouse saves the orphan girl from death out of gratitude for former kindnesses which she has shown to her. "Mergyte papenaja pelyti ir ta nubega tardama as tau pribusiu un pagalbas... Tuo laiku pelyte graitai nubega un mergyti ir atadavus jai raktus liepe lyst is papecia."<sup>95</sup> - "The girl

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<sup>94</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos Yvairios. Chicago: Lithuania, 1904, Vol. 2, p. 316.

<sup>95</sup> Ibid.

fed the wee mouse, which, before leaving, promised her: "I will come and help you." Then the mouse ran quickly to the girl, gave her the keys, and told her to come out from the place behind the oven."

Not only the domestic animals which the true mother has left her, but the animals of the forests as well come to the aid of the orphan girl. The bear, for example, says: "As meskele- nagabele as pribusiu un pagalbas."<sup>96</sup> - "I, the bear, poor fellow that I am, shall help you"; the hare warns her: "Jau buvo belipanti is ratu, bet kiskelis atsiliepe plonu balseliu-Neik, sesele, neklausyk! "Sita upe krauju teka, krauju teka. Ana upele pienu teka, pienu teka."<sup>97</sup> - "Just as she was about to alight from her carriage, the hare warned her: "Do not go, Sister, do not listen, do not listen. This river flows with blood, with blood. The other flows with milk, with milk"; the cuckoo puts the girl's brothers on their guard: "Jus trys broliukai, kuku! Ka jus cia mylit kuku! Laumi-raganu, kuku! Jusu sesule, kuku! Zirgelius gano, kuku! Ir gailiai verkia, kuku!"<sup>98</sup> - "You

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96 Ibid., p. 315.

97 Ibid., p. 229.

98 Ibid.

three brothers, cuckoo! Whom do you love here? Cuckoo!  
A fairy-witch, cuckoo! Your sister, cuckoo! Was turned  
into a shepherd and cries. Cuckoo!"; the fox tries to pre-  
vent two witches from cutting a tree under which the girl  
is sleeping: "Atbega lapute, sako, duokit man pakirtet, o  
judvi pasilsekit."<sup>99</sup> - "The fox comes running and says:  
"Let me cut a little bit for you, and you both can rest a  
while""; the pigeons come to her rescue: "Leke pro sali  
karveliai, jie dave po keleta savo plunksnu, dave kupka,  
dave sepeti, dave abrusa,- su tom plunksnom galesi lekt,  
o kai matysi, kad tave pasivys, mesk kupka, mesk sepeti,  
mesk abrusa ir tuomi issigelbesi."<sup>100</sup> - "Some pigeons flying  
by gave her some of their feathers, a cup, a towel, a brush,  
and said: "With the feathers you can fly, if the witch  
begins to overtake you throw the cup, the brush and the  
towel, and in this way you can save yourself""; the cock,  
the duck, the swan, the falcon, the bee and the ant, all  
the animals and birds that meet the poor orphan girl in  
critical moments take the place of her dead mother and  
help the orphan. Nature itself is gracious to her, but

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<sup>99</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos,  
Vol. 2, p. 154.

<sup>100</sup> Ibid.

the stepmother has no heart and no feeling of pity for her:

Sunku akmeneliui  
 Ant zemes guleti,  
 Sunkiau naslaitelei  
 Pasauly gyventi.  
 Sunku akmeneliui,  
 Kai per ji vaziuoja,  
 Sunkiau naslaitelei,  
 Kai ant jos meluoja.<sup>101</sup>

It is hard for a stone  
 To lie on the road,  
 But it is harder still for an orphan girl  
 To live in this world.  
 It is hard for a stone,  
 When they drive over it,  
 But it is harder still for an orphan girl,  
 When they tell lies about her.

Since the orphan girl has nobody to defend her, she cries out all her troubles at her mother's grave; she cries as she works, when no one can hear her:

Ne tiek ji grebe,  
 Kiek gailiai verke,  
 Ant sieros zemeles  
 Parpuldama.<sup>102</sup>

She did not rake  
 As much as she cried,  
 Falling down at last upon the cold earth.

Most of the songs about orphans concern the orphan girls and not the boys. This is easily understandable, since a boy is more independent and soon grows up to be a strong

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<sup>101</sup> Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 29.

<sup>102</sup> Ibid., p, 30.

young man who can take care of himself. The Lithuanian girl, however, growing up in severe traditions has great need of a mother's guidance. The worst fate that can befall a girl is to be all alone:

Ir paaugo naslaitele  
Tarpe pamoteles-  
Be teveliu, be broleliu  
Ir be sesereles.<sup>103</sup>

The orphan girl grew up  
In her stepmother's home  
Without parents, without brothers,  
And without a sister.

The days without parents are very long: "Ilga diena be tevelio, be tevelio, dar ilgesne be mociutes, be mociures."<sup>104</sup>

The poor orphan girl becomes absorbed in the flowers, thinking perhaps they can replace her parents:

Aina siratele viesuoju keleliu.  
Ir isdygo bijunelis salyje kelelio.  
Ji praeidama, pasikloniodama:  
Ar nebutum, bijuneli, man uz tetuzeli?  
Ar nebutum, lelijele, man uz motinele?<sup>105</sup>

An orphan girl walking down by the big  
road gazes at  
A peony growing on the side.

<sup>103</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., "Naslaiciu Dainos," in Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 114.

<sup>104</sup> Antanas Vireliunas, "Raudos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1923, Vol. I, p. 292.

<sup>105</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos. She-  
nandoah: Dirva, 1902, p. 2.

Coming near, she bows and asks:  
 Peony, could you not be my father?  
 Lily, perhaps you could be my mother?

But the flowers cannot move to defend her, for their feet are roots and branches are their hands. All they can do is wave their petals and leaves to console her: "As neturiu, siratele, ne baltu rankeliu, as neturiu, siratele ne meiliu zodeliu. Sakneles-kojeles, sakeles- rankeles, o the zalieji lapeliai, tai meilus zodeliai."<sup>106</sup> The lime tree can offer greater protection to the orphan girl. So she comes to it, tells it about her misery and presses herself gently against the trunk. It seems to her that the tree understands her and consoles her. A feeling of appeasement fills her heart:

Uz mane linko  
 Liepos sakeles,  
 Ne mociutes rankeles.  
 Uz mane krito  
 Zali lapeliai,  
 Ne mociutes zodeliai.<sup>107</sup>

For me the branches of the lime tree bend  
 down-  
 But not like the arms of my mother.  
 For me the green leaves fall-  
 But not as the words of my mother.

The poor, heart-sick orphan girl may not only fancy that the lime tree is her mother, but she may also imagine that other

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<sup>106</sup> Ibid., p. 3.

<sup>107</sup> Ludwig J. Rhesa, "Daino," in Betrachtung ueber die litauischen Volkslieder. Berlin: Pranas Kurschaitis, 1843, p. 128.

trees are trying to take the place of her other relatives:

O as siratele,  
 O as vargdienele,  
 As neturiu mociutes.  
 Augo girioj liepuzele,  
 Tai mano mociute.  
     Augo girioj zalias jovarelis,  
     Tai mano brolelis...  
     Augo girioj azuolelis,  
     Tai mano tevelis...  
     Augo girioj sedulele,  
     Tai mano sesele.<sup>108</sup>

I am only a poor toiling orphan girl,  
 And though I have no mother  
 There in the forest a linden tree,  
 That is my mother.  
     There grows in a forest a plane tree,  
     That is my brother.  
     There grows in a forest an oak tree,  
     That is my father.  
     There grows in a forest a dogwood tree,  
     That is my sister.

The personification of trees comes from the old pagan religion of Lithuanians, in which trees, especially the oak, were considered holy. Even certain groves were considered sacred.<sup>109</sup> One can find accounts of sacred groves and forest of Lithuanian

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<sup>108</sup> Jonas Baldauskas, Dr., "Sirateliu Dalia," in Gimtasai Krastas. Siauliai: Krastotyros Draugija, 1938, Vol. 5, p. 258.

<sup>109</sup> "Arbores. sacrae et loci sacri." G. Pertz, "Vita S. Adalberti episcopi," in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Dr., Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre. Riga: Lettisch-Literarische Gesellschaft, 1936, p. 10.

in all the old chronicles, starting from Bruno Bonifacius (1104)<sup>110</sup> and Vincenz Kadlubek (1223)<sup>111</sup> to Matthaeus Praetorius (1631-1707)<sup>112</sup> and in the records of the visitations of the Protestant church in Lithuania Minor until the middle of the 18th century.<sup>113</sup>

The pagan Lithuanians believed that after death the soul can live in birds<sup>114</sup> and in holy trees.<sup>115</sup> Thus it is not difficult to understand why the poor orphan girl looks to a lime tree for help. She imagines that her mother's

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110 Petrus Dusburg, "Chronicon Terrae Prussiae (1326)," in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum. Edited by Th. Hirsch, M. Toeppen and Ernst Strehlke. Leipzig, 1861, Vol. I, p. 64.

111 Vincentii Kadlubek, Chronica. Dobromili, 1612, in Johannes Voigt, Dr., Geschichte Preussens, Koenigsberg, 1827, Vol. I, p. 357.

112 Matthaeus Praetorius, "Deliciae Prussiae," in Acta Borussica, 1731, in Auszuegen herausgegeben von W. Pearson, Berlin, 1871, Vol. 4, Cap. I, 6.

113 Visitations Protokolle, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, pp. 414-434, p. 591, p. 517. "Wohlfart. Viele opfern unter einer Linde bei Aren..." - "Wohlfart (name of the place). Many (people) sacrifice under a linder tree at Aren."

114 Marija Gimbutiene-Alseikaite, Dr., Die Bestattung in Litauen, in vorgeschichtlicher Zeit. Tuebingen: C. B. Mohr, 1946, p. 237.

115 "... inter populos barbaros, qui honorem Deo debitum animalibus brutis, arboribus frondosis, aquis limpidis, virentibus herbis et spiritibus immundis impendunt..." Bulle Papst Innocenz III, v. 1199, Oct. 5, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, p. 28.



The orphan, to whom no heart listens, speaks to nature, cries with the cuckoo, sings with the birds, laughs to the flowers. The rain, instead of mother's hands, washes her face; the wind plaits her braids; the sun caresses and kisses her face with its warm beams. In nature she feels at home, she feels that she herself is just a small part and that there is a place for her. Surrounded by plants, animals, and birds, and living under the clear sky and the bright sun, she is happier and safer than among people. In the spring she sees the beauty of blossoms and she raises her heart to "Zemyna"<sup>118</sup> the goddess of the earth, of life and of creation. "Zemyna" (from "zeme", earth) is the creating mother of all nature, and so she is also the mother of her poor small flowers, the human children who thus implore her:

Zemynele, Ziedeklele ("ziedkelele" in other songs),  
 Kur rasiu teva, mociute,  
 As prastumta vargdiennele?<sup>119</sup>  
 Zemynele, who makes every thing blossom,  
 Where shall I find a father and a mother,  
 I, poor girl, heavily laden with cares?

The songs about the sun mother and about "Zemyna" take their origin from the old pagan Lithuanian religion;

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<sup>118</sup> Tacitus, Germania. Edited by Alfons Molder. Leipzig, 1778, Cap. 45.

<sup>119</sup> Ludwig J. Rhesa, Dainos, p. 300.

they are as old as the Lithuanian nation itself. The mythological songs were created in this period of the nation's life, when the powers of nature were worshipped. The songs about "Zemina" were recorded in the middle of the 19th century, more than five centuries after Lithuania's baptism, and they were still alive in the tradition of the folk.

The orphan girl feels more poignantly the absence of her mother at wedding time, because every Lithuanian girl has a dowry of her own hand-made linen, clothes and everything needed for the household. But the orphan girl has had no time to spin and weave for herself and she has had no flax of her own, no thread, and so she could have no dowry. She tells her "bernelis"-her bridegroom:

Ko užsipuolei, tu bernuzeli,  
 Ant manes sirateles,  
 Ant vargo mergeles?  
 Juk tu zinojai, jaunas berneli,  
 Varguzyje užaugau, ...  
 Tik kas dienele po purvyneli,  
 Kas adynele po asarele,  
 Vargios mano dieneles.<sup>120</sup>

Why do you blame me, bernuzeli,  
 Me an orphan girl,  
 A girl with troubles?  
 Did you not know, young man,  
 That I grew up in misery,  
 Every day I had to step in mud,  
 Every hour I shed a tear,  
 All my days are wretched.

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120 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 161.

Coming to her new family, the family of her husband, the young daughter-in-law must present a gift to each of the new relatives, to the guests, the neighbours, and to each child in the village. The orphan girl does not have enough gifts. What shall she do? She goes to her mother's grave to ask for advice. The mother gives her the following advice:

Vieniems skarele,  
 Kitiems juostele,  
 Tretiems lenki galvele...  
 Paliai siera zemele.<sup>121</sup>

To some, give clothes,  
 To others, girdles,  
 And to the rest bow your head...  
 Very low to the earth.

The life of an orphan girl is a very hard one. From the cradle to the grave hers is a life of misery, trials and poverty. She is poor and she can marry only a poor "bernelis"; since she has no dowry and no inheritance she cannot get a wealthy husband:

Varguzij gimiau, varge uzaugau,  
 Uzvargo bernelio ir nutekejau.<sup>122</sup>

I was born in hardship and distress  
 And when I grew up, I married a fellow as poor  
 as myself.

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<sup>121</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 164.

<sup>122</sup> Jonas Baldauskas, Dr., "Sirateliu Dalia," in Gimtasai Krastas, 1938, Vol. 5, p. 262.

## 4. Chastity.

For Lithuanians, chastity--"skaistybe"--and innocence --"hekaltybe"--are the chief virtues. Between sixty and seventy per cent of the folk songs mention the green rue--"zaliaja rutele"--,<sup>123</sup> the symbol of purity. It is only in Lithuanian folk songs and folklore that a symbol of chastity is given such prominence and that chastity and virginity are given such honor. This outstanding mark of Lithuanian character has been noted and praised by students of folklore, culture and ethnic traits.<sup>124</sup>

In earlier times it was the custom for the girls going out to festivities on Sundays and holidays to adorn their braids with wreaths of rue as sign of their virginity. Up to the present day, the village girls put a sprig of rue in

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<sup>123</sup> "Apie dainas...gausingiausia skyriu musu liaudies dainu tarpe sudaro dainos apie berneli ir megele bei judvieju santykius..." Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 198.

<sup>124</sup> Ludwig J. Rhesa, Dainos, p. 320.  
 August Kotzebue, Preussische aeltere Geschichte.  
 Hamburg, 1811, Vol. I, p. 89.  
 Adalbert Bezzenberger, Dr., Litauische Forshingen-  
 Beitrage zur Kenntnis der Sprache und des Volkstums der Litauer.  
 Goettingen, 1882, p. 32.  
 Victor Jungfer, Dr., Litauischer Liederschrein,  
 p. 9. "Da wird das Maegdlein zur zarten Lillie... So werden  
 Rautengarten und Rautenkraenzlein zu Sinnbildern fuer die  
 Unschuld des Maedchens."

their hair, and when they go to church, they put a spray of rue between the pages of their prayerbooks.

The virgin in her mother's house is supremely happy. Her life is like that of her rue, basking in the warm sunshine.<sup>125</sup> The days are filled with her gladsome songs. Besides her daily chores done gladly, she takes care of her flower garden and rejoices in her wreathed young days--"jaunos dienos vainikuotos"--:126

Sejau ruta, sejau meta,  
Sejau lelijele.  
Sejau savo jaunas dienas  
Kaip darze rutele.<sup>127</sup>

I sow the rue, I sow the mint,  
I sow the lily too.  
I sow my blooming flower days of youth  
As in my bower garden I sow the rue.

The maiden is very happy with her rue wreath:

Vainikeli pyniau,  
Ant galveles dejau,  
Uzsidejus ant galveles,  
Jaunimelin ejau...<sup>128</sup>  
Daineles dainavau.

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125 Teodoras Brazys, Dr., "Die Singweisen der litauischen Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1926, Vol. 4, pp. 13, 15, 18, 20.

126 Balys Sruoga, Dr., "Lietuviu Dainu Poetines Priemones," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1925, Vol. 3, p. 63.

127 This writer's Collection of Songs. Rec. from Magde Mikolaitiene, Village of Padainupiai, Kaunas, 1936.

128 Vincas Kreve, "Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 266.

I wreathed the wreath,  
 And put it on my head.  
 Thus crowned with my wreath,  
 I went where the young people gather...  
 There I sang songs.

The girl can go to such gatherings of songs and innocent merriment only if she wears her rue wreath:

Sokit, sokit, merguzeles,  
 Pakol vainikuotos,  
 Kai nuimsit vainikelius,  
 Busit kaip parduotos.<sup>129</sup>

Dance, girls, dance,  
 But only while you're wreathed,  
 For once you take your wreaths off  
 You'll be like hired drudges.

That song is about a bride on the eve of her wedding. It means that a girl can be merry only while she still has her rue wreath, or so long as she is free. After taking off her rue wreath to become a wife, she shall be under the will of her husband, take on new duties and have no time for gay songs and dances. The girl, living in the bliss of her parental home, speaks with her sister about the rue of which she thinks so often:

Pirksim mudvi, seserele,  
 Tu navatnu sekluziu,  
 Vis zaliu rutuziu.  
 Tai retai sejau, tai tankiai dygo.  
 Rutele isbujojo, rutele islapojo.  
 Is palapiu bus vainikelis,  
 Is virsuneles-kvietkuzele.<sup>130</sup>

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129 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 181.

130 Ibid., p. 7.



jaki Europejski narod, ktory w swoich piesniach milostnych... milosc w tak rozlyczny sposob odmalowal."<sup>132</sup> - "I do not know of any other European nation which in its love songs... would be able to describe love in such a variety of ways." Love is a spontaneous and holy feeling of nature, which suggests to innocent people that in this wonderful, inconceivable inclination, there must be something exalted and divine. In the songs, the word love is never mentioned. Love itself hardly has a name; it is still a profound and holy mystery of nature, which innocent hearts dare not express.

The description of a girl's chastity, expressed in truly poetical terms, is found in such a great number of songs that it would be impossible to mention them all. Here we can give only a few examples:

Kur musu sesite stowejo,  
Rutuzes zidejo ir lelijuzes.<sup>133</sup>

Where our sister stood,  
The rue and the lily blossomed.

The young virgin knows her value, the great worth of her chastity and she says proudly to a young man who boasts of his wealth:

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<sup>132</sup> Jonas Balyis, Dr., "Tautosaka is Kossarzewskio Lituanicos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1937, Vol. 3, p. 109.

<sup>133</sup> Ibid., p. 113.

Visa mano tau sviesybe-  
Vainiks ant galvos.<sup>134</sup>

All my splendor is for you-  
For you the wreath that crowns my head.

If a young man--"lanko mergele"--is courting a girl, his  
mother asks him:

Ar grazi tavo mergele,  
Ar zalia josios rutele?<sup>135</sup>

Is your girl comely?  
Is her rue green?

The mother was once a virgin, that loved and still  
loves chastity. The Lithuanian woman is very pure, very  
faithful to her husband and her children. Therefore she  
insists that her son take a virgin for his wife. She teaches  
her son to be pure, to honor a girl's chastity, not to act  
dishonorably towards her:

Mano suneli, dobileli,  
Kai nujosi pas mergele,  
Nekelk vartu iki galui.  
Neleisk zirga visa valia,  
Nemindziok ruteles,  
Nevirkdyk mergeles.<sup>136</sup>

My son, my shamrock,  
When you go to see a girl,  
Do not open the gates too wide,  
Do not let the steed run wild,  
Do not tread on the rue,  
Do not cause your beloved to weep.

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134 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 27.

135 Ibid., p. 122.

136 Ibid., p. 175.

And the girl at her mother's aide is always busy, always working hard, and always very gay and happy, for she has her rue wreath on her head:

Augin mociute viena dukrele,  
Kaip darzelij rutele.  
Vai issiskalbe baltai zlugteli,  
Kasdiena baltai vaiksciojo,  
Kasdiena baltai, vis vainikuota,  
Galvele susukuota.<sup>137</sup>

The mother raised a daughter,  
Like rue in the garden.  
She washed white the linen.  
Every day she was freshly clean  
And crowned with a wreath,  
Which rested on her neatly braided hair.

The Lithuanians believed in the great power of chastity and virginity. Chastity can save from charms. There are many folk tales, in which this power of virginity has saved a young man from evil powers and spells. A young man is bewitched--"uzkeretas"--. His body is covered with painful wounds; he is about to die. A wise old woman says he can be saved only if a young virgin willingly kisses him with her chaste lips. There was a virgin who had pity on him and kissed him. Immediately the youth recovered and later married his lovely rescuer.<sup>138</sup> In this tale the girl's chastity triumphed over the deadly spell.

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<sup>137</sup> Ibid., p. 69.

<sup>138</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., "Pasakos," in Tautosakos Darbai, Vol. 2, p. 35.

A father in order to be freed from his troubles promises his yet unborn daughter to a witch. The witch imprisons the girl in a tower, where she is shuttered from the day. When the witch wishes to see her prisoner, she climbs up on the girl's long braids. A handsome prince, chancing to see this, comes to visit the girl in the same way. But one day the witch finds out about the prince and so she crops the girl's hair and drives her out into the wilderness. The prince is blinded by his fall from the tower. Then one day the wandering maiden finds in the forest the poor blind youth. The tears she sheds for him in pity fall upon his eyes and the veil of blindness is lifted from his eyes to reveal his beloved.<sup>139</sup> In this story the chaste tears of a virgin restore sight to blind eyes.

The Grand Duke of Lithuania Gediminas in 1323 began the building of a great castle on the river Neris, on a strategic hill, which was to become the new Lithuanian capital, Vilnius. The pagan priests told the duke that if he wished the walls and ramparts of his castle to be invincible, a young virgin would have to be immolated and immured in the foundation stones. The ceremony began as the first rays of the

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<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 38.

dawn appeared. The maiden, a pure, young girl who had willingly offered to sacrifice herself for the good of her homeland, stood robed in white garments, a wreath of rue on her head, and holding a bouquet of lilies and rue. On the hill above, looking down upon the maiden who was standing near the foundation, the duke gathered with his nobles, priests and throngs of his subjects. At a signal from the Grand Duke, hundreds of his soldiers pushed against a giant boulder which thundered down the hill to crush the victim. The rumbling of the great stone mingled with the horrified gasps of the onlookers rose to a deafening din. But, as the dust subsided and the awakening sun arose boldly over the hill, its bright beams revealed the innocent, smiling maiden tranquil and unscathed looking with gentle pity upon her flowers which alone had been crushed.<sup>140</sup> This legend shows how highly chastity was honored and valued, even in the affairs of state. The life of a chaste girl was to be offered as the sure guarantee of invulnerability and success in the building of a new capital.

Chastity was adorned with every honor. The virgin was greatly admired and it was the greatest misery for a

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<sup>140</sup> Benys Babrauskas, Lietuviu Keliu. Kirchheim-Teck: Atzalynas, 1947, p. 46.

girl to lose her virginity, her rue wreath. She was condemned by parents, friends, relatives, and by society. On every side she would be tortured with reproach and blame, and no one could be found who would defend her. Hers was the supreme misfortune and throughout her life she would find no forgiveness. The same disgrace would be suffered by her illegitimate offspring--"povainikis"--, slurringly called a bastard--"benkartas"--<sup>141</sup> an insulting epithet borrowed from the Slavonic. For such one who has lost her rue wreath, there are but two alternatives: to spend her life in shame and bitter remorse or to end it once and for all. The wretched girl complains to her mother:

Be reikalo, motin, mane auginai,  
 Be reikalo maza nepaskandinai.  
 Reikejo imesti i vandeneli,  
 Reikejo paristi ir akmeneli.<sup>142</sup>

In vain, mother, have you reared me,  
 Would that you had drowned me  
 Far better had you plunged me beneath the wave  
 With a heavy stone about my neck.

It seems better for the poor girl not to have lived at all, not to have tasted youth and virginal splendor, than to lose it in undying shame.

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<sup>141</sup> Pelikšas Bugailiskis, "Sis-Tas apie Musu Doroviniu Prasizengimu Baudziamuosius Paprocius," in Gimtasai Krastas, 1938, Vol. 5, p. 265.

<sup>142</sup> This writer's Songs Collection. Rec. from Agota Ramonaitiene, Village of Ramoniskiai, District of Marijampole, 1932.

In another song a fallen girl sighs her desire to  
hide her disgrace in the grave:

Jau ner veide skaistumelio,  
Ant galveles vainikelio...  
As inlisciau in ta vola,  
Kur lapute vaikus veda,  
As toj voloĵ beguleciau,  
Ne sarmatos netureciau.<sup>143</sup>

There is no more purity in my gaze,  
The rue wreath is fallen from my brow.  
How I yearn to creep into the den  
Where the fox guards its young!  
How I yearn to snuggle into such a cave!  
For there I would be safe from accusing eyes.

One night the girl met a young man. She sat on a  
hill under the lime tree and bargained away her rue wreath--  
"ant kalno po liepele sedejo, rutu vainika derejo."<sup>144</sup> Her  
brothers discovered her shame and revealed it to her father:  
"Vai ir isgirdo broleliai, vai ir paskunde teveliui."<sup>145</sup>  
And the severe father punished his daughter to death:

Tevas dukrele mokino,  
I Dunojeli skandino.<sup>146</sup>

The father has learned of his daughter,  
He has drowned her in the Danube.

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143 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 51.

144 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 58.

145 Ibid.

146 Ibid.



85,000 proverbs, 50,000 puzzles, 105,000 superstitions, and about 36,000 items of folklore) not even one per cent relate to lost virginity.<sup>148</sup>

This spotless purity was demanded only of the girl. There is, for example, one song in which a youth going to a war, asks his "mergele" to wait for him. But when he comes back from the war he finds his girl without her rue wreath. Disgusted, he refuses her. And when she asks him if he was faithful to her, he answers, that he is a man and that it does not matter if he was not faithful to her:

...Ir nerado merguzeles ruteliu darzely.  
 Uliojai, mergele, per visa naktele,  
 Tai dabar pauliavosi per visa amzeli.  
 ...O ar tu neuliavojai svetimoj salelej?  
 Mano zirgas ristas, kepurele juoda,  
 O kas man bernuzeliui uliavot neduoda?<sup>149</sup>

The youth came back from war,  
 And he did not find his girl in the rue  
 garden.  
 You, my girl, have amused yourself all  
 night long,  
 Now you can amuse yourself all your life  
 long.  
 My "bernuzeli", my white shamrock,  
 Have you not amused yourself in the  
 foreign country?  
 My steed is trotted, my hat is black,  
 Who does not allow me to amuse myself?

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<sup>148</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, p. 263-264.

<sup>149</sup> This writer's Collection of Songs. Rec. from Antanina Varkalaite, Bitelai, District of Kaunas, 1935.

The young man has no wreath; instead he has a black hat--"juoda kepurele"--, which hides everything. It is not common to require chastity from a young man, and the folk is not so severe with a wretched youth. But there is a tradition that the young man values very highly the chastity of his girl, and often he gives his life to save a girl's chastity:

Ir uztiko siaurus vejas, o, jo, joj,  
 Ir nupute vainikeli, o, jo, joj,  
 Anoj pusej Dunojelio, o, jo, joj,  
 Stovi pulkas bernuzeliu, o, jo, joj,  
 Viens is juju atsirado, o, jo, joj,  
 Uz vainika galva deda, o, jo, joj,...  
 Vainikelis ant krantelio, o, jo, joj,  
 Bernuzelis ant dugnelio, o, jo, joj,  
 Vainikelis graziai zydi, o, jo, joj,  
 Berneli i kapus lydi, o, jo, joj,  
 Tik kavokit, mielos seses, o, jo, joj,  
 I ruteliu zalia darza, o, jo, joj,  
 Kai jus skinsite rutele, o, jo, joj,  
 Mane garbavosit, o, jo, joj.150

Up came the north wind, Oh! Oh! Oh!  
 It blew off the rue wreath, Oh! Oh! Oh!  
 On the other side of the Danube, Oh! Oh! Oh!  
 Stand a troop of youths, Oh! Oh! Oh!  
 One of them gives his head for the wreath,  
 Oh! Oh! Oh!  
 The wreath is on the shore, Oh! Oh! Oh!  
 The youth is by the bank of the river,  
 Oh! Oh! Oh!  
 How lovely is the blossoming of the wreath,  
 Oh! Oh! Oh!  
 But the youth is carried to the grave yard,  
 Oh! Oh! Oh!  
 You, dear sisters, will bury me, Oh! Oh! Oh!  
 In the green rue garden, Oh! Oh! Oh!

And when you pluck the rue, Oh! Oh! Oh!  
Your lips will speak my praise, Oh! Oh! Oh!

This song seems to have its origin in the time of wars against either the Teutonic knights or against the Swedes. The youth has to defend the chastity of his girl against the assault of an enemy soldier (a Lithuanian would never molest a girl in this way). The assailant is killed, but the girl's honor is saved.

The river, especially the Danube, is mentioned frequently in Lithuanian songs. There are many hypotheses about the Danube; perhaps it is a symbol, a remembrance. At one time the Lithuanians may have lived near it before settling on the Baltic sea. They may have travelled there as nomadic tribes thousands of years ago. Such problems bring up the question of the true origin of the Lithuanians. The latest archeological findings show that they lived in the same place as the historic Lithuanians after the second and the third ice-ages.<sup>151</sup> The question of the original homeland of the Lithuanians cannot be discussed here. The most recent investigations come to the conclusion that the cradle of the Lithuanians was the land lying between the east shore of the

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<sup>151</sup> Jonas Puzinas, Dr., Naujausiu Praistorinin Tyrimu Duomenys. Kaunas: University of Jaunas Press, 1938, p. 131.

Baltic sea (the rivers Nemunas and Dauguva), the Wysla river in the west, and the Dnieper in the south-east.<sup>152</sup>

The following song is related to the songs of Sweden during the wars of the 17th century:

Yra darze iskada ...  
 Barzduoti vyrai,  
 Vyrai is juriu...  
 Rutas numyne,  
 Rozes nuskyne,  
 Lelijas islakste.<sup>153</sup>

There is a disaster in the flower garden...  
 The bearded men,  
 The men from the sea,  
 Trampled the rue,  
 Plucked the rose,  
 Broke up the lily.

The Swedish soldiers (the bearded men from the sea, as they are described in folk songs) have brutally ravished the girls. In this song nobody has come to the defence of the girls, for the men were away at war, and the women had been left alone. Here the poor girl sings very sadly; she weeps and dreams sad dreams, but she does not go to drown herself in the river. Since she has lost her rue wreath unwillingly, her misfortune is one with that of her whole country, wasted, destroyed, and dotted

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<sup>152</sup> Marija Gimbutiene, Dr., "Lietuviu Proteviai, Aisciu-Baltu Apygyventos Srytys ca 1500 m. pries ir 500 m. po Kristaus," in Darbininkas, May 8, 1951.

<sup>153</sup> Mykolas Birziska, Dainu Atsiminimai is Lietuvos Istorijos. Vilnius: Svyturys, 1920, pp. 25-26.

with thousands upon thousands of fresh graves.

Sins against chastity are rare. On the one hand there was the greatest admiration for virginity, because it was considered as the greatest moral virtue; on the other hand there was great dishonor and shame for the whole family and for all society when virginity was violated. The punishment meted out to the guilty was severe. In "Lietuvos Statutas", the Lithuanian Law Codex, issued in 1566, an unfaithful spouse was punished with death.<sup>154</sup> In ancient times a girl who lost her chastity was buried alive.<sup>155</sup>

After Lithuania was christianized, the Church took a great care to preserve the moral traditions. Illicit sexual relations were considered grievously sinful and consequently they required special punishment. A pregnant girl--"prasiradusi"--<sup>156</sup> could never put a wreath on her head nor wear a white dress (the latter being a later custom) for her wedding. In northern Lithuania, in the district

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<sup>154</sup> Pelikšas Bugailiskis, "Sis-tas apie Musu Doroviniu Prasizengimu Baudziamuosius Paprocius," in Gimtasai Krastas, 1938, Vol. 5, p. 265.

<sup>155</sup> Zenonas Ivinskis, Dr., "Lietuviu Kulturos Tarpsniai," in Aidai, June, 1949, No. 25.

<sup>156</sup> "Kai prasiradusi merga ruosias krikstynoms, varles kurkia: Barbe, Barbe, Duok lopsi." Jurgis Elisonas, "Gantos Garsu Pamegdziojimai Lietuviu Tautosakoje," in Tautosakos Darbai, Vol. 6, p. 248.

of Kretinga, Skuodas, even the nuptial ceremony was not performed in the church, but on the threshold of the sacristy, to emphasize her sin.<sup>157</sup> Going to the church the first time after having a child, such a woman had to put on her head a wreath of vine, which grows in the district of Kedainiai.<sup>158</sup> The wreath of the vine is common in most parts of Lithuania. In the district of Kedainiai and Telsiai, the girl wearing a vine wreath and he wearing a straw hat were tied on Sundays at the entrance to the church. It was a penance for their sin. In Siaulienai such a woman had to go around the church on her knees with a straw wreath on her head, in order that everybody could see that she had lost her virginity.<sup>159</sup> In Seda, district of Mazeikiai the guilty pair had to pray with hands outstretched as on a cross, with a stick thrust through their sleeves.<sup>160</sup> In the district of Plunge, on Sunday they had to lie face downward in the church for a period of three hours.<sup>161</sup> In the districts of Utena, in Uzpaliai, Tryskiai

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157 Pelikšas Bugailiskis, op. cit., p. 266.

158 Ibid.

159 Ibid., p. 267.

160 Ibid., p. 266.

161 Ibid.

and Alunta, they had to lie crossed on the church floor, and they were guarded, for greater ridicule, by a beggar with a big stick.<sup>162</sup> In the district of Mazeikai, in Akmene, during a parish procession--"atlaidai"--the guilty maiden had to follow the pastor on her knees wearing a wreath of straw; the guilty young man had to go on his knees with a bunch of straw on his back; both were driven on by two beggars with straw whips.<sup>163</sup> But even this punishment was not severe enough. For some time (one or two weeks or even longer) every morning the beggars would drive the unhappy couple around the church on their knees while the church bell was tolling the beginning of the four o'clock Mass. If any one refused to obey, he was flogged.<sup>164</sup> In Siauleniai, Mosedis and Gruzdziai, the two transgressors were given from five to twenty-five lashes as a penance.<sup>165</sup> In the district of Palanga the priests nailed their feet to a block, and they were put face downward on the church floor where the beggars guarded them.<sup>166</sup> In the district of Kedainiai, the culprits were put into the ditches near the church and buried up to

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162 Ibid., p. 265.

163 Ibid.

164 Ibid.

165 Ibid., p. 266.

166 Ibid.

their knees. In Akmene they were buried up to the waist and were obliged to bow before each person entering the church and to ask to be forgiven. Sometimes such public disgrace drove the distraught sinner to suicide. Our information concerning these punishments is taken from the Lithuanian Jurists Society which, in 1937, made a report on this type of punishment. It is interesting to note that in three places - Veliona, Grinkiskis, Merkine, - there were some survivals from the Middle Ages: the entrance of the church was equipped with from two to four iron stocks which were locked about the neck of guilty lovers.<sup>167</sup>

All these punishments evidence a cruel moral severity and some of them continued until the middle of the 19th century, until the end of serfdom. Such cruelty can be explained only by the conditions prevailing at the time. In 1937 an eighty-five year old Ksavera Legaite related that when she was fifteen years old, she saw a girl guilty of unchastity tied in shame to a church pillar. Three generations back, according to my grandmother, the customary punishment for such offenses consisted in the wearing of straw wreaths, lying in the church

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<sup>167</sup> "Lietuvos Teisininku Draugijos Siauliu Skyriaus Aneka Apie Dorovinius Prasizengimus ir Baudziamuosius Paprocius," in Gimtasai Krastas, 1938, Vol. 5, p. 267.

or walking around the church on their knees. Rarely was the punishment more severe than this, although this depended on the character of the pastor. But certainly a girl's greatest misfortune was to lose her chastity.

According to many legends, young girls who had been taken prisoners were drugged and violated by Teutonic Knights. Many of them, when they realized that they were to become mothers of the enemy's children, took their own lives. The entreaties and persuasion of father and fiancé that she was an innocent victim were often in vain. The poor girl, unable to bear the shame, would kill herself at the very scene of the crime.<sup>168</sup>

When the girl had been betrayed and abandoned by her lover, she often considered the cold waves of a river or lake to be the only solution for her sorry plight.<sup>169</sup> When the young lover left his girl unwillingly and was killed on the battlefield, the girl cried so much upon hearing the sad news - so the legend runs - that she turned into a cuckoo which sings always at his grave, or into a red rose which blooms every year on his grave. The poor girl, as she closed her eyes

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<sup>168</sup> This writer's Collection of Legends. Rec. from Elena Surviliene, Kaunas, 1928.

<sup>169</sup> Julija Zymantiene (Zemaite), Rastai, Vol. 2, p.87.

for the last time, said: "As is dugsiu ant tavo kapo zolynu krumeliu. Padabinsiu kapo virsunele roziu gelelemis, skaisciais ziedeliais. Jie bus skaistus, kaip mano meiles jausmeliai."<sup>170</sup> - "I shall grow on your grave as a green bush, I shall adorn your grave with roses, with bright blossoms. The blossoms shall glow as my feelings for you." Immediately on his grave sprang forth a rose bush on which a nightingale sang its sad, strange songs the whole night through.<sup>171</sup>

In folk tradition the notion of virginity is so closely linked to a maiden that a girl is usually called virgin. Virginity is the brightest gem in the girl's diadem; for it she receives the greatest honor and respect. But, if she permits this precious jewel to be sullied, she becomes an outcast, a pariah ostracized from the company of even the dregs of society and punished without sympathy, for a fallen angel is a devil.

##### 5. Modesty.

Chastity and modesty are two inseparable things. Modesty is the prime virtue not only of the virgin but of all Lithuanian women, and even of the entire Lithuanian

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<sup>170</sup> Vincas Kreve, "Giriu Paslaptis," in Kastai. Kaunas: Svyturys, 1921, Vol, I, p. 242.

<sup>171</sup> Ibid., p. 246.

people. To this day to be called very modest is a highly prized compliment for a Lithuanian girl, whether she is a simple village girl or a highly trained professional woman. Country girls are very modest and shy. A good example can be found in the song of Birute.<sup>172</sup> Birute was and remains the most popular Lithuanian woman. She was a poor but noble girl of Palanga. According to the legend she vowed to spend her life as a virgin and preserve the sacred fire for the gods Perkunas and Milda. But one day, the great Duke Kestutis chanced to see her and at once was consumed with an ardent love for this winsome maid and resolved to marry her. Though it was a grave offense to take for a wife a virgin dedicated to the service of the gods, Kestutis' love would not be frustrated, and his people found it in their hearts to forgive him, for he was a most beloved national hero, admired and revered for his honesty, his self-sacrifice on behalf of his people, and for his heroic defense of the land against the enemy.<sup>173</sup> And so it was that the nation and the priests forgave Kestutis and he settled down with his wife to create the pagan ideal of the Lithuanian family. Their son Vytautas

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<sup>172</sup> Mykolas Birziska, Dainu Atsiminimai is Lietuvos Istorijos. Vilnius: Svyturys, 1920, pp. 14-15.

<sup>173</sup> Adolfas Sapoka, Dr., Lietuvos Istorija. Tuebingen: Patria, 2d ed., 1951, p. 107.

the Great was the most famous Lithuanian ruler and his people's most illustrious hero.<sup>174</sup> That most typical Lithuanian girl, and later wife and mother, had the three main Lithuanian feminine qualities: she was pure, modest and shy. She was always dressed in her own hand spun and woven white blouse, striped and flowered skirt, apron and veil or bodice: "...is savo darbo marskinius devejo, trumpa rainuota sijona turejo."<sup>175</sup> She did not care for jewels and expensive clothes from abroad: "...zemciugais brangiais ir aukso auskarais nesipuosavo, vaiksciojo pamariais."<sup>176</sup> Very simply she dressed, her head always covered with a "nuometas"--a white long veil--(a married woman could never be seen without a head covering; it would be immodest, because she no longer wears her rue wreath). She was so decent, pure, and resplendent - like the rue and the rose themselves: "Padori skaisti, kaip roze ir ruta..."<sup>177</sup> Her shyness is expressed in this song which describes typical Lithuanian expression of shyness:

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174 Constantine Jugela, History of the Lithuanian Nation. New York: Lithuanian Cultural Institute, 1948, pp. 103-190.

175 Mykolas Birziska, op. cit., p. 14.

176 Mykolas Birziska, Dainu Atsiminimai is Lietuvos Istorijos, p. 14.

177 Ibid., p. 15.

Zemyn zydrasias akeles nuleido,  
Atsidusejo ir puole ant veido-178

She closed her blue eyes,  
Blushed and bowed her head very low.

When, at their first meeting, the duke asks her to be his wife, she closes her eyes for shyness, blushes, and covers her face with her hands. Her low bow was only a sign of honor for the great ruler. Birute answered Kestutis as every Lithuanian girl answers her "bernelis": she blushes, closes her eyes, bows her head to hide the tears, and very softly so that the parents, the matchmaker and the bridegroom can hardly hear her whisper: "Yes". The maiden is so shy, that she dares not speak with the young man alone. If he tells her that he likes her, she answers: "Pasakyk teviu, mociutei."<sup>179</sup> - "Tell this to my dear mother and father." It is neither common nor modest for a girl to speak privately with a young man. If the girl meets her "bernelis", first she tells him that she cannot speak with him nor can she linger in the field or on the road alone with him. The poor woman's heart may be longing for love, without her understanding the hunger of her heart: "...that the strings of the heart are numbered,

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178 Ibid.

179 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 169.

and that the harmony or discord which life draws from us is the same old tune that has been running through the world since mankind was born to sorrow and to joy."<sup>180</sup>

If the maiden has softened to the point of exchanging some tender words with her "bernelis", she is sure to be questioned by her mother upon arriving home. Her mother will want to know what took her so long, why there is still some dew on her dress and why her rue wreath has been touched by the frost. Since she is shy to tell her mother the truth, she tells a poetical lie - she has followed her brother along the road. But her mother is very shrewd and sees in her daughter's eyes a confession of her rendez vous:

Netiesa, dukrele,  
Berneli lydejai,  
Su berneliu po berzeliu  
Zodeli kalbejai.<sup>181</sup>

It is not true, my daughter,  
You have followed your "bernelis".  
With your bernelis you have spoken  
A word under a birch.

A girl, meeting a youth alone in the field, is afraid to speak with him:

Kaip Dieva myli, atstok nuo manes.  
Saulute leidzias, vakars netoli,  
Laiks namo eiti.<sup>182</sup>

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<sup>180</sup> H. V. Morton, Women of the Bible. London: Methuen, and Co., 1940, p. 4.

<sup>181</sup> Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 24.

<sup>182</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 115.

For God's sake let me alone.  
The sun is setting, the night is approaching,  
It is time for me to go home.

When the matchmaker comes for the first time with the bridegroom to be, she hides herself for modesty: she runs off to some friend, for she is too shy to show herself to strange people and to hear them discuss her future.<sup>183</sup> In the most important event of a girl's life, her espousal, she has no choice as to whom she will marry; the decision rests with her parents and with the matchmaker. After everything is settled, she gives her word as a mere formality. Doubtless it is hard for a young girl, who has always been dependent upon her parents, to give her life now to a man, whom she does not even know. It happened frequently that a place in her heart had already been taken by some other youth, perhaps a poor fellow, with whom she used to tend the cattle in her childhood days and whom she knew as a dear friend at work and at youth meetings. But she does not even dare mention her affection for him to her parents. The mother knows about this, but she cannot help her daughter, for it is the custom for the parents to choose their daughter's husband. He is chosen from among those of merit in the same general social

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<sup>183</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche.  
Hamburg: Contribution of Baltic University, No. 9, 1946,  
p. 5.

category as the bride's family.<sup>184</sup> All evening the matchmaker and the parents bargain about the inheritance and the dowry. The maiden and her suitor sit together with scarcely a word between them. After the deal is made, the maiden and the young man take a short walk in the garden, in order to speak a few words and become acquainted.<sup>185</sup> When the mother serves a meal to celebrate the deal and invites few close neighbours or relatives, the girl does not come to the guests by herself. The matchmaker must find her and bring her in from where she had hidden herself in a closet.<sup>186</sup> The behavior of Lithuanian girls could be described by one word - modesty. In her own family a girl never even washes her face, arms or feet, or combs her hair if a man, be it her father or brother, is in the room.

There are some parties in which young girls never take part. For example, they never go to visit the mother of a new born infant, nor take part in the christening feast.<sup>187</sup>

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184 Aleksander Brueckner, Dzieje Kultury Polskiej. Krakow: Krakowska Spolka Wydawnicza, 1930, Vol. I, p. 110.

185 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 205.

186 Ibid., p. 204.

187 Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 8.

Only a married woman can do this; for an unwed maid, it is regarded as indecent to know about having children. She will learn enough after she is married. Praetorius mentions some feasts, in which only men take part: "Einsaefest"<sup>188</sup> - the corn planting feast, "Vieheinstallubgfest"<sup>189</sup> - a feast celebrating the winter stabling of the cattle, "Einheuligung der Pferde"<sup>190</sup> - a feast celebrating the winter stabling of the horses and "Gabjaugios"<sup>191</sup> - the feast of the grain harvest. All these feasts are old pagan feasts. The father of the family kills a black cock and cooks it. When it is ready, he takes a glass of beer, intones some prayer formulas and pours out the beer as a libation to "Zemyna" - the goddess of the earth. Then he offers the cock to the god of grain--"Gabjaujis" or "Gabjaugis"--<sup>192</sup> Only men were allowed there. Great

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188 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. IV, 1-8.

189 Ibid., Cap. VIII, 1-3.

190 Ibid., Cap. III, 1-7.

191 Ibid., Cap. IX, 3.

192 "Jauja" is the drying house, where the grain is to be threshed. "Gabijsa" is an honorable word for fire, which was sacred in Lithuania. "Cum autem nimia aestatis brevitates fruges demessas plane siccori non sint, fit hoc sub tectis ad ignem. Tum vero precandus est illis hisce verbis: Gabie deus, gabie deuaite pokielki garu nuleiski kibirkstu. Flammam, inquit, eleva, at ne demittas scintillas." Johann Lasicii, De Diis Samagitarum caeterorumque Sarmatarum et falsorum Christianorum (1590), in Magazin. Mitau: Lettisch Literarische Gesellschaft, 1868, Vol. 14, p. 51.

care was taken that neither any woman nor any stranger would taste the meat offered to the god Gabjaugis: "...es duerfen nur Mannspersonen sein... Der Acht halten muss, dass keine Weibsperson oder sonst ein fremder etwas von dem Fleisch kostet."<sup>193</sup> The rule was that only men were to partake in those feasts celebrating the work and activities (the planting of corn, the winter stabling of the cattle, the harvesting of corn and taking care of the horses) ordinarily performed by the men. Likewise with equal right, only women were allowed to celebrate the feasts connected with their work.<sup>194</sup>

Even today in Lithuania Minor, where the old traditions are faithfully and conscientiously preserved, the daughter of the family doesn't sit at the table when the party is large or when important guests have been invited. Nor does the hostess sit at the table at such time, for her duty is to offer the guests the best hospitality. An example of this can be given from one of this writer's visit to a prosperous farm in the district of Klaipeda, in the village of Didlaukiai, on the farm of Vilius Linartas on February 20, 1937. The eighteen-year-old daughter, a college student of this writer, was not sitting at the table, but only served the guests--

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193 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. IX, 3.

194 Zenonas Ivinskis, Dr., "Vatikano Archyvas-Aruodas Lietuviu Kulturos Istorijai," in Aidai. Kennenbunk Port, Maine: Franciscan Fathers, March, 1950, No. 3 (39).

the pastor, the professors, her grandparents and her father. The lady of the house stood all the time between the table and the door, with hands crossed on her chest and looked attentively, to see if the guests had every thing they would like. From time to time she came to each of the guests and invited them to try her specially prepared smoked meats and cakes. She and her daughter were so modest that even the pastor could not make them sit at the table and eat with the guests.

In comparison with the womenfolk of other parts of Lithuania-Aukstaitija, Dzukija, Suvalkija,<sup>195</sup> the girls from Lithuania Minor are the most modest ones. Their character evolved from old Lithuanian traditions, well preserved from pagan times and deep-dyed by severe Protestant family traditions. (Lithuania Minor is almost all Lutheran, having been Lutherized by force and subject to Lutheran authority for seven hundred years).

The girls from Lithuania proper are very modest and shy too, but there is ease and brightness in their modesty; one feels that this modest behavior springs spontaneously

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195 This writer has made personal investigation of this problem during her ten years of teaching, visiting peasant families in various parts of Lithuania, while gathering first-hand material.

from their pure hearts and from a love of whatever is clean and pure. Their modesty seems innate, and is something lovely, tender and unaffected. The girls from Lithuania Minor are very shy and their modesty is overcast by a shadow of humiliation. There seems to be an external pressure on the form of a belief or a feeling that a woman has less dignity and worth than a man, that she knows and understands less, and she is less independent. This is largely due to the influence of Lutherans, which marks out three main jobs for the women: "Kinder, Kirche und Gebet."<sup>196</sup> Her circle of interests is more limited - the house and the children -, but even there the more important decisions are made by the husband. As a rule she obeys without question. School children, especially the girls from Lithuania Minor, are very obedient and conscientious.

A Lithuanian girl blushes very easily. It is a sign of her modesty: "Uzkalbinta mergele paraudo kaip vysnia."<sup>197</sup> - "A girl blushed as a cherry when she was spoken to." -- "Vos tik zirga prie ziogriu pririses i trioba iejo, visos mergaites

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196 A saying from Luther's Bible, which became a popular German proverb.

197 Vincas Kreve, Dainavos Salies Senu Zmoniu Padavimai, p. 84.

pareudonavo it gaidzio skiautures."<sup>198</sup> - "As soon as the young man (who came to look for a girl for his future bride) after harnessing his steed to a stake fence entered the house, all the girls blushed as red as cockscomb." The mere blush of a virgin prevents people from using vulgar language and saying improper things in her presence.

The national dress is a good indication of the character of the women. The national dress of Lithuanian girls is extremely modest: a wide skirt made of heavy woolen material, and long to the heels; a white linen blouse with long and wide sleeves and with a high collar around the neck. A belt around her waist is the only indication of the slenderness of her figure. The apron is a necessary part of her costume, and it is considered as a symbol of womanly modesty and virtue.<sup>199</sup> Her hair is arranged in two braids free-hanging or circled on her head in the form of a crown, surrounded by a garland-like headpiece made from colored linen or ribbons.<sup>200</sup> All this blends to make for the beauty and elegance of the national

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<sup>198</sup> Motiejus Valancius, vyskup, Palangos Juze, Vilnius, 5th ed., 1907, p. 126.

<sup>199</sup> Jurgis Baltrusaitis, Dr., Lithuanian Folk Art. Edited by T. Vizgirda. Munich, 1948, p. 77.

<sup>200</sup> Anastazija Tamosaitiene, "Moteru Tautiniai Rubai," in Teviskes Ziburiai, June 26, 1951.

dress. The flowers, the plants, the stars, and everything that the Lithuanian woman observes, admires and likes are included in the pattern of her weaving, especially the weaving of her apron and skirt.

In her modest national dress she looks as sweet as spring flowers of a Lithuanian countryside - fresh and resplendent in her simplicity and modesty:

Juk zinai, kaip mus lietuvninkes dabinejas,  
Kad vieset ar i cernis nukeliaut uzsigeidzia.  
Kykas su nuometu bei ploste moteru redai,  
Bet vainiks su kasoms mergu dabinejims.<sup>201</sup>

You know how our Lithuanian women dress  
When they go on a visit or to a party.  
A hood with a veil and shoulder cloth adorn  
our women,  
But wreaths (rue) and braids decorate the girls.

#### 6. Diligence.

After chastity and modesty, diligence is one of the main characteristics of the Lithuanian maiden. Besides helping her mother to keep the house in order, to prepare the meals, to take care of the younger sisters and brothers, she works in the garden and in the field. This kind of work was common to the peasant women of all countries. But the work special to Lithuanian girls, both the noble girls of Lithuania and

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<sup>201</sup> Kristijonas Donelaitis, Metai. Kaunas: Svietimo Monisterijos Knygu Leidimo Komisija, 1940, p. 96.

the simple peasant girls up to the first and second world wars, was the spinning and weaving of flax and the preparing of all kinds of material for dresses, clothes and linen.<sup>202</sup> In very early times, since the Lithuanians were hunters and shepherds before they undertook agriculture, they used the furs and skins of animals for their clothing. The first steps of Lithuanian agriculture (it was the woman who dug up the ground with a large broken bone or with a stick of wood and planted seeds)<sup>203</sup> were followed by the cultivation of flax and hemp. Johann Lasicii mentions the work of the women: "...foeminae pecori curando, ...lidem deni aut viceni, plures vel pauciores, in uno tugurdo linum, lanam, cannabiam pectunt, nent, textunt, vestes conficiunt."<sup>204</sup> He mentions that the men also prepared dresses and that they spun and wove. Praetorius, who says that the men did their own weaving,<sup>205</sup> and Lasicii, are the only sources which mention men weaving. But one can not find any mention of it in the national

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202 Jurgis Baltrusaitis, Dr., Lithuanian Folk Art, pp. 68-78.

203 Zenonas Ivinskis, Dr., "Lietuviu Kulturos Tarpsniai," in Aidai, June, 1949, No. 25.

204 Johann Lasicii, De Diis Samagitarum caeterorumque Sarmatarum et falsorum Christianorum, p. 45.

205 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. I, 3.

traditions, preserved in the tales and old songs. That chroniclers' account is impossible to verify and seems opposed to the picture given us in the national traditions where it is always emphasized that spinning and weaving is exclusively the work of the women. This tradition is corroborated by Lasicii, who writes that the virgin does not marry before 24 or 30 years of age, and that she prepares all kinds of dresses as gifts for her husband's relatives and guests. She prepares everything needed for her new life in her husband's home: tablecloths, sheets, towels and napery.<sup>206</sup> This custom is kept up to today in Lithuania, where the maiden prepares with her own hands everything she will need.

The information about a bride's age is also probably correct, for many years of hard work are required to prepare such a large quantity of linen. The bride must have gifts for all her husband's relatives and for all the wedding guests, neighbours, distant relatives, and practically everyone in the village.<sup>207</sup> Each person must be given (depending

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206 "Virgo non ante nubit, quam triginta annos aut minimum viginti quatuor expleat. Et ipsa manibus suis aliquot corbes vestium, omnibus cum sponso venientibus dispertientium parat. Tum enim dat singulis vel indusium, vel mappam, vel mantile, vel texta et lana tibia, vel chirotecas." Johann Lasicii, *op. cit.*, pp. 45-46.

207 "Du simtu stuku plonu drobeliu, o trecis abruseliu. Neisteksiu dovaneliu, didiejej giminelej." Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., *Ozkabaliu Dainos*, p. 5.

upon the importance of his relationship or "stuomuo") either from three to five yards of linen, or a towel, a girdle or gloves.<sup>208</sup> On the morning after her wedding, as she inspects her new farm, she has to throw a gift on each corner, on the fence and the threshold, to symbolize that she has earned it and has the right to call it her own. In old pagan times, that was done to obtain the grace of the gods guarding the farm and of the souls of the ancestors of her husband, so that they would take her under their protection.<sup>209</sup> Thus she shows her new neighbours her industry, skill and good taste.<sup>210</sup> Then the new housewife covers the tables with her own tablecloths (the bridal bed is covered with her bed linen before the couple arrives), she distributes clothes to her mother-in-law and father-in-law,<sup>211</sup> she gives her sister and brother-in-law ready-made skirts, girdle--"juosta"--and gloves.<sup>212</sup> But the newly wed girl must have enough ready-woven linen to supply her new family, including the

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208 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, pp. 270-271.

209 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 39.

210 Balys Buracas, op. cit., p. 270.

211 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 39.

212 Balys Buracas, op. cit., pp. 268, 270-271.

servants and the children to come. In a big family with many young children the housewife has no time to do much weaving. Not infrequently the dowry of a wealthy and diligent maiden is so great that her daughter, and even the grand-daughter keeps some beautifully weaved linen, bed spreads, tablecloths, etc. for her dowry.

To prepare the dowry is such an immense work, that the peasant maidens used to gather in one of the biggest houses of the village with their spinning wheels. While spinning, they would sing and tell stories late into the long autumn and winter evenings, until midnight or even three o'clock in the morning. The weaving was started in the early spring. Since the girls could not weave together (the looms could not be moved) each maiden would start weaving in the wee hours of the morning, from "gaidgysteje"<sup>213</sup>--cockcrowing--, about two or three o'clock until the "pusryciai"<sup>214</sup>--breakfast--. Then she would help to feed the pigs, the cattle, and milk the cows. After the breakfast the incoming would again continue until dinner, and in the afternoon, while helping her

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213 Praetorius Matthaeus, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. I, 6.

214 Stasys Daunys, "Moteru Darbai," in Gimtasai Krastas, 1942, Vol. 9, p. 77.

mother, she takes advantage of every free minute to sit down at the loom.

The better towels, the pillow cases and shirts, not intended for everyday use, are trimmed with hand-made laces, knitted by the shepherdness. Small girls of about six or seven years of age, while tending cattle or geese, sometimes made some thread from linen with only their finger tips. They also made girdles and knitted laces which are now admired as works of art in exhibitions and museums.

In the long fall and winter evenings all the family work together until almost midnight. The "vakarones, vakarojimai"<sup>215</sup> represent a typical Lithuanian idyl of the traditional Lithuanian village family life. "Vakarones" are mentioned very often in narratives, folk tales and proverbs, but also in literature. They were very romantic some centuries ago, even a hundred years ago, when the only means of illumination in the villages was candle, or oil lamps, in the rich houses. Even the candles were too expensive for everyday use; the house was lightened with "balanos"<sup>216</sup>--chips or splits. The big living room of the wooden peasant house was lightened with only one or a few chips, put in special holes

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215 Julija Zymantiene (Zemaite), Rastai, Vol. I, p. 92.

216 Albinas Vitauskas, "Liaudies Technika," in Gimtasai Krastas, 1942, Vol. 9, p. 239.

in the big oven. In this rustic scenery, weird shadows dance in the dark corners. Outside the wind of late fall laments its sad songs. All the peasant family sit at work. The father and his sons repair and prepare utensils and implements for house use and for the work in the fields. The younger boys and the shepherd make the wooden spoons and dishes.<sup>217</sup> The hired men--"bernai"--make wooden shoes, harnesses and tacklings. The mother with her grown-up daughters spin the flax and the wool. The grandmother and other old women knit woolen garments for winter. The small girls pluck feathers. Everyone is busy with his work. The grandmother sits at the oven and tells stories. In this atmosphere, the imagination hears not the wind sougning in the night, nor the singing of the oven, but the souls of the ancestors returning to the place where they once lived long ago and asking for help, for food or for prayers. Outdoors it is not the wind moaning, but the remorseful soul of a self-murderer.<sup>218</sup> And from the woods or out of wells come ghosts; from the ruins of castles come enchanted girls and heroes. All the old superstitions, the tales, the narratives live on in this way in the mouths, in the ears, in the hearts and in the souls of the people from generation to

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217 Albinas Vitauskas, op. cit., p. 244.

218 Marija Gimbutiene, Dr., Musu Proteviu Paziuros i Mirti ir Siela. Tuebingen: Patria, 1947, p. 6.

generation while the hands of diligent women ply ceaselessly their everlasting work.

Besides helping her mother for the meals, the taking care of the younger brothers and sisters, and even for the tending of domestic animals, the daughter has always to keep order in the house, to wash the tables, the benches (there were no chairs in earlier times in a peasant house) and the windows, to sweep the rooms and the yard.

Philipp Ruhig (1675-1748), a philologist and a specialist in Lithuanian language, reproduced an old song: "As atsisakiau savo mociutei", which recounts how a certain daughter very poetically tells her mother that she is going to be married and her mother should look for a new helper, because from now on she will be working for her mother-in-law:

As atsisakiau savo Moczuttei,  
 O asz nuo pusses jau Wassareles.  
 Jeszkok Moczutte, saw Werpejate,  
 Saw Werpejate ir Audejate.  
     Jau prisiwerpiau baltu Linneliu,  
     Jau prisiaudziau plonu Drobeliu.  
     Prisiszurawau baltu Staleliu,  
     Jau prisiszlawiau Kiemo Wejeles.<sup>219</sup>

I shall have to refuse my mother  
 Even from the middle of summer.  
 Look, mother, for a spinner,  
 For your spinner and weaver.

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<sup>219</sup> Philipp Ruhig, "Betrachtung der litauischen Sprache in ihrem Ursprunge, Wesen und Eigenschaften," in Vorrede, in Littauisch-deutch und Deutch-littauischea Lexicon, 1747, pp. 77-78.

I have already spun white flax,  
I have already woven fine linen cloth.  
I have already washed enough white tables,  
I have already swept enough yard grass.

Truly the Lithuanian maiden deserves to be honored for her inexhaustible industry, her assiduity and her chastity. The girl is trained and educated by her mother. In this maternal school of tenderness and patience, the girl learns all her duties, large and small, with great alacrity, with a smile on her lips, and with the song of a lark in her heart. Besides the practical skills, the mother instills in her daughter's heart a treasure of wholesome and noble sentiments - love of God, of people, of nature, of home, of native land and soil, and sympathy for the weak, the needy and the helpless. The mother inculcates in the heart of her daughter the virtues of eternal femininity.<sup>220</sup> The daughter learns to love her modesty and chastity more than life itself. With the expert schooling of her mother, the virgin is prepared to cope with the duties and responsibilities of her future role of wife and mother - to be a faithful wife, a congenial companion for her husband, a model housewife in her home, and especially to become a loving and skillful mother in the rearing of her children. Towards this noble goal, she consents to play her role as a wife.

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<sup>220</sup> Marija Ramuniene, "Amzinasis Moteriskumas," in Draugas, September 8, 1950.

## CHAPTER II

### THE WIFE

While the girl plays an important role in the Lithuanian folklore, which in so many songs praises her virginity, the wife remains in the background.

In the folklore, there is no mention of honey-moon or of romantic and passionate love between married people; the wife is described as the housewife, as the head of the household. On the other hand, there is no scene of jealousy and infidelity is very rare indeed. These traits might be partly explained by the fact that a girl had nothing to say about the choice of a husband and also by a profound understanding of the sacredness of marriage.

In this second chapter we will consider the expectation of the chosen one, the matchmaking and the marriage by the will of the parents, the nuptial rite, the farewell to the parents' home and to the merry youth, the new status as daughter-in-law or member of a new kindred and finally the sacredness of marriage.

#### 1. Waiting for the Chosen One.

The virgin prepares her dowry and dreams about her future husband, her "bernelis"; her dreams she expressed in

soft and tender songs. When the maiden has a young man already in her heart, she does not dare tell her parents. If a mother, who once may have been in love with a young man she was not allowed to marry, notices her daughter's melancholy, she is answered in this poetical way:

...Su berneliu po berzeliu  
Zodeli kalbejau.<sup>1</sup>

With a youth, under the birch  
I have spoken a word.

The feelings of the young people are always expressed in songs and symbols. The word "love" is never used.<sup>2</sup> If a maiden promises to marry a young man it is said that she "zodeli dave"<sup>3</sup> --gave her word,-- or "rutele pazadejo"--promised her rue, her rue wreath--. The maiden is always very shy; she never tells her feelings to her "bernelis". She is so proud of her virginity that she does not readily respond to her suitor's compliments. Even today the Lithuanian girl never speaks first nor shows her feelings first, but she leaves the initiative

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1 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, Vieux Chants Lithuaniens. Edited by Erdwin Burde, Fribourg en Brisgau, 1948, p. 24.

2 "The Lithuanians are distinguished from other European peoples at their delicate, reserved and modest way in which they mention love in their popular songs." Jonas Balys, Dr., "Tautosaka is Kossarzewskio Lituanicos," in Tautosakos Darbai. Kaunas: Lietuviu Tautosakos Archyvas, University of Kaunas Press, 1937, Vol. 3, p. 110.

3 Juozas Gabrys, A Sketch of the Lithuanian Nation. Paris: Lithuanian Information Bureau, 1918, p. 7.

to the young man to woo her heart and win her hand. She is always like a redoubtable fortress challenging all the man's charm and manly virtues:

Kas nor mane gautie  
Tai tur ilgai lauktie.<sup>4</sup>

Who wants to get me,  
Must wait very long.

Usually a girl shows and tells that she does not care if a young man suits her:

Ne as aisiu starkiai,  
Ne as minsiu tankiai.  
Tegul ziuri trys berneliai,  
Tegul sau daboja.<sup>5</sup>

I shall not go fast,  
I shall not work hard,  
May the three young men watch,  
Let they like me if they want.

It is not to be said that she has no strong feeling of love; on the contrary, when she loves with all her strength of a pure heart. She can suffer very much, but she is too shy and too proud to reveal her feelings. Many tragic cases of broken hearts result, only because of this extreme shyness and pride. It happens rather often that such a girl marries a man whom she does not love. Although suffering greatly in this way, she remains a faithful and good wife and veils this

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4 Grazina Krivickiene, op. cit., p. 48.

5 Ibid., p. 47.

initial tragedy within her heart to be hidden from the sight of all. Only later in life, when her own daughter is about to marry, does she reveal this great secret to her daughter. In her suffering she finds consolation in the strength of her virginity that she has kept even in her heart; she has not offered her heart even to the man she has loved so much.

The man is the active part in making a marriage; the girl can only accept or refuse. A maiden never expresses a wish to be married or to have a husband. But the young man expresses his dreams and his desire to be together with his sweetheart:

Akmuo be kraujo, vanduo be sparno,  
 Papartis be ziedelio,  
 As bernuzelis, as jauns bernelis  
 Be jaunios mergeles.<sup>6</sup>

Like a stone without blood, or water without  
 wings,  
 Of fern without blossom,  
 So am I, a youth-  
 A young man without a young girl.

The young man, singing of his loneliness and yearning, asks a swallow to fly to his sweetheart and tell her how much he is longing for her:

Lek pas mano mergele,  
 Pasakyk anai skaisciai merguzele  
 Kaip liudnos mano dienos:  
 Kaip as cion trokstu

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<sup>6</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozbakaliu Dainos. Shenandoah, Pa.; Dirva, 1902, p. 51.

Kaip as cion troksju,  
Be mano lelijeles.<sup>7</sup>

Fly to my girl,  
And tell that pure maiden  
How sad are my days.  
How here I am hungry,  
How here I am thirsty  
Without my lily.

It happens that a "bernelis" and a "mergele" who have grown up together in the same neighbourhood fall in love; the "bernelis" takes a great care of her and asks her not to promise her hand to another suitor:

As mergele auginau,  
Kaip vysnele nokinau...  
Vis tam paciam kaimely.  
Tu mano merguzele,  
Baltoji lelijele,  
Neduok kitam zodeli,  
Busi mano mergele.<sup>8</sup>

I have tended a growing maiden,  
I have let her ripen as a cherry,  
In the same village...  
You my maiden,  
White lily,  
Give not your word to another,  
You shall be my girl.

If a girl does not return such ardent love and does not want to marry a suitor, she tells in poetical words of song:

As pasiversciau i raiba gegute,  
Graziai kukuociau po visniu soda,  
Vai kad tik tavo nebuciau...<sup>9</sup>

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<sup>7</sup> Albinas Konce, "Panevezio ir Paystrio Parapiju Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1926, Vol. 4, p. 589.

<sup>8</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos. Shenandoah, Pa.: Dirva, 1902, p. 50.

<sup>9</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

I would like to turn into a nightingale,  
 And sing nicely in a cherry garden,  
 Only if I could not be yours.

He answers that he would turn into a falcon and follow her. So she tells him that it would be better for her to be a rue, a gold ring, a fish<sup>10</sup> and so on, but he wants always to follow her. At last his great ardor and patience triumph.

The Lithuanian girl herself sings her longing for her "bernelis" only if he, to whom her heart is pledged, has gone to war:

Nei man ruteles skinti,  
 Nei man vainikas p̄inti,  
 Man diena nakti rupi,  
 Kaip su berneliu buti.<sup>11</sup>

I have no desire to pluck the rue,  
 To wreath the wreath,  
 Night and day I wonder,  
 How I may be together again  
 With my "bernelis", my beloved.

But the heart of a Lithuanian girl longs for a kindred heart that loves the native soil, the fields and the meadows and the strong, dark forests. In the songs, in the tales she dreams that her chosen one must be an "artojelis"--a ploughman, a "sienpiovelis"--hay mower, a "tevelio pirmasis sunelis"--an eldest son of a family, heir to the farm. She tells to her "bernelis" what his job must be:

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<sup>10</sup> Ibid.

<sup>11</sup> This writer's Collection of Songs. Rec. from Magde Ramonaitiene, Village of Ramoniskiai, Marijampole, 1932.

Berneli jaunasai, tavo darbeliai,  
Naujoji zagrele, palsi jauteliai.<sup>12</sup>

Young man this is your work:  
You guide the gleaming, ox-drawn ploughshare.

Before letting him court her, she asks him:

Ar nemoki, bernuzeli,  
Zagrele taisyti,  
Ar nemoki, doibileli,  
Jautelius valdyti?<sup>13</sup>

Do you now, "bernuzeli",  
How to repair the ploughshare,  
Are you able, shamrock,  
To master the oxen?

If she sees that a young man's hands are white and smooth, she is suspicious of him; he may be a lazy lad. If she notices a gold ring on his finger, she considers him as playboy; an honest peasant does not wear a gold ring on work days:

Bernuzelio baltos rankos-  
Tai ne darbinykas,  
Aukso ziedelis-  
Tai jis merginykas.<sup>14</sup>

The hands of "bernuzelis" are white-  
He is not an industrious man.  
A gold ring on his finger-  
He must be a "Don Juan".

The maiden is warned not to marry a soldier; it is a hard fate to be a soldier's wife:

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<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 128.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., pp. 138 and 164.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid., p. 142.

Oi, neik, sesute, uz zalnieriaus,  
Zalnierelio prastas budas.<sup>15</sup>

Oh, sister, do not marry a soldier,  
A soldier has a bad character.

If a girl is not a fisherman's daughter, she does not marry a fisherman. While getting some water at the Danube a young girl is accosted by a flirtatious young fisherman who asks her to sit on his boat (a symbol of wedding): "Sesk, mergele, i lai-veli!"<sup>16</sup> She spurns him, because the life of a fisher's wife is unfamiliar to her and seems very hard and frugal:

Pas jus kalneliai rupesteliu,  
Vuogeles- asareles.<sup>17</sup>

You have mountains of solicitude,  
And the berries (you offer me) are only tears.

But even the ploughman whom she would prefer must have his own farm. A peasant maiden does not want to marry a "sluzauninkas" --a hired man:

Tu giriesi, bernuzeli,  
Kad tu ukininkas,  
Norint tavo puikus rubai,  
Bet tu sluzauninkas.<sup>18</sup>

You boast, young man,  
That you are a farmer,  
Although you dress well,  
You are only a hired man.

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15 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 71.

16 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., op. cit., p. 46.

17 Ibid.

18 Ibid., p. 53.

When a farmer's son asks a girl whether she knows how to spin, to weave and to pluck the flax, she answers that such questions are pointless, since he is not the eldest son and the heir of his father's farm:

Tu neklausk, berneli,  
 Ar as moku austie,  
 Tik tai pasiklauskie,  
 Ar uz tave eisiu...  
 Tu ir tevuzelio  
 Ne pirmas sunelis.<sup>19</sup>

Do not ask me, bernelis,  
 Whether I can weave,  
 But first you must ask me  
 Whether I would marry you...  
 You are not the eldest son  
 Of your family.

In a peasant family of many sons, only the eldest inherits the farm. The younger ones have to look for a maiden who is herself and heiress. The brother who inherits the farm has to give their share to his younger brothers and sisters. The fate of a man who comes to his wife's farm is not very easy; usually his wife is boss. Such a poor fellow sometimes tries a little bluffing, when he comes with his matchmaker to look for a girl. If he is from a distant village, he claims that he is the heir of his parents' farm, or he does not tell her that he has sisters and brothers to whom a share must be paid. But the truth comes out as soon as the bride's parents visit

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<sup>19</sup> This writer's Collection of Songs. Rec. from Daugirdiene Agnieszka, Village of Udrija, Alytus, 1932.

his farm, after the deal was made and he was accepted by her parents. When he comes again to visit his girl, often the maiden does not forgive him easily and tells him about his lie:

Ko atjojai, bernuzeli,  
 Tu nelaukiamasai,  
 Ko prisedai prie saleles,  
 Tu nemylimasai...  
     Ant brolelio bero zirgo  
     Pas mane atjojai,  
     Sesereles aukso zieda  
     Man padovanojai.<sup>20</sup>

Why did you come, "bernuzeli",  
 You, unwanted one,  
 Why did you sit by my side,  
 Whom I have spurned?  
     You came riding  
     Your brother's bay steed,  
     You gave me  
     Your sister's gold ring.

When the youth comes during the hay harvest, he is not accepted by the girl in a very friendly way:

Kai as grebiau laukoj siena...  
 Ir atjojo bernuzelis pas mani...<sup>21</sup>

As I was raking the hay in a meadow...  
 My bernelis came riding to see me.

After a greeting she asks him why he has come. He tells her that he has already been served wine and dinner by her father, who has promised him her hand. At this point she retorts proudly:

Ka valgei, ka gerei,  
 Reikes sumoketi,  
 As jauna mergele  
 Nenoriu teketi.<sup>22</sup>

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20 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 43.

21 This writer's Collection of Songs. Rec. from Agnieszka Daugirdiene, Udrija, 1932.

22 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 82.

What have you eaten? What have you drunk?  
You must pay for it.  
I am a young girl,  
And I do not want to marry.

It is the custom that a young man coming with his matchmaker to the parents of a girl should bring a bottle of wine or brandy. If the parents accept him, the mother provides him with a meal, but if later the girl or her parents reject him, he has to pay for the food.<sup>23</sup> In some places if the parents do not accept him, they either pay for his wine or provide their own wine.<sup>24</sup>

Sometimes he comes alone in the daytime, in order to see if his girl is truly diligent at her work in the fields: "Padek, Die, mergele, lineliu roveja!"<sup>25</sup> - "God help you, maiden, a flax plucker!" When he tells her that he has come to choose her for his wife, she answers proudly that she does not want to marry. Almost always the girl at first rejects his proposal, and when he presses her about the date of their marriage, she asks him to give her time, to wait three years.<sup>26</sup>

Even if the marriage with a man of inferior social standing was undesirable, the marriage to a man of higher social

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23 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 5.

24 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 204.

25 This writer's Collection of Songs. Rec. from Agnieszka Daugirdiene, Udrija, 1932.

26 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 135.

rank from a neighbouring foreign nation was not only undesirable, but very unfortunate. To marry a Gypsy or a Jew was to incur the greatest notoriety. In earlier times in Lithuania and in Lowland, marriage to a foreigner was considered so infamous that a girl would rather die than become the wife of a German or a White Ruthenian.<sup>27</sup> Although the attitude in this regard was different among noble families, this thesis is not concerned with the traditions of maidens of noble birth, since there is no mention of them in folklore, except Birute, the national heroine. Nevertheless, Brueckner reported that the Lithuanian nobles watched enviously that the Poles would not try to marry heiresses of Lithuanian nobility.<sup>28</sup> A few folk songs refer to the marriage of a noble to a country girl who inevitably suffers a sad fate because of her mate. Either he was too proud of his noble birth or too lazy and unskilled to earn a living:

Ir atvaziuoja, ir atkeliauja  
Is Varšuvos ponaitis  
Pas Lietuvos mergele...

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27 "...isteketi uz prasalaicio, buvo Lietuvei ar Ziamaiti visudidziausia geda: todel senu dienu Lietuvos ir Ziamaites velyjosi mirt, neg kaip Vokiecio ar gudo zmona tapti." Simanas Daukantas, Budas ir Apsiejimai Lietuviu ir Zemaiciu Senoveje, Wilno, 1907, p. 62.

28 "...jak czuwala Litwa nad tem, zeby Polacy nie wciskali ani do posiadlosci, ani sie o rece dziedziczek litewskich ubiegali." Aleksander Brueckner, Dzieje Kultury Polskiej. Krakow: Krakowska Spolka Wydawnicza, 1930, p. 649.

Uzrudi jo strelbele,  
 Nenusoviau pauksteliu...  
 Mazos mano seseles,  
 Nenumezge tinkleliu...  
 Nekaitino saulute,  
 Nenunoko vuogeles...<sup>29</sup>

There came a noble youth  
 From Varsove  
 To a Lithuanian girl...  
 My gun rusted,  
 I could not hunt some birds...  
 My sisters are too small.  
 They could not weave nets...  
 There was no sun,  
 The berries could not ripe...

Marriage with a man of a high rank brings no happiness to a simple girl. A general, for example, fell in love with a simple and charming girl called Sapute. A short time after their marriage, he had to leave for war. One of his servants, out of envy, falsely reported to her husband that Sapute had been unfaithful. Her husband had her drowned. As she dies, she protests her innocence; the frantic husband throws himself into the water and dies with her:

O ji nieko nezino,  
 Kad ja ponas pamego,  
 Ir ne prastas - generols...  
 Su kriauciukais ulevot...  
 Ing Dunoju inmete...  
 Ir pats drauge inpuole.<sup>30</sup>

And she does not know,  
 That a noble fell in love with her,

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<sup>29</sup> Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, pp. 61-62.

<sup>30</sup> Jonas Banasavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, pp. 16-19.

And not a simple noble, but a general...  
 "You have amused yourself with the tailors"...  
 Drowned her in the Danube...  
 And he also drowned himself in the water.

There is a song with a very similar story about a maiden called Onute.<sup>31</sup> And many other tales tell of a king who marries a poor but beautiful orphan girl,<sup>32</sup> or a poor but sweet and diligent girl.<sup>33</sup> The maiden is never happy with her husband in her strange and brilliant new surroundings. She suffers much from the envy of her in-laws, but in the end her virtue, her patience and her kindness triumph.

A simple Lithuanian girl is happy when she can tell with the words of folk song about her future husband:

Man bernelis sienpiovelis...  
 Mano vyras artojelis,  
 Duonpelnytojelis.<sup>34</sup>

My darling is a haymower...  
 My husband is a ploughman,  
 A bread-winner.

So she decided to marry a ploughman, a simple but honest man:

O as iseisiu uz bernelio,  
 Uz bernelio artojelio.<sup>35</sup>

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31 Ibid., p. 19-21.

32 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos Yvairios. Chicago: Lithuania, 1904, Vol. 2, pp. 173, 177, 224-227, 238-240.

33 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos. Shenandoah, Pa.: Dirva, Vol. 2, pp. 162-165, 178-181.

34 Antanas Vireliunas, "Dzuku Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1927, Vol. 4, p. 524.

35 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 71.

Oh, I will marry a "bernelis",  
A "bernelis", a ploughman.

And she will gladly do all the peasant works:

Uz artojaus tai tekesiu,  
Darbo dirbti tai mokesiu.<sup>36</sup>

I will marry a ploughman,  
I can and will do all the work.

When the "bernelis" asks his girl when she wants him to come  
to her, she answers:

Vai as insakiau savo berneliui  
Rudenuzij atjotie:  
Kada rugeliai zelmenij,  
Zalia rutele garbenij.<sup>37</sup>

I have ordered my "bernelis"  
To come in the autumn,  
When the rye is green (it is sown in the fall  
for the next spring)  
And the rue is in my hair.

Then she asks her "bernelis" to visit her:

Vai lankyk, lankyk mane, berneli,  
Zaliam rutu darzely.<sup>38</sup>

Come to visit me, my "bernelis",  
In my green rue garden.

Usually on saturday evening the "bernelis" rides to  
visit his sweetheart. A young man finds those clear autumn  
saturday nights so poetical, when he saddles his finest steed,

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<sup>36</sup> Antanas Vireliunas, "Kupiskenu Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1925, Vol. 3, pp. 410, 455.

<sup>37</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 54.

<sup>38</sup> Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 37.

puts a "jurginas"--a dahlia, in his hat and rides miles pouring his heart to the moon in songs:

Subatos vakareli, ...  
Zirguzeli balnojau,  
Pas merguzele joaju.<sup>39</sup>

On a saturday eve...  
I have saddled my steed.  
And I went riding off to my girl.

As the swain rides far "per zalia girele"<sup>40</sup> - through the green forest, "per devynis laukus"<sup>41</sup> - through nine fields, "i tevu dvareli, pas savo uosvele"<sup>42</sup> - to the home of his girl's parents, to his future mother-in-law, he keeps singing:

Puikus, grazus rudenelis,  
Tiesus kelias vieskelelis.<sup>43</sup>

The autumn is bright and beautiful,  
And the road to my girl is smooth and straight.

He hitches his favorite bay steed to the rue garden fence, and greets his maiden with these tender, sweet words: "meiliais zodeliais kalbina."<sup>44</sup> The maiden gives him a sprig of green

<sup>39</sup> Albinas Konce, "Panevezeioir Paystrio Parapiju Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1926, Vol. 4, p. 592.

<sup>40</sup> Vincas Kreve, "Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1924, Vol. 2, pp. 288, 295, 298.

<sup>41</sup> Ibid., p. 372.

<sup>42</sup> Albinas Konce, op. cit., p. 595.

<sup>43</sup> Ibid., p. 592.

<sup>44</sup> This writer's Collection of Songs. Rec. from Anele Pieteriene, Ilgakiemis, District of Kaunas, 1940.

rue and listens to him as he speaks. He does not tell of his fiery love, his restless passion, his thirst which can be quenched only by her sparkling blue eyes, her lips red and sweet as the first strawberry, rather he tells her how melodiously the birds sing in the early morning when he goes to "laukelio arti"<sup>45</sup>--to plough the field--, how fragrant and fresh is the hayload which he brings home, and what intelligent horses he has raised and trained. She tells him about the snow white linen she has woven, about embroidered flower patterns, and about the dresses and bedspreads she has made. Asking for her hand he says:

Ar ne ilgu ir nuobodu  
Pas mociute augti?<sup>46</sup>

Do you not feel bored and lonesome  
Here at your mother's?

Bowing her head the girl answers shyly:

Man neilgu ir nuobodu  
Pas mociute augti,  
Tik man ilgu ir nuobodu  
Vis bernelio laukti.<sup>47</sup>

I am not bored and lonesome  
Here at my mother's.  
I am only lonesome and tired  
Of waiting for my "bernelis".

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<sup>45</sup> Antanas Vireliunas, "Dzuku Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1926, Vol. 4, p. 528.

<sup>46</sup> This writer's Collection of Songs. Rec. from Anele Pieterien, Ilgakiemis, 1940.

<sup>47</sup> Ibid.

The fall is the usual time for weddings since it presents an appropriate setting. The harvested grain fills the barns and granaries. The fattened cattle and pigs are ready for butchering to make delicious sausage and savory "skilandis". The barley is ready to brew good beer and barrels of golden honey are ready to make the Lithuanian national drink--"midus". Orchards abound with pink, red and golden apples, with pears, with dark blue and yellow plums for the making of rich wines. All nature seems to rest after a busy and fruitful season. On quiet evenings, the fog rises slowly from peaceful lakes, lazy rivers and slumbering meadows. To the regular and dreamy rhythm of girls' sweeping brooms in the garden, late fall flowers seem to nod their heads in sleep. Innocent young hearts stir restlessly as faint sounds of longing songs are wafted to their ears from beyond the dark forests where the young men are tending the horses. The dreams of flowers, trees, fields and of young girls and men seem to blend as separate notes in the one harmony of nature. Indeed, the Lithuanian people's deep attachment to the soil make them inseparable of nature - they appear as the warp and woof of nature.<sup>48</sup>

On such a dreamy autumn evening, a young man comes riding with his matchmaker to his girl's parents. He keeps singing:

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48 "The Lithuanian loves his native soil; he is a mystic and an esthetician in his attitude to it." Juozas Lingis, "The National Character of Lithuanian People," in The Baltic Review. Stockholm, 1945, Vol. I, No. I, p. 7.

Seriau zirgeli  
 Visa rudeneli,  
 Ir nujojau pas mergele  
 Velai vakareli.<sup>49</sup>

I have fed my steed  
 All autumn long,  
 And I rode to my girl  
 Late in the evening (night).

As it is the custom that the girl uses to reject his proposal or postpone the wedding, he asks her with the words of a song:

Merguzele mano,  
 Balta lelijele,  
 Vai ar eisi tu uz mane  
 Sita rudeneli?<sup>50</sup>

My maiden,  
 My white lily,  
 Will you marry me  
 In this fall?

## 2. The Matchmaking.

When the suitor with his matchmaker come to visit the bride-to-be, the girl usually hides herself; first because she is shy and also because she would like to dress properly.

The matchmaker gives a pretext for their visit.<sup>51</sup> He says that they came to "zusales pirkti"<sup>52</sup>--to buy a goose, or that

49 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 66.

50 Ibid.

51 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," op. cit., p. 205.

52 Ibid.

they came looking for a diligent and industrious virgin:  
"Zalio sieno grebeleles, plonu lineliu verpejeles, baltu  
drobeliu audejeles, zaliu ruteliu augintojeles!"<sup>53</sup> The mother  
invites them to sit down in the "seklycia"--the guest room.  
Usually the matchmaker praises the suitor very much; he des-  
cribes his wealth in phantastical pictures, and then asks  
the parents about the girl's share and "dalis". If the parents  
are satisfied with the suitor, they let the matchmaker put his  
bottle of brandy on the table.<sup>54</sup> Then the matchmaker goes to  
bring the girl who was hidden in a "kamara"--a cell. The girl  
and the suitor sit quietly at the table. The mother serves  
a meal. The brother of the girl brings the steeds of the suitor  
and the matchmaker to the stable and feeds them (if the parents  
are not satisfied with the suitor, the mother does not serve  
the meal and the horses stay all the time in the garden).<sup>55</sup>  
The "uzgeros"--a toast of approval--starts again with the  
speech of the matchmaker, when he tells exactly what the suitor  
owns and what they require from the parents. The matchmaker  
gives to the father of the girl a glass of his own brandy, then

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<sup>53</sup> Petras Butenas, "Vestuviu Apeigos," in Tauta ir  
Zodis, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 268.

<sup>54</sup> Balys Buracas, op. cit., p. 205.

<sup>55</sup> Ibid.

he serves a glass to the mother, to the suitor and to the girl. Then comes the "apsedos"--the party. The father goes to invite some neighbours or close friends to a small gathering during which they drink the matchmaker's brandy and agree to go with the father and some relatives to visit the farm of the hopefulswain--"Prazvalgoms vaziuoti."<sup>56</sup> This visit takes place two or three days after the first agreement. If the farm does not suit the father, he neither opens his brandy nor drinks in the house of the young suitor;<sup>57</sup> he simply goes home, and after a few days he returns the matchmaker's bottle of brandy.<sup>58</sup> Sometimes by importunity and deceit (at which he is expert) the matchmaker persuades the father to reconsider his rejection. If the father is satisfied with the farm, he drinks brandy with the suitor and decides the date of the "uzurasai"<sup>59</sup>--the visit to the pastor to pass a test of religious knowledge and to make arrangement for the reading of the banns. Then they become officially bride and bridegroom; they must celebrate the betrothal in the bride's home.<sup>60</sup>

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56 Ibid., p. 207.

57 Ibid.

58 Ibid.

59 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. VIII, 3-4. Also Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 5.

60 Matthaeus Praetorius, op. cit., Cap. VIII, 5. Also Jonas Balys, Dr., op. cit., p. 5. Also Balys Buracas, p. 208.

After the second reading of the banns, in a second visit, the bridegroom accompanied by the matchmaker "atvaziuoja su didziaja"<sup>61</sup>--brings strong brandy, liquor and wine. The maiden's mother provides the beer, prepares a big meal and invites her girl friends, some neighbours and relatives. The series of toasts--"uzgeros"<sup>62</sup>--begin with the girl's father drinking to the matchmaker who in turn drinks to the parents and asks the mother whether she is willing to give her daughter to the young man. If the mother answers affirmatively, the matchmaker enquires of the daughter whether she would like to take this man for her husband. The girl always answers "yes", because it is not she but her parents who decide whom she will marry. When she approves and consents, the couple must kiss each other with the whole party as witness.<sup>63</sup> Then for the last time the terms of the inheritance and the dowry are decided and the girl's father and her suitor exchange small deposits of money<sup>64</sup> as a bond of mutual assurance that the engagement shall not be broken.

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61 Theodor Lepner, Der preusche Littauer, p. 15.

62 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, pp. 4-5.

63 "Die Hauptvorgaenge waehrend der Verlobung sind: I. der Austausch der Geschenke (Rautenstraeusse, Tuecher, Geld, Ringe), 2. gegenseitiger Zutrunck des Paares aus dem selben Trinkgefaess, 3. das Handreichen und der oeffentliche Kuss." Jonas Balys, Dr., op. cit., p. 6.

64 Ibid. Also Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 128.

The money that the bridegroom pays to the parents of the bride is a remainder of a very old custom of the third period of matriarchic culture, when the bride was bought:

...Nach der aldin gewonheit  
sich noch der Pruzzin sitte treit,  
daz si koufin mit gedinge  
ire wib umme pfenninge.<sup>65</sup>

According to the old custom  
the Prussians used  
to buy their wives  
with a sum of money.

Praetorius mentions that the bridegroom had to pay some money, depending on his wealth, or give to the father of the bride some grain or a few oxen; the daughter was never given gratis.<sup>66</sup>

Later it became customary for the bridegroom to pay the bride's parents for the rue wreath the same amount of money as they had given to their daughter.<sup>67</sup> In a folk song the bridegroom tenderly and coaxingly inquires of his beloved:

Klausciau tames, mergele, mergele,  
Kaip tie brangus zolynai?  
Uz rozele du simtu, du simtu,  
Uz rutele keturi.<sup>68</sup>

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65 Nicolaus Jerochin, von, Die Kronike von Pruzzinlant, in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum. Ed. by Ernst Strehlke, 1864, Vol. I, lines 4195-4199.

66 "...Item so einer begeret eines mannes tochter, so giebet er sie nicht vergebens. Er mus ein mark zehen oder nach seinem reichtumb geben. So er nicht geld giebet, so giebet er ime ochsen oder getreide: er will sein kind keinem fremden umbsonst geben." Hieronymus Maletius, Sudauerbuechlein, in Erleu-tertes Preussen, 1742, Vol. 2, p. 201.

67 "...jog istekant ateinantis vyras turejo uzrasyti vainikui treciaja dali savo teviskes ir valsciu." Simanas Daukantas, Budas ir Apsiejimai Lietuviu ir Ziamaicziu Senoveje, in Sofija Ciurlioniene, Lietuviu Literaturos Chrestomatija, Voronez, Kulturos ir Svietimo Sekcija, 1918, p. 36.

68 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 53.

I would like to ask you, maiden,  
 How much you charge for your flowers?  
 For the rose two hundred, two hundred,  
 For the rue four hundred.

When the money matters are settled, her parents call the bridegroom "zentelis"--son-in-law:

Sesk, zenteli, uz stalo, uz stalo,  
 Dek pinigus ant stalo.<sup>69</sup>

Brueckner mentions that the same custom - namely when the bridegroom paid to the bride's parents the same amount of money as they gave to their daughter, was common to all the Aryans:

...jak o tem sama nazwa wiana, y.j. ceny za zone, ofiarowanej przez mlodego... U Arjow... bylo malzenstwo pierwotne tylko dobrowlna umowa, o czem wzajemne podarunki wyraznie swiadczyly; te dary obustrone bywaly rownej wartosci, jeszcze w szlacheckiej Polsce rownal sie posag panny wianu, wnoszonemu od oblubienca.<sup>70</sup>

...it shows the same name "wiana", meaning the price of the wife, which the bridegroom gave... The Aryans arranged the marriage by free dealing between two parts (families), which presupposes equal gifts from both sides, yet in Poland, in the time of the domination of nobility, the share received by the girl from her parents was equal to the amount of money which the bridegroom paid to her parents.

Up to the present day, this custom has remained in Lithuania, but the money is paid only as a symbol.<sup>71</sup>

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<sup>69</sup> Ibid.

<sup>70</sup> Aleksander Brueckner, Dzieje Kultury Polskiej. Krakow: Krakowska Spolka Wydawnicza, 1930, pp. 109-110.

<sup>71</sup> "...der Braeutigam gibt der Braut Geld fuer den Trauring...Waehrend der Vereinbarung ueberreicht der Braeutigam der Braut etwas Geld..." Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 7.

The exchanging of the gifts is still used. The mother of the bride presents to the young man a fancy handkerchief containing in one corner a sprig of green rue and in another a gold ring. The bridegroom kisses the mother's hands, attaches the rue to his suit and places the ring on his finger after putting his own ring on the girl's finger. Thus, they are betrothed.<sup>72</sup> The mother gives the matchmaker and the suitor about five yards of linen--"stuomo"<sup>73</sup>--for shirts. To signify the completion of the betrothal, the mother gives the matchmaker a handkerchief, a belt--"juosta"--, and two towels, and the girl decorates his cane with rue.<sup>74</sup> The matchmaker gives the mother a handkerchief - a gift from the bridegroom's mother. The matchmaker acts as a go-between for these gifts, giving one towel to the bridegroom's mother, and a rue, a handkerchief and a "juosta" to the bridegroom.<sup>75</sup> This exchange of gifts between the two families is a recognition of betrothment.<sup>76</sup> Now the

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72 Ibid., pp. 6-7.

73 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestives," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 208.

74 Ibid.

75 Theodor Lepner, Der preusche Littauer, p. 13.

76 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, pp. 6-8. Also Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestives," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, pp. 208-9.

bridegroom can visit his bride alone.

The bride invites the "svocia" (sometimes there are two or three of them). They are married women, one of them "svocia nuleideja"<sup>77</sup> assists the bride in the church and fetes her immediately after. The second, "svocia gaubeja", accompanies the bride to her husband's house, removes her rue wreath, cuts some of her hair, and finally hands her over the "noumetas"--the head dressing of married women, which the bridegroom gives her as a gift.

The period of the matchmaking was the last carefree and romantic one in a maiden's life.

### 3. Marriage by the Will of the Parents.

Although gay and happy in a degree probably never surpassed thereafter, the maiden's life at home with her parents, brothers and sisters ends with the beginning of a new life towards which the pattern and tone of her daily routine are destined. Her mother prepares her for her future role as a housewife and mother. Naturally, she awaits and dreams of the coming of her "Prince Charming", although his selection depends on her parents. Thus, she is destined to a new life and to the new circumstances of her own marriage.

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77 Ibid., p. 209.

She will help her husband to create and build a new home, the setting for a new happiness and joy, which, though quiet and subdued for herself, shall be boundless, warm and intense for her own children.

In olden times in Lithuania, as well as in all Arian nations, marriages were negotiated or arranged by heads of the families.<sup>78</sup> Marriage was considered so sacred that its determination was not left to the making of the young couple alone, but to the decision of parents and even the whole family.<sup>79</sup> First of all, the young man informs his parents of his desire for courtship. His father says he will propose a suitable maiden for him, and he chooses the one whom his father and mother like. Asking many questions, he confers with other people, makes her acquaintance, judges her virtue and then begins courting her. In all this preparation for marriage, the young man is very serious: "Vater und Sohn fragen den Schaumgucker, Blei-und Wachsgusser ob die Heirat gluecklich wird. Dann der Vater sucht Pirslys."<sup>80</sup> - "Father and son

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78 Aleksander Brueckner, Dziej Kultury Polskiej, p. 110.

79 "Der junge Kerl sagt seinen Eltern zuerst er will sich bewerben. Der Vater sagt, er wird ein Weib fuer ihn werben und freien. Er nimmt welche vater und Mutter gern hat. Er beradet viel, ausfragt andere und kennt selbst das Weib ob sie tugenhaft ist, dann macht ihr den Hof." Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. VIII, I.

80 Ibid., Cap. VIII, 2.

consult a magician (one who tells the future by wax figures casted in leaden moulds) as to whether the marriage shall be happy. Whereupon the father seeks a matchmaker." This was the method regardless of whether the couple had ever met or seen each other before. The older generation would justify this custom with the comment that love would come after marriage. Moreover, this was the time-honored procedure by which ancestors had founded their families and happy ones. Another reason was expressed in the question that if both parties be honest, virtuous, young, and healthy, and if they spend a lifetime together, why should they be unhappy.

Wedding ceremonies, customs and traditions (until the first world war) remained as they were in early pagan centuries. Testimonies about Lithuanian customs and traditions date only from the tenth century. At first, there were only a few about the early religion, people and their life. Only the Teutonic Knights left us more complete information, which must be used with discretion. However, from well preserved and copious<sup>81</sup> legends, songs and tales of folklore, one can safely judge that these traditions and customs are a thousand years old, as will be shown later on in the close examination of several customs.

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<sup>81</sup> Antanas Juskevicius, Lietuviskos Svodbines Dainos. St. Petersburg, 1883. This book alone contains as many as 1100 wedding songs; all in all there are about half a million wedding songs.

The wedding is arranged directly not by the couple or the parents, but by a third person selected by the suitor. This matchmaker is the bridegroom's spokesman. Even throughout most of the wedding ceremony, the bridegroom remains inactive himself and acts through his best man (pajaunys,<sup>82</sup> pabrolys). Even the bride answers through her mother and at the ceremony she is represented by the maid of honor. The bride must speak only in traditional lamentations (verkavimai).<sup>83</sup> The bride must weep profusely during the wedding; otherwise, all the days of her life will be sad and tearful.<sup>84</sup>

The Lithuanian wedding was celebrated all week long<sup>85</sup> and with so many ceremonies that it was like a play. It can be divided in four major parts: 1) the matchmaking--"pirslybos", 2) the agreement and betrothal--"sutartuves ir ziedynos", 3) the wedding and the leaving of the parents' house--"vedybos ir atsisveikinimas tevu namu", 4) the bride's reception into the bridegroom's home--"marcios priemimas i jauniko namus."

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82 Vincas Kreve, "Dzuku Vestuves," in Musu Tautosaka, Kaunas, 1930. Vol. 2, p. 29.

83 "...die Braur hebet an und weinet scheutzlich..." Hieronymus Maletius, Wahrhaftige Beschreibung der Sudawen auf Samland, sammt Ihrem Bockjeiligen und Ceremonien, oder Sudauerbuechlein, in Erleutertes Preussen, Koenigsberg, 1742, Vol. 2, p. 202.

84 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 43.

85 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 278.

The wedding starts on a Saturday evening with a sort of shower at the bride's place.<sup>86</sup> Only the "paretkas"--bridesmaids, the best men of her side--"pajauniaiai" and "svocios" attend. They all come in gaily decorated carriages, festooned with flowers and pine branches. The girls wear their finest hand-made national costumes and the men sport flowers in their hats. The wedding gifts are mostly food: the women give big wedding cakes--"karvojus"<sup>87</sup> and the men supply the drinks. The gifts are wrapped in large "stuomenys"--about five yards of white linen, or towels and tied with "joustos"--a kind of belts or ribbons, hand-woven, with beautiful colored patterns.<sup>88</sup>

On the eve of the wedding the home of the bride is very sad. No music, no dance. It is the custom for the bride herself to be downcast during most of this period. She is expected to do much crying,<sup>89</sup> and so she sings wonderful melancholic, lyrical songs to put her in the proper mood:

Smutkai sirdi man suspaude...  
 Begau greitai i darzeli...  
 Ten isliesu upytali  
 Gailiu asareliu...

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86 Ibid., p. 210.

87 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p.45.

88 Balys Buracas, op. cit., p. 210.

89 Ibid., pp. 210-212.

Ti as viena pasilieku  
 Biedna naslaitela...  
 Sudiev, tau, brangus darzeli.<sup>90</sup>

My heart is broken with grief...  
 Swiftly to my garden I run,  
 There shall I weep.  
 Like streams in spring my tears shall flow...  
 In my sorrow I am alone, I, a poor orphan...  
 Farewell my well-beloved flowers,  
 Farewell my darling garden.

The bridesmaids plait her braids and, for the last time weave for her the rue wreath. The bride bids her girl friends a tender farewell in the gently melancholic words of the traditional songs. The sentiments expressed are profoundly sad and deliciously lyrical. They bespeak the bride's reluctance to leave her happy home and her yearning for her rue garden, and they breathe in an air that is chaste, modest, and demure. In them the bride compares herself to the glory of the lily which fades so soon when it is plucked:

Atjojo selmis bernelis,  
 Nulauze ruta is saknu,  
 O lelijele is laisku.  
 Motule mano senoji,  
 Vysta rutele zaiioji.<sup>91</sup>

Brusque bernelis came a-riding by.  
 He uprooted the rue from its bed;  
 And the lily he snatched from the stem.  
 Oh my sweet old mother,  
 The rue is fading.

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<sup>90</sup> Ibid., p. 210.

<sup>91</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 4.

The bride is sad because she is leaving forever that which she has always held most dear, her lily and rue, her spotless virginity. When on Sunday morning before going to church the bride meets her groom she offers him a rue--"rutu Kvietka"--and then dissolves in tears. She worries that her rue will feel lonesome and orphaned, and therefore she begs her younger sister to take good care of it when she is gone:

Pavasario dienele  
 Sejau zalia rutele,  
 O as sedama, apravedama  
 Su rutele kalbejau.  
 Auki, rutele zalia,  
 Rutele kvepiancioji,  
 As istekesiu nebelukesiu,  
 Tave zalia palikti,  
 As paliksiu rutele,  
 As paliksiu zaliaja,  
 O as paliksiu rutele zalia  
 Jauniausiai seserelei.  
 Sesute jauniausioji,  
 Sesute myliomoji,  
 Mokeki seti ir apraveti  
 Mano zalia rutele.<sup>92</sup>

'Twas on a spring day  
 That I sowed my green rue.  
 And while I was planting and weeding  
 I spoke to my green rue:  
 "Grow green rue,  
 My adorable verdant rue.  
 Though I marry I shall not want  
 To leave you, my green one.  
 I shall leave the rue,  
 The green and tender shoot,  
 I shall leave my green rue  
 To the care of my youngest sister,  
 My youngest sister, my best beloved,  
 Please tend my rue for me,  
 My green and beautiful rue."

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92 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 66.

On the Saturday before the wedding the groom has a party--prieveselis<sup>93</sup>--with his matchmaker--"svocia gaubeja"--and his groomsmen--"pabroliai". This party is not a very joyful one either: the young husband-to-be says goodbye to his friends and they sing songs, but there is no dancing. The village youths decorate his house--"kletis"--and the bridal chamber.<sup>94</sup>

#### 4. Nuptial Rite.

In pagan Lithuania, the nuptial ceremony was performed by the matchmaker<sup>95</sup> in the bride's home. Its essential act was the surrender of the rue wreaths<sup>96</sup> and asking the mother: "Do you let your daughter marry this man?"<sup>97</sup> If the mother answers "yes", then he proposes to the daughter. If she consents, they must kiss each other in the presence of other witnesses.<sup>98</sup> After this civil marriage ceremony, the bride and groom were considered man and wife. This custom of civil marriage<sup>99</sup> is observed even today, sometimes on Saturday or

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<sup>93</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 211.

<sup>94</sup> Ibid.

<sup>95</sup> Mitteilungen der litauischen literarischen Gesellschaft, Tilsit, 1855, Vol. 5, p. 159.

<sup>96</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. 2, p. 164.

<sup>97</sup> Ibid.

<sup>98</sup> "Wenn das Maedchen mit der Heirat einverstanden ist... kuesst den juengling." Jonas Balys, Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 8.

<sup>99</sup> "Pilietines jungtuves" in Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. 2, p. 165.

Sunday morning before going to church. After making a speech the matchmaker performs the ritual of giving the bridegroom's rue wreath to the maid of honor, who, in turn, places it on the bride's head. The bride gives her own rue wreath to the best man, who, in turn gives it to the bridegroom.<sup>100</sup> In some places before changing the rue wreaths the matchmaker asks the bride for the last time whether she is willing to marry the groom, and the groom whether he is willing to marry the bride. After they have both reaffirmed their intention, the matchmaker escorts the bride over to the groom, who is sitting on the opposite side, and seats her, saying; "Here is the young couple!"<sup>101</sup> But the couple nowadays is considered married only after the performance of the nuptial ceremony in the church, and they sleep together for the first time only after the bride's reception into her husband's home. The old pagan traditions are now mixed with Christian traditions. In Christian Lithuania the old traditions remained peacefully, but the Church's rites were added to them. Now the matchmaker employs passages from the Bible in his speech and finishes it with a hymn.<sup>102</sup> Sacred songs are sung a few times during the course of the wedding ceremony: before going to the church,

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<sup>100</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, pp. 9-10.

<sup>101</sup> Ibid., p. 9.

<sup>102</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 215.

at the reception of the bride in her home, and at his house.<sup>103</sup>

The wedding day starts very early. The bride and her bridesmaids rise early. She meets her parents on the threshold with sad words: "Negitau, motynyta, jau nubodau, kad mani svetimon salelen ataduodi?"<sup>104</sup> - "Is it possible, dear mother, that I am a nuisance to you, because you are sending me away to a foreign country?" Kneeling before her mother the bride asks her to be crowned with the rue wreath for the very last time. And then, wreath on her head, she sits with her "paretka" and waits for the bridegroom, who soon arrives with his matchmaker, the bridesmen, and a band of musicians who mingle their melodies with the jingling of the bells on the necks of the horses.

To the ceremony of the bride's departure for the church everybody in the village is invited. In the wedding ceremony the bride's people and the groom's people play at being enemies.<sup>105</sup> The bridegroom's side is mocked with songs and to stop the mocking the "enemy side" must be bribed with sweet brandy. When the bridegroom comes to his bride's home, he finds the gate barred, and only after much coaxing will her side open it. The bride hides among her maids: they cover

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<sup>103</sup> Petras Butenas, "Vestuviu Apeigos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 171.

<sup>104</sup> Balys Buracas, op. cit., p. 212.

<sup>105</sup> Ibid., pp. 260, 264. Also Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, pp. 12-14.

themselves with sheets, and the groom has to guess which one is his bride.<sup>106</sup>

Since the bride does not want to go, her father takes her by the hand and leads her to her place at the table where she sits with the other girls. The best man first gives a toast to the bride's mother and gives her a piece of gold wrapped in a handkerchief; this is called the "pragertuves"--drinking away the bride. The daughter cries, as her mother sells her. The bridegroom brings gifts for the bride, her mother, and her svocia, either shoes or money. The bride gives a shirt to the groom. Dr. Balys writes that before leaving for the church the bride and the bridegroom go to the "klete", he to put on the shirt, she, the shoes. On this occasion they must tell each other about their sicknesses or physical defects, so there will be no reproaches in the future. It is a superstition that if an ailment or blemish is not revealed at this time, it can never be cured later.<sup>107</sup> If such a custom existed,

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106 "...sponsa circum ducitur linteo velamine...". Erhard Wagner, Vita et mores Litvanorum in Borussia sub districtu Insterburgensi et Ragnitensi degentium, in Acta Borussica, Koenigsberg, 1730, Vol. I, p. 34. Also Matthaeus Praetorius, Nachricht von der Litauer Art und Leben, in Erleutertes Preussen. Edited by Lilienthal, 1724, Vol. I, p. 131 (Cap. IX, 28).

107 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. II.

it was not popular, for it is not mentioned by any other researcher of wedding customs.

When everything is ready, the "svocia" addresses the young couple, and then they pray. The father puts a cross and a loaf of bread on the table and lights a candle. The bride and groom with their "paretkas" kiss the cross and the bread and then circle the table three times.<sup>108</sup> This old custom comes from pagan times and signifies the bride's separation from her Lares and Penates, and the souls of her ancestors. The maid of honor then says a special prayer: "Kloniojos tam baltam stalui ne azu ka, azu siu zaliu rutu vainika..."<sup>109</sup> - "I bow my head and honor this white table not for anything else, but for this wreath of green rue..." It is a time-honored way of saying thank you to the gods of the hearth and the ghosts of the forefathers for having preserved the bride's virginity and of praying them not to be angry with her for leaving them. The same ceremony--the leading of the bride around the table and the fire place<sup>110</sup>--will be repeated the next morning after the bride has gone to her husband's home; then she will

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108 Hieronymus Maletius, Sudauerbuechlein, p. 198.

109 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 218.

110 "Wenn nun alles das beklaget was im hause ist, so nehmen sie dann ihre freunde und furen sie zum fewer." Hieronymus Maletius, Sudauerbuechlein, p. 199.

be a wife and he must lead her around<sup>111</sup> to introduce her to his Lares and Penates, and to his ancestral spirits, so that they will acknowledge her as a member of his family and take care of her.

The custom about the crossing of the threshold comes from the same old pagan beliefs. No one can touch the threshold during the wedding,<sup>112</sup> because it would cause the union to be an unhappy one,<sup>113</sup> for the threshold is considered to be sacred to the gods of the earth and the souls of the ancestors. If they were disturbed they might wreak bitter vengeance. The fact that a long time ago not only living friends and relatives, but also the souls of the ancestors were invited to the weddings is shown in songs in which an orphan bride invites her dead mother to come to her wedding and bless her nuptials - her entry upon a new life.<sup>114</sup>

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111 Matthaëus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. VIII, 37.

112 "...Dar nach bindet man der braut die augen zu und schmieret ihr den mund mit honige und furen sie vor alle thuren... spricht: unser goetter werden dir alle genuege geben, so du wirst an unserm glauben bleiben unser veter." Hieronymus Maletius, Sudauerbuechlein, p. 199.

113 Pranas Meskauskas, Volksbraeuche im litauischen Familienleben, Tilsit, 1936, pp. 25-56.

114 R. Meulen von, Gantos Palyginimai Lietuviu Dainose ir Raudose. Translated from German by Mylolas Birziska. Vilnius: Lietuviu Mokslo Draugija, 1919, p. 85.

After kissing the cross, the bride places a piece of bread (which plays an important role not only in everyday life, but also at the wedding)<sup>115</sup> on her chest on the way to church for the wedding. The eating of this piece of bread by the couple is a sign that they shall love each other very much. She brings a loaf of bread to her new family, and in East Lithuania the bridegroom brings a loaf of bread for his mother-in-law. The bride and groom kneel down before the parents to receive their blessing. They kiss the knees and hands of the parents, and the bride in sad and touching lamentations asks them to bless her.

After bidding farewell (treated in the next part of this chapter) to her parents, relatives and neighbours, the bride accompanied by her bridesmaids (svocia) and maid of honor (baznytine) and the groom accompanied by his best man leave in separate carriages for church. In order to protect the bride from evil spells, she and her svocia are veiled with white linen and thus hidden from the gaze of evil spirits.<sup>116</sup> For, if they cannot see her face, they do not know which one is the bride. Besides many other wedding superstitions,

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<sup>115</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, pp. 41-42.

<sup>116</sup> Jurgis Elisonas, "Burtai," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1925, Vol. 3, pp. 142-153.

the bride holds in her mouth some garlic,<sup>117</sup> or salt, and sprinkles in her shoe some grain as a charm for future wealth.<sup>118</sup> All the way to church the bride sobs and utters tearful words in bidding farewell to the meadows and fields and in invoking their blessing. No songs are heard -- only the rhythmic rise and fall of a sad wedding march (grauduji marsa).

Long ago it was the custom for the "pajaunaiai" to do a lot of shooting and firing on the way to the church in order to frighten off witches, for the bride was always in danger of evil enchantment.<sup>119</sup> When the bride has reached the church she kisses the hands of beggars and gives them money which she received during "prageros". While Veni Creator is being played, svocia covers the way with a stuomuo and leads the bride to her groom where they stand together. After the ceremony the couple and their paretkas go to the home of the svocia for dinner. The svocia meets them at the threshold with bread, salt, and beer. Here all is joy and merriment. Late into the night they dance and sing because of the joy

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<sup>117</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 221.

<sup>118</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., op. cit., pp. 11-13.

<sup>119</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, pp. 46-48.

of the occasion, and also because the witches have a hard time to see in the dark and cause trouble. When the party is over bride and bridegroom return to their respective parental homes.<sup>120</sup> The bride finds to her delight that her gate has been decked with flowers and greenery by the village youths who also provide music. To gain admittance she must buy her way through the gate with some of the svocia's "karvojus"-- wedding cake, and some of the "pajauniai's" brandy. A blazing wheel on a high stick has been set up near her home to guide her and to ward off all envious witcheries.

Her parents also meet her with bread and salt for a happy life. The guests sing "paduok duona ir druskiene, kad but gera gaspadine" - "give her bread and salt, so that she will be a good housewife."<sup>121</sup> The maid of honor has to buy a place at the table for the bride's "paretkas". At the meal many songs are sung.

The next day the women make a "jos soda"--a miniature garden made from vegetables, with small trees, even birds, a young couple inside. To take the place of the sun a real candle is hung above the table. In the afternoon the bridegroom's two or three "pajauniai" come to buy it, as a token of buying a place for their client. After much bargaining they

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<sup>120</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 282.

<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 229.

finally buy it with a bottle of sweet brandy. This custom helps the guests to pass the time with some amusement.<sup>122</sup> It is also for some entertainment that on Tuesday morning the svocia with the "pamerges"--bridesmaids--go to the neighbors' "paveseliamis"--afterwedding parties. There, they eat, sing and dance to their hearts' content.

In Lowland the dowry must be taken to the groom's home before the wedding; in other parts of Lithuania, after the wedding, but usually before the bride is taken to her husband's house.<sup>123</sup> The bridegroom invites some of his friends to be "kraicveziai"<sup>124</sup>--dowrydrivers; they bedeck the carriages with greens and flowers. The "Kraicveziai" go along singing and making a great racket. On the way they ask the neighbours for something to eat and to drink. They joke very much and pick up whatever they find along the way "jaunuju gyvenimo pradžiai"--for the young couple and their new life. These objects gathered on the way often can not be returned to their owners who have been forgotten and are therefore brought to the bridegroom's house. Since the "kraicveziai" are on the groom's side, they are received

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122 Ibid., pp. 200, 221, 233.

123 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p.229.

124 Matthaëus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. VIII,32.

unfriendly.<sup>125</sup> When the village youths arrive at the "kletis", they sing praises of the bride's diligence and dowry and laugh at the "kraicveziai". Her mother covers with "stuomuo" and "juosta" the tub or trunk containing the dowry and sits on it. The groom ransoms the dowry from her mother.<sup>126</sup> The bride embraces her dowry, cries and refuses to surrender it. The girls sit on the other items of the dowry. The groom's attendants use sweet brandy to bargain with the girls and pay for the dowry. When it is loaded on the carriages, her mother gives them a loaf of bread--"marcios rugstis"<sup>127</sup>--and a small barrel of beer. The bride's coming with bread and drink augurs a prosperous future.<sup>128</sup> Her mother gives the "kraicveziai" some "stuomuo" which they put on their shoulders.

Following the dowry the youths sing:

Ko liudi sesele, ko liudi jaunoji?  
Kelia kraicius is svirnelio,  
Mane jauna unt vargelio,  
To liudziu, to liudziu.<sup>129</sup>

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<sup>125</sup> Petras Butenas, "Vestuviu Apeigos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 175.

<sup>126</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p.18.

<sup>127</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves", p. 254.

<sup>128</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., op. cit., p. 19.

<sup>129</sup> Balys Buracas, op. cit., p. 255.

Prithee, sister, why so sad and wan?  
 They take my dowry from the storeroom,  
 And Deliver me so young unto misery.  
 For this I grieve--for this.

When the dowry is taken away, the bridegroom comes to take his bride with his "pajauniaï"--groomsmen, and "svocia nulei-deja". The bride hides herself<sup>130</sup> with her maidens of honor. Sometimes she sits on a bread trough, covered with a white linen; then the matchmaker or the best man has to guess which one is the bride by the mere touch of the hand, and if he does not pick the right one the girls drench him with water and laugh at him. Or perhaps the girls are led out one by one covered with sheets and the groom is made to guess which one is his bride. If he is too slow they slip him a false bride in order to make fun of him. Both sides try to capture the bride in their midst, and then whoever wishes to have her must pay the ransom--a bottle of brandy. But, of course, if the groom and his friends capture her first then they need pay no ransom.

Before she is actually given away her kinfolk grant her liberty. This ceremony is followed by the "buying of the bride--"marcios pirkimas"<sup>131</sup> in the form of an auction. The

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<sup>130</sup> "This custom is known in Slavic countries, in Germany, Italy and France, in order to cheat the demons and not to let them enchant the bride." Pipirek, Slavische Brautwerbungs-und Hochzeitsbraeuche, Stuttgart, 1917, p. 191.

<sup>131</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, pp. 239-240.

supporters of the bride and those of the groom vie with each other in bidding for the bride<sup>132</sup> who sits by the door at a little table crowned still with her rue wreath. On the little table there is a dish into which the people are invited to put money to liberate the poor bride. Either the "Mitulys"--his best man, or her "pajaunys" gives this invitation. The bride then bursts forth into melancholy plaints and tearful lamentations calling upon all her dear ones to come forward and ransom her and rescue her out of the hands of strangers. One by one they respond--depending upon the piteousness of her entreaty--and come up to make deposits of money in the dish. She thanks them profusely in song:

Teveli sanoleli, motula augintojela,  
 Vaduokit mane jauna is azi situ baltu staleliu,  
 Neparduokit mane jaunu didiesiems vargeliams.  
 Vaduok sesiula mani jaunu...  
 Vaduok nors rutu sakeli...<sup>133</sup>

You, my mother who bore me, you, my dear old father,  
 Come to rescue me from this white table where I sit,  
 Do not sell me into this misery.  
 You, my dear young sister,  
 Save even a little sprig of my rue.

The "mitulys" gives to each contributor a glass of sweet brandy. Invited by the "mitulys" his side--"jaunojo svotai", calls out "musu sese"--"the sister is ours" and throws down money. But

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132 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 18.

133 Balys Buracas, op. cit., p. 241.

the bride's side is not to be outdone and puts down still more money, with the same cry. The bride throws the money from his side on the floor, and they receive no brandy. But when her side has no more money the responding to an invitation steps forward and puts down the biggest bid. But her brother outbids him. At last, however, the groom wins the auction: "Marti nupirkta!"—"The bride is bought!"<sup>134</sup> "Mitulys" now stands up, makes the sign of the cross and asks her mother for permission to remove the rue wreath.<sup>135</sup> The bride, weeping profusely, begs her mother not to allow it:

Nezvolyk, motinela, nezvolyk, teveli, no mona galvelas nuiplist rutu vainikeli! Negi sis vargelis-pijokelis turi kur padeti brangu rutu vainikeli-numas patvorelin, sumins jiji purvynalan.<sup>136</sup>

Dear Mother! Father dear! Do not permit him to tear from my head my rue wreath. We do not know whether this tippler, this cad, (the bride pretends that the groom is a dangerous enemy) has an honored place for the rue wreath or whether he shall trample it in the mud.

The parents give permission for the wreath to be removed, but the girl does not let it go without a fight; she puts up a fight. Many needles have been put in the wreath to prick whoever tries to uncrown her. Her last valiant effort to

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134 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p.19.

135 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves", p. 243.

136 Ibid.

keep her rue wreath as long as possible and her final farewell are so touching and sorrowful that all the women cry together with her. For, the wives remember their own young days locked irrevocably in the past. As the object of such emotions the rue wreath has inspired the most expressive songs. To the music of a doleful march the young people sing:

Verk, .sesiule zaliu rutu, rutu vainikelio...137

Cry, sister, for your green rue, for your rue  
wreath.

Ke nuvytai rutyta  
Zalia budame?...  
Uztiko jau salna,  
Nubirs tau lapeliai  
Nuo zaliu sakaliu...  
Verksi sasutyta,  
Per visa amzeli...  
Tu nebematysi  
Jaunuju dieneliu,  
Ruteliu neses-  
Nuo veidelio asareliu  
Sluostyt nepaspesi...138

O rue, that was so green,  
Why have you faded?  
The frost has already caught you,  
Green leaves fall  
From green branches...  
You shall weep, my sister,  
All your life...  
You shall see no more  
Your days of youth,  
You shall sow the rue no more  
You have no time to waste,  
Even to wipe the tears from your face.

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137 Antanas Vireliunas, "Dzuku Dinos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1926, Vol. 4, p. 557.

138 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves", p. 244.

The "svocia gaubeja" fold about her head a "nuometas"-- a fine white linen, which is the head-dress of married women. This act marks the giving of the daughter to her beloved.<sup>139</sup> Taking the hand of his daughter the father leads her to the bridegroom, seats her close to him and makes a speech. All the guests stand to honor for the first time the bride's dignity as a married woman--"uometas", and also to honor the generous act of giving one's own daughter to another family. Her father speaks: "I have taken great care of my daughter; her rue wreath is green and fresh. She is well trained and has learned all her duties. Love and honor her."<sup>140</sup> After these words they sing a hymn: "Is verksmo stojos linksmybe." The bride has no longer her rue wreath on her head. She is still a virgin, but she no longer belongs to her parents, to her kindred, or to her young girl friends; she must leave them, never again to know the joys and intimacy of that carefree life.

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<sup>139</sup> Petras Butenas, "Vestuviu Apeigos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 179.

<sup>140</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," pp. 244-245.

5. Farewell from the Parents' Home  
and from the Merry Youth.

As already mentioned, the wedding ceremony is rather sad for the maiden; she has to leave her parents' house, her sisters and brothers, her girl friends, her relatives, and her gay and youthful days. Moreover she imagines that her life in the company of her mother-in-law will be very harsh and miserable. All the wedding songs present a comparative picture of these periods--the bride's merry past with the bright days of youth--"jaunos dieneles" and the dark foreboding shadows of an unknown future: "pas anytele, to didzio vargelio, per visa amzeli lieti asareliu" - "at mother's-in-law, to cry all life long.<sup>141</sup> When the lonesome daughter later comes to visit her mother to "vargelio parukuoti"<sup>142</sup>--to count her troubles, at the sight of her daughter's unhappiness the mother asks her: "Grisk, dukrele, atgalios, sugrazinki zalia ruta ir margasias skryneles" - "Come back, daughter, but only under one condition, bring back your green rue and your dowry trunk."<sup>143</sup> This request as well as the daughter's answer is always poetical:

Kai sesele rutas ses,  
Ant rytojaus jau zydes...  
Kai brolelis rugius ses,  
Ant rytojaus jau zydes...  
Taitada, o motinele,  
As pas tave sugrisiu.<sup>144</sup>

<sup>141</sup> Antanas Vireliunas, "Jupiskenu Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1926, Vol. 4, p. 536.

<sup>142</sup> Antanas Vireliunas, op. cit., pp. 534, 535.

<sup>143</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," p. 255.

<sup>144</sup> Ibid.

When my sister will sow the rue,  
 And tomorrow it will blossom,  
 When my brother will sow the rye,  
 And tomorrow it will blossom...  
 Only then, mother dear,  
 I can return to you.

In other wedding songs the mother asks her daughter if she will return to her mother's house, and the daughter answers: "as atejau pas motinele ruteliu vainikelio" - "I came back only to get from you my rue wreath." However, the mother can not give her a new rue wreath--virginity, without which she can never return. Moreover, the daughter could not desert her husband even if he be a bad man.

Whenever her new home is far away and she can not visit her mother, she sings:

Pazyciocia gegules sparneliu...  
 Kad as nuskriscia...  
 Pro rutu darzeli,  
 Pro vysniu sodeli...  
 Ir as uzkukocia,  
 Vargelius rukocia...<sup>146</sup>

I would borrow the cuckoo's wings...  
 I would fly through the rue garden,  
 Through a cherry garden...  
 And I would, cuckoo,  
 Unburden all my troubles.

But songs and legends never express material troubles. Seldom does she complain of having a bad husband. If he is a "pjo-kelis"--a drunkard, she will more likely complain of having a

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<sup>146</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, pp. 8, 59, 64.

severe mother-in-law--"anyta", who imposes on her all at once many tasks which are never accomplished to the satisfaction of her in-laws:

Oi siunte siunte mane anytele.  
Ziemuzes seko, vasaruzes sniego...  
O as eidama, graudziai verkdama...147

My mother-in-law has sent me  
For winter's green, for summer's snow...  
Crying bitterly I went...

Or the "anyta" exacts very much from her, or sometimes she treats her as maid servant:

Tare anyta savo martelei, kaip tarnelei:  
Aikie, martele, nedelios dienele per pacius pietus,  
Tris darbus dirbkie: zlugteli skalblie.  
Per marias plaukie, girioj kukokie...148

The mother-in-law told to her daughter-in-law,  
as to a maid servant:  
Sunday at noon, my daughter-in-law, go  
To do three tasks: to wash clothes,  
To swim through the sea, to cry like a cuckoo  
in a forest.

The "anyta's" frequent dislike for her daughter-in-law has a psychological basis: the mother's exclusive claim to first place in the heart of her son, for whom she has sacrificed so much, is usurped by a strange woman. Moreover, competition in housekeeping is very strong between the two housewives. After

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147 Ludwig J. Rhesa, Betrachtung ueber die litauischen Volkslieder. Edited by Pranas Kurschaitis, Berlin, 1843, p. 325.

148 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 148.

the marriage of the son, the mother has to give her daughter-in-law the keys of all the buildings of the farm and the oven shovel--the symbols of the rule in the house.<sup>149</sup> Indeed she is not easily satisfied and criticizes the new ruler severely. Every bride is afraid of her mother-in-law.<sup>150</sup>

However the fears of the "anyta" as expressed in wedding songs are of minor importance and are eclipsed by the bride's absorbing sorrow of leaving home. From fond years of daily contact, her heart is attached to every object in her mother's house, and she sighs a tender farewell to them all: her loom, spinning wheel, the windows and tables she washed, the yard she swept, the birds and animals she fed.<sup>151</sup> She touches the things she used so often in her home for the last time weeping and singing in rimes, (the bride expressed herself throughout the wedding not only in speech, but in songs and lamentations) and utters rimes full of pity for her mother:

Motinele, sirduzele,  
Pasigesi mane:  
Kai nueisi i seklycia,  
Kur as audziau astuonycius-  
Tu nerasi mane...

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149 Baly's Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," p. 271.

150 "...o kai as tekau anytelei, tai rustus zodeliai, nebijoju tamsia nakti laukeli pereitie..." Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 132.

151 This writer's Collection of Songs. Rec. from Agnieszka Daugirdiene, Village of Ramoniskes, Marijampole, 1932. "Oi, tu stale, ataleli,... oi kas teve mazgos, kai dukrele isvaziunos... oi tu lange...kieme..."

Tevuzeli, sengalzeli...  
 Kur grebiau kalne rugelius...  
 Seserele, lelijele,  
 Kai nueisi i darzeli,  
 Kur sejau zalias ruteles...  
 Broluzeli, doibileli...  
 Kur seriau bera zirgeli...  
 Tu nerasi mane.<sup>152</sup>

My mother, who are my very heart,  
 You shall miss me,  
 When you come to this room,  
 Where I have woven an eight-heddle cloth--  
 You shall not find me.

My father, my grey-headed dear...  
 Where I have raked the rye...  
 My sister, my lily...  
 Where I have sown the rue garden...  
 My brother, my clover...  
 Where I have fed the bay steed...  
 You shall not find me.

Never, never shall she come back to her mother; this "niekada"--  
 never--echoes painfully in her ears:

...Ne pas motyte namo pareisiu.  
 Ak, kas man sildys kojās, rankeles?  
 O kas kalbes man meiles zodelius?  
 Anyta sildys kojās rankeles...  
 Anytai besildant graudziai paverksiu.<sup>153</sup>

Not to my mother I shall come home.  
 Who will make warm my feet and my hands?  
 Who will speak to me the words of love?  
 The mother-in-law will make my feet and my hands  
 warm

While I will cry bitterly.

When the youth sings a farewell song: "Aciu tau, mocute, aciu

152 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 80.

153 Ludwig J. Rhesa, Betrachtung ueber die litauischen  
 Volkslieder, p. 180.

tau sirdele, Kad tu mane uzauginai tokia slauna dukrele"<sup>154</sup>--

"With all my heart I thank you, mother, for rearing and educating me to be such a brave girl", she kneels down and kisses the hands and knees of her mother and father. Her farewell to her parents is pervaded with deep affection and melancholy. In response her parents bless her with these words: "Tegul tavi blagaslovija tavo rutu darzelis ir visi takeliai; blagasloviju tavi ir tavo jaunas dieneles, kad uzlaikei za rutele."<sup>155</sup> -

"Your rue garden and all your flowers shall bless you; I bless you and your young days for you have kept your rue green." Coming to the yard, where all the village is gathered to bid her farewell, the bride says adieu to all of them, kisses the hands of the elderly, begs forgiveness for all her offenses of word or deed, asks the blessing of all and invites them to follow her at least to the gate of her home:

Palydekit, sesutals,  
Nor lig kiemo vartu,  
As sudiev jums pasakysiu  
Paskutini karta.  
Nebegrisiu, sesutalas,  
Is kur buvau imta,  
Grieciau aisiu unt kapeliu,  
Kur zemela svinta.<sup>156</sup>

Follow me, my sisters, please,  
At least to the gate,

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154 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," p. 256.

155 Ibid., p. 257.

156 Ibid., p. 255

I shall bid you farewell  
 For the last time.  
 I shall never come back,  
 Rather I shall go (I shall be brought) to the  
 graveyard,  
 To the Holy Earth.

The pathos is never more touching than at the moment when she tears herself away from the others as she walks to the wedding carriage, and rushes wildly to her rue garden, falls down, caresses the flowers and sobs to them:

Sudiev, darzeli mano brangusai,  
 As jau tavi nebelankysiu!  
 Sudiev, zalios ruteles ir visi zolyneliai  
 Nebaravas jusu mona baltas rankelas...157

Farewell, my dear rue garden  
 Never again I shall visit you;  
 Never more shall I tend you.  
 Farewell my green rue, and all my flowers!

As she is being taken from her rue garden by force, she begs her mother to go into the yard and wait until the church bells chime (the parents do not go to the church to accompany their daughter at the marriage ceremony) at which time they can take off her rue wreath and part her from her joyous youth. To her sister she says:

Iseik, sesiula, rutu darzelin,  
 Pasiziurek, kada nuvys darzely rutelas,  
 Tada nuvys rutu vainikas unt mona galvelas,  
 Tada atskirs mani sesutalas nuo savo pulkelio,  
 Nuo rutu darzelio.158

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157 Ibid., p. 220.

158 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," p. 220.

Go, my sister, into the rue garden,  
 Watch when the rue fades in the garden,  
 Then they shall fade the rue wreath on my head,  
 And I shall be separated from my dear friends,  
 From my dear rue garden for ever.

Passing through her native fields, meadows, trees and lakes, the bride bids them a sorrowful farewell and asks them to bless her for her new life.<sup>159</sup>

#### 6. DAUGHTER-IN-LAW

The bridegroom takes his bride home in a specially decorated carriage, covered with white cloth, garnished with flowers or pine branches and with two or more candles placed in the corners of the carriage. Such a carriage is called "palagas" in the Lowland.<sup>160</sup> The bride is always covered with a white sheet, and always carried in the dark of the night in order to shield her from enchantment. Her brothers ride on both sides of the carriage to protect her.<sup>161</sup> Over the road where the wedding--"vestuvininkai" has to pass, the youth of the villages build gates decorated with flowers and sing wedding songs to honor the couple.<sup>162</sup> The "svocia" gives them

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159 Ibid., p. 221.

160 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. VIII, 23-25.

161 Ibid., Cap. VIII, 26.

162 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," p. 259.

"karvojus"--the wedding cake, and the "pajauniaiai"--groomsman, sweet brandy. Then "vestuvininkai" drive gayly along with music and songs. Very frequently, fires are lighted along the road to honor the young couple and also to ward off evil spirits.<sup>163</sup>

When the bride arrives at the yard of her new home she goes immediately to the "kletis"<sup>164</sup> (a separate building where the young couple will have their sleeping room, and where usually the maidens sleep and where the rooms for the guests are) where she is met by the parents of her husband. They greet her with bread, salt, and a glass of wine or brandy and they sprinkle her with water and corn to symbolize their desire for her future prosperity.<sup>165</sup> The bride thanks them and kneeling down kisses the hands and knees of her mother-in-law and gives her a "stuomuo"; then she kisses her father-in-law and places a "stuomuo" on his shoulder. The "anyta" leads the couple to the "kletis" and brings them some refreshments.

The ceremony of the wedding night has changed somehow through centuries. But the bed is always covered with the

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163 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 46.

164 "Wann der wagen vor der haustuere kompt...so laufft der Kellewese ins haus und alle aus dem wagen." Hieronymus Maletius, Sudauerbuechlein, p. 200.

165 Petras Butenas, "Vestuviu Apeigos," pp. 180-181.

dowry bedding.<sup>166</sup> Pains are taken that the person who makes up the nuptial bed be a person of the highest moral character to insure the moral of the couple and their union.<sup>167</sup> The bed is subjected to careful scrutiny, for it may have had some evil spell cast upon it, or perhaps some wicked person had hidden in it a stone to cause barrenness. To ward off such dread things the bride puts some of the bread and salt she has brought from her home into the bed.<sup>168</sup> Many superstitions center around the marriage bed. Does one wish to live his entire life in loving wedded bliss? Then he must not turn the blanket or turn over the pillows.<sup>169</sup> If she shakes his pillow she will know his character. Whoever falls asleep first shall be the first to die.<sup>170</sup> The same sort of beliefs are connected with the candles held in the church ceremony: if both turn brightly the couple will have a bright and happy life,<sup>171</sup> if the flame flickers this bodes troubles and

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166 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 21.

167 Ibid.

168 Vincas Kreve, "Burtai ir Prietarai", in Tauta ir Zodis, 1926, Vol. 4, pp. 489-503.

169 Stasys Didziulis, "Senuju Kalbos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1926, Vol. 4, p. 513.

170 Jurgis Elisonas, "Burtai," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1925, Vol. 3, pp. 493, 450.

171 Petras Betenas, "Burtai," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1925, Vol. 3, pp. 376, 387.

misfortunes: if one burns with a wan and tremulous flame one shall die soon.<sup>172</sup> Preparations for bed are described by some chroniclers, by Praetorius<sup>173</sup> and Maletius.<sup>174</sup> The later custom describes the "svocia nuleideja" helping them to undress, blessing them and locking the door with a key.<sup>175</sup> The bridegroom undresses himself and puts the light out. The bride prays a long time and then undresses very slowly. The groom looks for her in the darkness and carries her to bed.<sup>176</sup>

#### 7. Member of a New Kindred.

The waking of the young couple is surrounded by several ceremonies. They awaken to the strains of music and at the same time to the noise of the guests imitating the sounds of the farmers' work. (Waking without noise is feared to invite barrenness).<sup>177</sup> The "anyta" tells her daughter-in-law: "Get up,

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172 Jurgis Elisonas, op. cit., pp. 349-351.

173 "The maid of honor prepares the bride for bed and the mother-in-law presents her to her husband. The "svocia" undresses them, even unbuttoning their blouses while they are in bed, explains them how perform the marriage act. She blesses them, wishes them happy wedded life, locks the door and takes the key." Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. VIII, 30.

174 "A woman of the highest moral character and reputation comes to the bed and instructs the bride about the conjugal act." Hieronymus Maletius, Sudauerbuechlein, p. 202.

175 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," p. 266.

176 Ibid.

177 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p.23.

you are sleeping too long, and the work is waiting for you."<sup>178</sup> The "anyta" or "mosa"--the sister-in-law--brings them a basin of water to wash. Washing together in the same basin is fancied to be the indication that they shall love each other, and shall never be needy.<sup>179</sup> The groom pays the musicians with brandy, and the bride, the "mosa" with some money for the water. When the daughter-in-law enters with her husband into her new house for the first time, the father delivers a speech--an official reception of the daughter-in-law,<sup>180</sup> blesses the new couple, and receives the young wife of his son as a new member of his family. Now his house is her home; from now on she is called "marti". The "marti" starts her duty as a housewife covering the tables with cloths: from her dowry for the big breakfast to which all the relatives and neighbours from the village are invited. The young daughter-in-law sits at the table sad and melancholic (usually eating nothing)<sup>181</sup> The guests accept the bride's stolid and silent behavior as a challenge and vie with one another for the great honor of making her laugh.<sup>182</sup> The bride is very sad because she sits for the first time with her

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178 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," p. 267.

179 Jonas Balys, Dr., op. cit., p. 23.

180 Ibid.

181 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. VIII, 38.

182 Balys Buracas, op. cit., p. 264.

new head dressing--"nuometas". The removing of the rue wreath --gaubtuves---and the imposition of the "nuometa" vary according to locality. For instance, in Dzukai, Lithuania, that ceremony takes place in the bride's home before leaving for the groom's home, as well as in short weddings (lasting only three or four days).

Maletius notes that it happens before going to bed:

"While the bride is dancing and unaware, her maid of honor comes and cuts her braids and the women put on her head a crown sown all around with white linen. This is called "abglobte" and is worn until the birth of the wife's first son."<sup>183</sup>

Praetorius indicates: "In the "kletis" the "anyta" cuts off some of the bride's hair which is mixed with beer and drunk by a "malidininkas" (malda, prayer--"maldininkas", one who knows how to pray the gods, a kind of pagan priest) after praying for their happiness. The "anyta" takes off the rue wreath and she places on her head a "nuometas" upon which her brother-in-law--dieveris--fixes a hat."<sup>184</sup>

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183 "Wann die braut soll zu bette gan, im tanze kompt von ihr freundin und schneidet das har abe und die weiber umbher setzen Ir einen Krantz auff mit einem breitten weissen tuch benehet, das nennen sie Abglobte, das traget sie, dieweil sie keinen Son hat..." Hieronymus Maletius, Sudauerbuechlein, p. 203.

184 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. VIII, 35.

Descriptions of nuptials mention this imposition of a hat, sometimes a fur hat<sup>185</sup> to symbolize his wish for her prosperity. Fur is used as a symbol of prosperity often: sometimes when welcomed into the groom's home, the parents wrap a fur about the couple; or they have to sit on furs;<sup>186</sup> or on the first morning after the marriage, the "anyta" enters the bride's room and warms her feet with a fur;<sup>187</sup> or they are made to sit on fur pillows.<sup>188</sup> The meaning is the same as that of showering the couple with all kinds of grain--wishes for prosperity. The investiture of the "nuometas" also means the welcoming of the bride into the kinship of her husband's family.

The cutting of the bride's hair was common in early times. In Birzai, Punpenai, Kalesnikai, on the morning following the marriage, the bride was made to sit on a kneading trough while her "svocia" cut her hair.<sup>189</sup> In other regions, the "anyta" plaits the bride's braids around her head in the style of married women (a maiden's braids hang straight down), and

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185 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, pp. 25-28.

186 Ibid., p. 17.

187 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. VIII, 37.

188 Jonas Balys, Dr., op. cit., pp. 17-18.

189 Antanas V

then places the "nuomentas" on her head. Even the substitution of the honorable "nuometas" is scant recompense for her rue wreath. She esteems the new headdress little and complains that she is forced to wear it.<sup>190</sup> Like a rose she had bloomed in the warm happiness of her mother's home, but transplanted to the hard soil and chill air of "bernelis" house she fades and withers at once:

As pas savo motinele  
 Zydejau kaip roze,  
 O pas tave, bernuzeli,  
 Kaip ruta nuvytau.<sup>191</sup>

The first night in "anyta"'s "kletele" she sobs and grieves without ceasing for her rue wreath:<sup>192</sup>

Lengvumai, grazumai vainikelio,  
 Sunkumai, biaurumai nuometelio.<sup>193</sup>

So light and pretty is the rue wreath,  
 So heavy and ugly is the "nuometas".

After the breakfast the former ruler of the house, the "anyta", surrenders her rule to her "marti"; she gives her the keys to the storehouse, the broom, the shovel and other symbols of feminine rule.<sup>194</sup> The assumption of her rule in housekeeping is

<sup>190</sup> Antanas Vireliunas, "Kupiskenu Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1926, Vol. 4, pp. 541-542.

<sup>191</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, pp. 34-38.

<sup>192</sup> Ibid., p. 56.

<sup>193</sup> Ibid., p. 60.

<sup>194</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, pp. 28-30.

accompanied by an offering to the gods.

This ceremony of reception and welcome into a new family circle in early pagan Lithuania was carried out after she has honored the home gods and the souls of her husband's ancestors, under whose protection she shall now live. Among these gods a prominent place was for Gabija, the goddess of sacred fire and of the hearth itself in the home.<sup>195</sup> In fact, before leaving her parents' home, the bride bids good-bye to the fire in the hearth, and, in some regions yet today, she gathers some live coals from the fireplace.<sup>196</sup> These coals are included with the traditional bread and salt which she carries with her to her reception into her husband's home.<sup>197</sup> With the heat of this fire the young "martele" makes her first meal and bakes her first bread in the house whose rule she thereby undertakes and inaugurates. From this time on, the young "marti" (daughter-in-law) has the honor and responsibility of taking faithful care of the everlasting

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195 Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre. Riga: Lettisch-Literarische Gesellschaft, 1936, p. 349.

196 "Ohow mey mile swenta panile' wer wirdt dich vorwaren'...kommt einer in einer hand einen brand fewer...und schenket der braut." Hieronymus Maletius, Sudauerbuechlein, p. 203.

197 Petras Butenas, "Vestuviu Apeigos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 216.

fire.<sup>198</sup> In old pagan Lithuania the extinguishing of the fire in her home fireplace and its enkindling in a new hearth<sup>199</sup> signifies her abandon of home gods and ancestral spirits and her acceptance of the gods of her new home and the ancestors of her new kin. As mentioned earlier in this thesis, on her journey to her husband's home, she offers gifts to the proper deities of each place at each fence and boundary along the way. Likewise, after undertaking the responsibility of housekeeping, the "marti" goes to honor the gods, the guardians of the animals, the grain, the buildings and of the whole farm.

Praetorius has this description: "...her"deverys" and "mosa" lead her through all the farm buildings, stables and storehouses. She leaves a small gift--a little money at the pig-sty and the oxen's stables, a belt at the gate of the sheep-fold, a "nuometas" at the cow stalls, a cake at the barn, and a towel for the gardens, the well and the gate."<sup>200</sup>

Maletius gives us the following description of the offering to the domestic deities:

They blindfold the bride, smear her mouth with honey and lead her to all the doors in the house; she must

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198 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. IX, 23.

199 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p.71.

200 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap.VIII, 40.

push the doors open with one foot. Someone follows her with a sack containing many kinds of grain: wheat, rye, barley, and oat. He stands before the bride and admonishes her: "Our gods will shower upon you their generosity, if you keep faith with our ancestors."<sup>201</sup>

At the close of this ceremony all the guests come forward with gifts for the bride. Some give farm animals: the brother-in-law may give a horse or an ox; the mother-in-law, a cow, etc. Even some of the other, more distant relatives may also give sizeable present.<sup>202</sup> Now the "marti" is a full-fledged member of the family. In gratitude for the gifts she has to dance with everybody,<sup>203</sup> but she dances lamely except with her husband. Many candles lit in her honor cast hundreds of little shadows which join in the dance.<sup>204</sup> To thank everyone for the dance the bride distributes gifts to all the dancers, the guests, the musicians, and even the wide eyed village youngsters.<sup>205</sup> The evening ends with a sumptuous repast which

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201 "...die braut wirdt mit zugebundenen augen...dan furen sie vor alle thuren..." Hieronymus Maletius, Sudauerbuechlein, p. 203.

202 Motiejus Valancius, vysk, "Palangos Juze," in Sofija Ciurlioniene, Lietuviu Literaturos Chrestomatija. Voronez: Kulturos ir Svetimo Sekcija, 1918, p. 53.

203 Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves" p. 270.

204 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 68.

205 Balys Buracas, op. cit., pp. 271-272.

is enlivened by jokes, songs, stories and dances. Joy and merriment reign supreme, and even the lingering melancholy of the bride dissolves in gaiety and laughter.

The following morning (Friday) the guests prepare to leave for home. A relative who lives in the same village jestingly in song tells them to pack up and be on their way: "Sveciai, segedziai, namo nevaziuoja"<sup>206</sup> or some other songs.<sup>207</sup> The paterfamiliae brings in an empty beer barrel and thumps it with an empty bottle as a sign that there is nothing more to drink.<sup>208</sup> They sing comical songs in which the barrels, bottles, and glasses are blamed for the shortage and blame each other. The songs are kept to the beat by the striking of the various containers. Even the vat of "gira" (a kind of sour drink made from rye bread or apples) trembles in the corner, fearful of what vengeance may be wreaked upon it if the guests stay any longer.<sup>209</sup> Everyone jokes and thrusts and parries the banter; and in mock seriousness the guests demand more food and drink. In southern Lithuania the head of the

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206 This writer's Collection of Songs. Rec. from her mother, Lekeciai, 1929.

207 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 119.

208 Jonas Balys, Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 33.

209 Ibid., p. 34.

house lights some straw under the table and the unruly guests are finally smoked out like hornets.<sup>210</sup> The "marti" cries to see her "pajaunia" leaving, and, to smoothe the transition for her, two of her brothers stay for a few days in her new home.<sup>211</sup> On the next Sunday the bride's parents have a big party to reciprocate: the couple, and all the relatives and guests are invited and entertained lavishly. Monday morning they return home. The Sunday after that the groom's parents wine and dine the relatives of the bride. These parties not only help the marriage partners to get acquainted with their new in-laws but also consolidate relations between the two families which henceforward are considered related to each other. All the relatives see to it that the new life begins in an atmosphere of mutual good feeling and do all that they can to see to it that the couple live together with the greatest possible love and harmony. Marriage is considered a matter of great moment to the partners and to the whole community, and therefore no pains are spared to secure its permanence and happiness.

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<sup>210</sup> Ibid.

<sup>211</sup>.Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," p. 278.

### 8. The Sacredness of Marriage.

As can be seen from the preceding chapters about the virgin's education and preparation for her wifely duties and about the seriousness of marriage which was touched with sadness for the bride, marriage was considered as one of life's weightiest steps and a state of great dignity and value. In the old days the outlook on marriage was very different from the attitude of today's youth. Today young people think primarily of great romance and connubial bliss; family and social obligations are put in the background. The old Lithuanians put duties to the family and to society first. The two young people going to be married usually did not even know each other before. The parents decided, on the basis of economic and moral status, that they would make a good couple. This was done in order to make sure that the future children would be well provided for spiritually and physically. Both partners were educated in a severe and demanding moral tradition and brought the charm of innocence to the bridal couch. Their love was a quiet and tranquil sort, arising not from torrid passion or adolescent infatuation but from the soft and persistent persuasion of growing together, living together, working, dreaming, planning, worrying, hoping, and praying together.

Even if the married life brought more than its wonted share of troubles and hardships it always--both in ancient pagan Lithuania and today--an indissoluble state.<sup>212</sup> In very ancient times, (i.e. in the times of the Lithuanian ancestors--"Lietuviu proteviai") the marriage was brought about by the abduction of the bride<sup>213</sup> or by her purchase,<sup>214</sup> but in the third period of matriarchy, divorce and separation were never permitted. This held true whether the union had taken place through abduction or barter--the bond was sacred and infrangible.

The old documents and chronicles have few references to the bartering of the bride;<sup>215</sup> the Prussians, however, bought their brides for money.<sup>216</sup>

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212 "...darosi suprantama, kodel Lietuveje buvo sventas or tvirtas seimos rysys." Feliksas Kapocius, kan, "Lietuve Motina," in *Darbininkas*, May 11, 1951.

213 "Savo moterystes sydarydavo, kartais is namu jega isvesdami mergaites, kartais jas pagrobdami." Zenonas Ivinskis, Dr., "Vatikano Archyvas-Aruodas Lietuviu Kulturos Istarijai," in *Aidai*, Kennenbunk Port, Maine, June-July, No. 4-5 (16-17), 1950.

214 "Das sie die Braut...mit Gewalt genommen..." Salomon Henning, Wahrhaftige und bestendige Berichten, in Scriptores Rerum Livonicarum, Vol. 2, p. 295.

215 "...Promiserunt etiam, quod nullus eorum de cetero filiam suam vendet alicui matrimonio copulandam et quod nullus uxorem filio suo emet vel sibi." In Friedensvertrag des Deutschen Ordens mit den Preussen vom 1249, February 7, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, pp. 41-44.

216 "Secundum antiquam consuetudinem hoc habent Prutheni adhuc in usu, quod uxores suas emunt pro certa summa pecuniae." Petrus Dusburg, de, Chronicon Terrae Prussiae, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, op. cit., p. 89.

The fact that old traditions have been well preserved in Lithuania is exemplified in the bartering of the bride. This custom--"marti nupirkta"--survives in the nuptials of today. When the bridegroom gives the mother a sum of money before going to church in exchange for her daughter, she cries and implores her mother not to barter her away. However, Dr. Balys, the outstanding leader in the research of Lithuanian folklore and customs, expresses some doubt about the survival of this custom:

I think it would be false to see in this custom (the auction of the bride) a remainder of the bartered wedding. However, there are some features of barter during the wedding ceremony.<sup>217</sup>

Differing from this opinion, other authorities maintain that the ceremony described above is an authentic survival of bartered weddings. The validity and accuracy of such a judgment must be qualified by several considerations. The circumstances inspiring the original significance of these customs have changed through centuries of historical development. Consequently, the definite original meaning has been modified and diluted. Therefore, inasmuch as the people have preserved the external manifestations of this custom as honored by

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<sup>217</sup> "Ich glaube, es waere verfehlt, in diesem Brauch (Versteigerung der Braut) die Reste einer Kaufehe zu sehen, obwohl solche Spuren manchmal tatsaechlich vorkommen, zum Beispiel waehrend der Vermaehlung." Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 20.

ancestors thousands of years ago, one is justified in establishing these survivals of bartered marriages.

Johannes Maletius also writes about the abduction of the bride,<sup>218</sup> and Einhorn describes it very clearly in great detail.<sup>219</sup> If the bride has been stolen all the wedding ceremonies are fulfilled in the groom's house, and her parents are obliged to give their consent--"Ihren Consens und Willen", but usually they do not give any dowry for their daughter.<sup>220</sup> Some old wedding songs describe the abduction of a bride: the mother discovers in the morning that her daughter is gone, she tells her sons to ride in pursuit, but they arrive too late - already her rue wreath has been displaced by the "nuometas"; she is a married woman:

Kelkit, kelkit, sunuzeliai,  
Balnokit zirgelius,  
Jus jokite, keliaukite,  
Dukreles jieskotie...  
Po liepele, po zliaja  
Martele redyta.<sup>221</sup>

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218 Johannes Maletius, Epistola de sacrificiis et idolatria de veterum Borussorum, in Acta Borussica, ecclesiastica, civilia, literaria, Koenigsberg, 1731, Vol. 2, p. 406.

219 "Dieser boese Gebrauch aber ist bey jhnen allezeit ueblich gewesen, dass eine Manns-Person nicht uemb ein Weib werben duerfe..., sondern es hat ein jeglicher, der ein Eheweib haben wollte, dasselbe entweder mit Gewalt genommen oder mit sonderlicher List der Eltern entfuehret." Paul Einhorn, Wiederlegung der Abgoetterey, Riga, 1636, Cap.XI, 593.

220 Aleksander Brueckner, Dzieje Kultury Polskiej, p.109.

221 Jonas Balys, Dr., "The Folklore from the Territory of Vilnius," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1937, Vol. 3, p. 135.

There are many such songs about the abducted daughter. She complains of her mother's absence with the voice of a cuckoo, lamenting in the forest or in the cherry orchard by her mother's window. But she never goes back to her mother,<sup>222</sup> because she no longer has her rue wreath - she is a wife, and a Lithuanian wife never leaves her husband. She remains loyal to him even if he is bad to her, even if he is a drunkard and squanders her dowry to slake his thirst while she and her child must endure crushing poverty:

Jis pragere namelius  
 Ir nuo lauko rugelius,  
 Jis pragers ir mano jaunos  
 Nuo rankeliu, ziedelius.<sup>223</sup>

For drink he has squandered away  
 Our home, and the rye still on the field.  
 For drink he will squander the gold ring,  
 The wedding ring from my young finger.

How high was the conception of marriage in pagan Lithuania can be seen from the testimony of Einhorn, who was the first to write a thesis about pagan Lithuanian religion and customs: "Therefore they gave a great value and worth to marriage viz., that a man and a woman should live together in an indissoluble union - indissolubili conjunctione. Therefore they regarded

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<sup>222</sup> Antanas Vireliunas, "Kupiskenu Dainos," in Tauta ir Zodis, 1925, Vol. 3, p. 425.

<sup>223</sup> Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 82.

their children, the fruit of their wedlock as the sole inheritors of their possessions. They had no polygamy, no concubinage, but they had a right marriage".<sup>224</sup>

The neighbouring nations, however, seem to have admitted polygamy. About polygamy in Slave nations we find the following statement: "Polygamy was practiced by the rich, and especially by dukes, where it may have been indispensable... The Duke of Pomorze (A.D. 1126) had several wives and twenty-four concubines."<sup>225</sup> Only one document mentions a plurality of wives among the Prussians, but it is impossible to verify this document.<sup>226</sup>

After the Teutonic Knights cruelly defeated the Prussians, they made a peace treaty with them; the Teutonic Knights

224 "...so haben sie doch den Ehestand und denselben wohl in act genommen, nemlich, dass ein Man und ein Weib indissolubili conjunctione, das ist in einer unaufloesslichen Vereinigung mit einander lebten, daher sie denn auch die Kinder, so sie mit einander in der Ehe gezeuget, allein fuer echte Erben Ihrer Gueter gehalten. Die Polygamia... ist bey jhnen nicht gewesen, auch nicht der Concubinatus: sondern sie haben eine rechte Ehe gehabt." Paul Einhorn, Historia Lettica, die Beschreibung der Lettischen Nation, in Scriptorum rerum Livonicarum, Leipzig, 1848, Vol. 2, p. 569.

225 "...wielozenstwo poplacalo u bogaczy, szczegulnie u ksiazat, gdzie memoze bylo obowiazkowe...Ksiazce pomorski mial w r.1126 24 "popasnic" obok ililu zon a byl juz chrzescijaninem." Aleksander Brueckner, Dzieje Kultury Polskiej, Vol. I, pp. 107-108

226 "Item promiserunt, quod duos uxores, similiter vel plures de cetero non habebunt: sed una sola contenti cum ipsa contrahet unusquisque sub testimonio competenti et matrimonium illud in ecclesia statutis temporibus cum sollemnitate debita publicabit." Der Friedensvertrag des Deutschen Ordens mit den Preussens, Februar 7, 1249, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, pp. 41-44.

did not know the Prussian language and had no opportunity to learn the Prussian customs well. Moreover, they wished to give the Christian world a picture of the Prussians as base savages, in order to justify their own ruthless conquests. This is the only document which mentions anything about two or more wives. It was a peace agreement with the Prussians after their first great and general insurrection (1242-1249). The Teutonic Knights came to Kulm invited by Konrad, the duke of Mozurians, in 1230 to help him against the Prussians and Lithuanians--Aistians. In 1231 he started his conquest of the Aistian tribes, The Aistians defended their independence with the greatest heroism, but they did not have the numbers to fight against the well-armed Teutonic Knights, who were assisted by the whole of Christian Europe. The Teutonic Knights fought in the most cruel way. In 1337 an Austrian Knight wrote: "There was a wedding party going on in a small lowland village when the crusaders came upon them by surprise. They staged a bloody 'dance'; sixty pagans were killed and the village vanished in red smoke. Afterwards they rode farther on, hunted, raided and killed the pagans like foxes and hares!"<sup>227</sup> In any case we must point out very strongly that the document in question

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<sup>227</sup> "Ein tanz mit haiden wart getreten, daz ir wol sechzig bliben tot...", in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum, Vol. 2, pp. 165-166.

does not affirm that they had two or more wives, but only relates that they promise not to have two or more wives. Mannhardt would agree with this position, since he does not admit that the Prussians had more than one wife.<sup>228</sup> In the same breath, as it were, in which the old chroniclers speak of the "evil superstitions" they extoll the high moral life of the family and the women's respect for chastity.

The history, archeology and culture of Lithuania afford ample evidence of strict monogamy:<sup>229</sup> "Taciau griezta lietuviskos seimos monogamija yra matriarchatinis brupzas... sios teorijos laikosi Dr. A. Maceina, Dr. J. Balys, Dr. M. Gimbutiene, A. Maziulis...!"<sup>230</sup>

In songs and tales there is no reference to divorce, unfaithfulness, or polygamy. Some songs and tales recount how the stepmother witch—"pamote-ragana"--out of jealousy accuses unjustly the wife of unfaithfulness while her husband is far away at war. However, when confronted by this accusation, he rejects it as a vicious lie, for he believes unshakably in his wife's fidelity.

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<sup>228</sup> Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, p. 44.

<sup>229</sup> Zenonas Ivinskis, Dr., "Lietuviu Kulturos Tarpsniai," in Aidai, June, 1949, No. 23, p. 59.

<sup>230</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, pp. 16-21.

In concluding that marriage was regarded in early pagan Lithuania as sacred and inviolable, we have the testimony of Very Reverend Byla, Chancellor of the great lowland Bishopric of Kurija-Scretary: "In more than twenty-five years of my service in the bishopric, we have had only two cases of separation." The situation remained the same after the "civiline metrikacija"--civic marriage--was established in 1934.<sup>231</sup>

In old Lithuania the basis of marriage was not love but an agreement between two families. Yet one cannot fail to admire those dutiful people who, without even knowing each other beforehand, and without the spur of romantic love, merged their destinies in wedlock according to the will of their parents. They put their confidence in each other and in their parents' good judgment, and by mutual honor and trust and unswerving devotion to virtue and duty they created a family life as sound, strong, and moral as any we know of, and far stronger than some of the tenuous arrangements of selfish convenience and infatuation which justify their shallowness and insecurity by the sacred name of love.

For Lithuanians the family is the great lodestar of life, the unassailable foundation stone upon which all society

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<sup>231</sup> Feliksas Kapocius, kan., "Lietuve Motina," in Darbininkas, May 11, 1951.

is firmly anchored. Neither domestic troubles and misfortunes nor the national cataclysms which have befallen the Lithuanian people, wars, devastation, occupations, exiles, and imprisonment<sup>232</sup> could extirpate the Lithuanian nation, because the family, the strong and sure substance of society remained to its deepest foundations unshaken and indestructible.

Today's Lithuanians no longer tend in wakeful vigil the "amzina ugnis gabija"--undying hearth fire, but in the heart of Lithuania's mothers there burns as brightly as ever the unquenchable fire of a mother's everlasting love kindled by an age-old tradition and fed on the sure fuel of unflinching sacrifice and innumerable tenderesses. And the heat and brilliance of that fire has warmed and lighted for her children and her husband a temple of devotion and a mighty fortress which has stood high, free, and invincible against the fury of evils which have stormed in vain about its walls!

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<sup>232</sup> During the 18th, 19th, and 20th centuries those who championed Lithuanian culture and national independence were banished to Siberia by the Russians. Constantine Jurgela, History of the Lithuanian Nation, pp. 329-382, 407-504.

## CHAPTER III

### THE MOTHER

Maidenhood and motherhood are the two important periods in the life of the Lithuanian woman. The transitional period when she is a wife and not yet a mother is regarded as a fleeting and inconsequential state, and sad indeed is the wife whose wedlock is barren of children. She regards herself as a tree whose deceptive blossoms have not fulfilled their promise in fruit, as a useless nature--"nevaisinga kaip isdziuves medis".<sup>1</sup> But even in such a case her motherly sentiments are not denied: she becomes a mother to all her family and servants. In Lithuanian, family--"seima, seimyna"--includes all those living in the home, not just the parents and children: hired men--"bernai", servant girls--"mergos", and shepherds--"piemuo" are all part of the family if they live under the same roof. This conception of the family is so old as to be lost in the midsts of remote antiquity. No doubt it stems from prehistoric times when family units or rudimentary clans lives together under the aegis, probably, of the oldest male member.<sup>2</sup>

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1 This writer's Collection of Proverbs. Rec. from Agnieszka Makauskienė, Village of Netonys, Kaunas, 1935.

2 "...wo die Soehne mit ihren Sattinen bei den Eltern zusammen wohnen..." Caspar Hennenberger, Kurtze und wahrhaftige Beschreibung des Landes zu Preussen, in Erscheinung der preussischen groesseren Landkarte. Edited by Georg Osterberger, Koenigsberg, 1576, p. 161.

Neither history nor koloklore provides us with examples of Lithuanian girls whose only concern in marriage is flirtation, coquettishness and romance. The ideal of the Lithuanian wife is one who is devoted entirely to her husband and her children, who desires more to love than to be loved. Some tales tell of a beautiful girl who desires to marry a prince. She wins him, not by erotic enticements but by her promise to bear for him strong and handsome sons.<sup>3</sup> And, even though she is poor, she is made his princess. The character of the Lithuanian woman is ingenuous and uncomplicated; unresisting towards nature she finds fulfillment in her destiny; she is born to be a mother.

#### 1. The Soul of the Family.

It would be rash to speak of the Lithuanian mother as "soul of the family" in such a way as to imply that this conception was unique among peoples. On the contrary, all peoples in all places and times have had roughly the same general conception. But from nation to nation there are variations and nuances in the conception. In Germanic folklore, for example, the mother is regarded as the mother of soldier sons, and,

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<sup>3</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos. She-  
nandoah, Pa.: Dirva, 1902, Vol. 2, p. 179.

together with her husband, she is the strict ruler of the family. In the Slavic nations the woman's status was very low, and so relatively little honor was given to the mother. She had to take care of her children and obey her husband as her children obey him. Brueckner describes the paucity of women's rights in Poland and other Slavic nations in ancient times: "Until she had given birth to a man-child a woman was only a "niewiasta", which means unknown, one whose duty was to be silent and whose name was not mentioned."<sup>4</sup>

In old Lithuania the mother was highly honored, and was even regarded as a holy being:<sup>5</sup> "But a Lithuanian mother was not only respected, but even revered as a holy being." To harm or insult one's mother was held to be the most nefandus crime, and in ancient times it was punished by death.<sup>6</sup>

This exalted position was not won by the Lithuanian mother by severity and authority exacting honor and reverence but by the artless blandishment of her tender love, her winsome modesty, and her stanch and smile-born self-sacrifice. Among the common epithets for mother we find "mociute sengal-  
vele"<sup>7</sup>--gray haired mother, "mociute sirdele"<sup>8</sup>--kind-hearted

4 "Poki nieporodzila syna, nie byla czlowiekiem Byla tylko niewiasta, t.j. nieznaną, co mylczec winna, ktorej nazwiska nawet nie wymieniano..." Aleksander Brueckner, Dzieje Kultury Polskiej, p. 115.

5 "Juk lietuviui motina yra ne tik gerbtinas, bet tiesiog sventas dalykas." Zenonas Ivinskis, "Lietuviu Kulturos Tarpsniai," in Aidai, Schwebmsch Gmuend, June 1949, No. 25.

6 Ibid.

7 Antanas Vireliunas, "Kupiskenu Dainos," in Epe Lituana, 1925, Vol. 3, pp. 420, 448, 479.

8 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, pp. 60, 80, 82, 85.

mother, "mociute rupintojele"<sup>9</sup>--mother who-takes-care-of-everybody, "motinele rutuzele"<sup>10</sup>--green-rue mother. This last title has a double meaning: on the one hand the mother's love and tenderness is as perennial as the greenness of the rue, and on the other she retains the fragrant purity of her youth notwithstanding her marriage and child-bearing: "po baltu nuometu baltos lelijos veidas"<sup>11</sup> - beneath the white "nuometas" (a linen head-dress for married women) the face of a white lily. The face of a mother is as pure and tranquil as the lily flower. It bears neither the flabby marks of passion nor the harsh lines of pride and smugness: "po baltu nuometu ji amziais vaidilute"<sup>12</sup> - beneath the "nuometas" she endures a vestal through the ages.

The Lithuanian mother is inseparable from her home. She does not travel, even to visit her parents and her relatives. Even when she is beset by troubles and homesickness and would love to confide her griefs to her mother, she loyally remains at home. Instead she confides her problems to song

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<sup>9</sup> Balys Sruoga, Dr., "Lietuviu Dainu Poetines Priemones," in Epe Litwana, 1925, Vol. 3, p. 8.

<sup>10</sup> Vincas Kreve, Dainavos Salies Senu Zmoniu Padavimai. Schweinfurt: Teviske Press, 5th Edition, 1948, p. 55.

<sup>11</sup> Bernardas Brazdionis, "Lietuvos Motina," in Darbininkas, May 11, 1951.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid.

like the plaintive cuckoo: "Isgirdau girioj gegule, mislijau, dumojau, motele saukia".<sup>13</sup> - "I heard in the forest the melancholy warble of the cuckoo, and there, I thought, my mother sings." For the mother watches over her children when they are small and when they are grown up. She is the consoler, the adviser-- "ramintojele".<sup>14</sup> In time of war when the father and sons must leave for battle it is the mother who bids the fond farewell and who stays on to protect the girls and keep the hearth fires burning to greet their return. This tradition has remained unshaken by the great national misfortunes of our own time. Though the young men, and even the girls, went off to the forests to wage guerrilla war on the enemy, the mothers of Lithuania remained in their homes as bright symbols of faith and duty, those mighty pillars of an ageless family tradition:

I am old, and I am a mother. My place is in the home. If I flee who will pray in the empty churches or by the neglected graves of our forefathers. If I am not here, my children, who will be there to receive you when you come home again? Perhaps you will be wounded and in agony; perhaps you will come in secret; perhaps you will be coming home to die. Who, then, will be there to close your eyes and throw her arms about you here in your

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<sup>13</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, Shenandoah, Pa.: Dirva, 1902, p. 72.

<sup>14</sup> Juozas Lelesius, "Raudos," in Epe Lituana, 1923, Vol. I, p. 287.

ancestral home? Oh no! Here is my post! Here will I guard the native nest until my last breath.<sup>15</sup>

It was with such words ringing in their ears that thousands of Lithuanian youths left their homes when the enemy was already gutting the cities and towns with flame. These are the very words which this writer heard from her mother when she saw her for the last time. This is the spirit which makes the mother an eternal vestal, an everlasting beacon.

The Lithuanian mother is serene, gentle, and indulgent. We can find nothing in the folklore about the mother punishing her children. This was the father's duty. The mother educated her children with good example, understanding and forbearance. In her presence arguments were avoided. She tempered the severity of even the strictest father, always interceding on the side of forgiveness and leniency; and, because of her exalted position her intercession seldom went unheeded. In the question of the children's marriage the mother, not the father, had the most influence.<sup>16</sup> In their troubles and

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15 In the recent Lithuanian literature, since the end of World War II, we find many examples of Lithuanian mothers, who remained in the occupied country to help, to console, to guard the graves of her martyred children. For instance: A. Daumantas, Partizanai uz Gelezines Uzdangos. - The Guerillas behind the Iron Curtain, True Facts from Present Life in Lithuania. Chicago: Draugas Press, 1951, p. 280; Nele Mazalaite, Legendos. Tuebingen: Patria, 1948, p. 23; Marija Ramuniene, "Laiskas Motinai," in Naujoji Austra. Chicago, May, 1948; and many others.

16 "...zuerst wird die Mutter gefragt, ob sie die Tochter geben wolle." Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche. Hamburg, Contribution of Baltic University, No. 9, p. 11.

disappointments son as well as daughter confided in their mother and followed her advice.<sup>17</sup> A Lithuanian proverb sums it up nicely: "Tevas laiko tik viena namu kercia, motina visas tris."<sup>18</sup> - "The father holds one corner of the home, but the mother holds the other three." Another one carries the same message: "If a child's father dies he is only half an orphan, but if his mother dies then he is truly an orphan."<sup>19</sup>

In all the lore of story and song the children have a special love for their mother if she is a widow, and they are happy to stay by her side. Traditionally such fatherless children are pictured as poor, and so they must go away from home very early and work hard. Their greatest happiness comes when they get a little time off to visit their poor mother and feel her hand caressing their head: "It is so sweet, Mother, to put my head on your knee."<sup>20</sup> -- "What is the softest thing in all the world? - The hand of a mother."<sup>21</sup> Tired and gnarled

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17 Zenonas Ivinskis, Dr., "Lietuviu Kulturos Tarpsniai," in Aidai, Schwebisch Gmuend, June, 1949, No. 25, p. 59.

18 This writer's Collection of Proverbs. Rec. from Agota Gumauskiene, Lekeciai, 1939.

19 "Be tevo vaikai tik pusiau siratos, be motinos-visiskos siratos," in this writer's Collection of Proverbs. Rec. from Agota Gumauskiene, Lekeciai, 1935.

20 "Ant tavo keliu, motinele, padeti galva taip saldu," in P. Preikstas, "Motinai," Draugas, May 12, 1949.

21 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 59.

from work, care-worn and never idle, browned by the sun, still a mother's hand surpasses all in tenderness. We have already spoken of the unflagging diligence of the Lithuanian woman. And so from all this we can briefly sketch the typical character of the Lithuanian mother:

She has a large family (on the average from eight to ten children) to which she dedicates herself completely. She is always overworked and tired, but this does not interfere with her unfailing sweetness and sympathy. She is always ready for new problems and listens to trifling sorrows with attention and understanding as well as to great heartbreaks. Her smile radiates peace and her composure and steadiness amidst so much work and so many problems inspire the confidence of all. By her side one feels happy and safe.

## 2. Self-denial and Sacrifice for her Children.

### Preparation for the Duties of Motherhood.

The sublime goal of motherhood animates the whole course and preoccupations of the Lithuanian woman's life. With this orientation, the mother guides her daughter in preparing for the noble vocation of rearing and educating children. This motivation is manifested as she plays as a child with her dolls, and later on as she helps in the

care of her younger brothers and sisters. The mother prays for her daughter: "Kad Dievas vaisiu uzlaikytu" - "that God might preserve her fruitfulness."<sup>22</sup> With this same intention, the mother after her daughter's first menstruation leads her to the church where both pray to the Blessed Virgin of the Immaculate Conception.<sup>23</sup> The mother nurses the baby girls a few weeks longer than the baby boys, in order to promote the great strength and health required in childbirth.

Throughout the wedding, from matchmaking to "Atameiles" (the last wedding celebration at the home of the bride's parents) there are a predominating theme of and wish for the fertility of the marriage. After the suitor leaves, the mother carefully gathers up all the bread crumbs and feeds them to a pregnant cow in order that her daughter might be favored with pregnancy immediately after the marriage.<sup>24</sup> In this same theme the bride puts on her blouse or dress wrong side out.<sup>25</sup> Likewise, while the bride and groom circle the table three times in her home,

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<sup>22</sup> Albinas Kriauza, "Vaikai ir Ju Auginimas Kupiskio Apylinkeje," in Gimtasai Krastas. Siauliai: Krastotyros Draugija, 1941, Vol. 8, p. 205.

<sup>23</sup> Ibid.

<sup>24</sup> Ibid.

<sup>25</sup> Balys Buracas, "Kupiskenu Vestuves," in Tautosakos Darbai. Kaunas: Lietuviu Tautosakos Archyvas, University of Kaunas Press, 1935, Vol. I, p. 221.

the number of times the bride's maids touch the table cloth will indicate the number of children to bless their union. In a similar way, the number of pieces in which a glass or dish breaks will foretell the number of future children.<sup>26</sup> Hundreds of such superstitions are found in Lithuanian folklore.

Even the bridegroom is concerned about the number of his future children. In the company of his matchmaker on his first visit to his prospective bride, the suitor swallows a raw egg that he might marry a fruitful woman.<sup>27</sup> During the wedding ceremony, the groom carries a head of grain in his pocket. On returning home, he examines the number of grains shaken off, and this indicates the number of children he shall beget.<sup>28</sup> The purpose of these numerous superstitions is to invoke the blessing of a large family and the favor of pregnancy for the bride on her first day of married life.

The wife's barrenness is considered as a great dishonor and shame and a punishment of God. Such an unfortunate woman, according to the superstition, will be forced to bear the children of a devil in eternity. This punishment is believed to be incurred by a woman or her husband for sinning against

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26 Jonas Balys, Dr., Litauische Hochzeitsbraeuche, p. 39.

27 Albinas Kriauza, op. cit., p. 206.

28 Ibid.

chastity, or for injuring old people, or for mocking a pregnant woman or their own parents.<sup>29</sup> In early pagan Lithuania the blight of infertility was fancied to be the result of incantations--the working of evil spirits.<sup>30</sup> If the daughter-in-law gives birth to no child within two years, she is considered quite miserable and is mocked, scolded and slighted in every way.

In order to encourage pregnancy, such women have recourse to superstitions, natural and mysterious medicines and artifices. They serve to their husbands extra strong meals with raw eggs, meat with much pepper and onions and with wine to drink.<sup>31</sup> The women themselves drink special kinds of tea and prepare baths and douches from many kinds of herbs. Among their deliberate efforts and considerations was included the calculation of the day, month and season of the year. Although the women of pagan Lithuania offered a white hen to the goddess of fertility, Zemyna,<sup>32</sup> the women of Catholic Lithuania pray very much, request Masses for this intention, make general confessions of their lives and make many promises and offerings.

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29 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Raganavimai," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, pp. 279-283.

30 Juozas Miskinis, "Trys Simtai Dzuku Burtu ir Prietarų" in Epe Lituana, 1923, Vol. I, p. 469.

31 Albinas Kriauza, op. cit., p. 206.

32 Matthaeus Praetorius, "Festa Veterum Prussorum," in Deliciae Prussiae, Buch V, Cap. IX, 11.

In order to beget a boy, a man's hat is placed under a cushion or is worn by the husband during marital relations. If a bridle is placed under the pillow, their son shall become a horseman or a knight; an axe under the pillow, he shall become a craftsman.<sup>33</sup> The survival of many of these superstitions to favor the birth of a child and a child of desired sex manifests the keen attention and prominence reserved for motherhood. It is quite natural, therefore, that the Lithuanian bride dreaming of and prepared for her role of motherhood from early childhood should study and use these means to hasten the realization of her dream as early as possible in marriage.

#### The Expectant Mother.

Normally, the transition of a Lithuanian girl from maidenhood to motherhood is effected with little delay. The orientation of her whole life is towards becoming a mother, and in this light the mere fact of becoming the mate of her husband is of secondary importance. Both families of the couple are looking forward with eagerness to the birth of their first child. Early pregnancy is considered a great honor. A pregnant woman and the mother of many children were "Pagirta Dievo ir

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<sup>33</sup> Albinas Kriauza, "Vaikai ir Ju Auginimas Kupiskio Alylinkeje," pp. 207-208.

zmoniu" - "honored by God and people."<sup>34</sup> The great respect for the mother<sup>35</sup> and the pregnant woman reveal traces of matriarchy.

However, the condition of women in Slavonic nations is different:

A pregnant does not dare to go out in the evening; she and the child in her womb were considered unclean. Therefore she was segregated (frequently confined to a separate house) from the rest. After childbirth, she and her child were purified by offerings to the gods.<sup>36</sup>

As soon as the young daughter-in-law becomes pregnant, her life belongs no more to her, but to her future child. The old Lithuanians believed that the mother educates her child in her womb from the very beginning. This belief is common in the nation yet today. Immediately after the interruption of menstruation, the woman recognizes her condition and changes the pattern and routine of her life accordingly.<sup>37</sup> Her prime

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34 Albinas Kriauza, "Vaikai ir Ju Auginimas Kupiskio Apylinkeje", p. 203.

35 "Ypatingoj pagarboj laikoma nescia moteris. Ne tik seimos nariai bet ir kiekvienas turi ja saugoti, globoti, apsaugoti nuo susierzinimu, nemalosumu. Pabarti ja ar uzgauti-didelis nusidejimas." - "A pregnant woman was especially honored. Not only the members of the family, but everybody must cater to her, help her and shield her from hardships and irritations. To scold or harm her are considered quite blameworthy." Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaičiu Krikstynos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 86.

36 Aleksander Brueckner, Dzieje Kultury Polskiej, Vol. I, pp. 116-117. "...poloznica nie smiala calemi dniami, szczegulnie pod wieczor wychodzic; ona i plod byly nieczyste, a wiec odosobniono ja (nieraz w osobnej chacie) a po pologu oczyszczano ja i dziecko..."

37 Albina Kriauza, op. cit., p. 204.

consideration is for the child in her womb. Still in this dormant state, the child is influenced by her words, deeds, thoughts and every manifestation of her character and soul. The welfare of the unborn child must be assured at any cost and jeopardized in no way. The older women in the family, the mother-in-law, the grandmother, the aunts, the old women from the village, and if she lives with her husband in her parents' house, her mother and relatives take great care of her. She is tutored, instructed and advised in all that is needful in her new responsibility. She is extremely cautious not to offend God, the people and her child.<sup>38</sup> During this important period of waiting, the mother in pagan Lithuania invoked the grace and favor of her ancestors and the goddess Zemyna, the mother of the gods and the goddess of mothers.

The expectant mother must strive to attain the highest level of morality to secure for her child a beautiful soul, a good character, and a sound healthy body. This moral striving is reflected in numerous superstitions, traditions and habits prescribed for expectant mothers. Such prescriptions can be classified according to their hygienic and moral purpose.

The health of the mother must be promoted and preserved

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<sup>38</sup> Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 87.

in order to give birth to a healthy child. The pregnant woman has to rest and sleep very much so that her child will be peaceful and sleep well.<sup>39</sup> She must avoid colds and getting her feet wet, lest her child be afflicted with furuncles.<sup>40</sup> She must not become frightened especially by fire, lest her baby be afflicted with a nervous disease--"priemetis"--caused by fright or lest he be marked with red spots on the part of the body touched by his mother in the moment of fright.<sup>41</sup> She must not worry or cry, lest her child be fretful and worrisome.<sup>42</sup> She must be careful not to fall, especially in water, lest he be afraid of water and bathing.<sup>43</sup> She must not carry or hold in her lap heavy or dirty things, lest her child have furuncles on his head.<sup>44</sup> She must avoid sitting on the threshold, lest her baby die in her womb.<sup>45</sup> Likewise, she must avoid chopping wood especially on feast days, lest her child

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39 Albinas Kriauza, "Vaikai ir Ju Auginimas Kupiskio Apylinkeje," p. 211.

40 Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," p. 88.

41 Ibid., p. 87.

42 Augustinas Janulaitis, "Burtai," in Epe Lituana, 1923, Vol. I, pp. 337-338.

43 Albinas Kriauza, op. cit., p. 87.

44 Albinas Kriauza, "Vaikai ir Ju Auginimas Kupiskio Apylinkeje," p. 212.

45 Ibid.

have a hairlip or a cleft palate. Also forbidden for expectant mothers are the following: alcoholic beverages,<sup>46</sup> rich foods hard to digest, dancing, and conjugal relations after the second month of pregnancy.<sup>47</sup> These and many other superstitions show that the people are solicitous for the hygiene of maternity and the prevention of bodily injury.

Expectant mothers in pagan Lithuania feared very much bad ghosts, the spells of evil eyes--"blogu akiu", of sorcerers--"raganu"--and of prowling specters--"padyvu".<sup>48</sup> For protection against these they wore talismans prepared from plants gathered on the eve of the feast known later as the feast of St. John the Baptist -- a sprig of mountain ash--"devyndrekis", or a garment worn wrong side out.<sup>49</sup> The pregnant woman was very careful not to stare at people with physical or mental defects, lest they befall her own child.<sup>50</sup>

The second class of superstitions has a moral aspect. Throughout the period of pregnancy, the woman makes a special effort to be virtuous, so that her child may inherit the elements of a good character. She tries to be especially modest,

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46 Ibid., p. 214.

47 Ibid.

48 Ibid., p. 211.

49 Albinas Kriauza, op. cit., p. 211.

50 Ibid.

pious, observant of feasts, and obedient to religious commandments.<sup>51</sup> She must not utter bad words, or speak evil of her neighbor or of anyone else, or scold anyone, especially elderly relatives for fear that her child be mute.<sup>52</sup> If she sells and gives away anything behind her husband's back, her child will not be open-hearted and will be full of guile and deceit in performing evil deeds in secrecy away from his parents' gaze.<sup>53</sup> If she steals, her child will become a thief.<sup>54</sup> Therefore, in order to give birth to a good-natured child with a genuine moral background, the expectant mother seeks the wholesome company of good-hearted people, whose virtues she admires and imitates.<sup>55</sup>

#### The Birth of the Child.

Life's three most crucial moments, birth, marriage, and death are inseparably bound up with woman. In the case of death, the passing over into the other world, Giltine,<sup>56</sup> the goddess of death decides, and Zemyna, mother of the earth,

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51 Albinas Kriauza, "Vaikai ir Ju Auginimas Kupiskio Apylinkeje," p. 211.

52 Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," p. 88.

53 Ibid., p. 87.

54 Albinas Kriauza, op. cit., p. 211.

55 Juozas Mickevicius, op. cit., p. 88.

56 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, in Acta Borussica. Edited by W. Pearson, Berlin, 1871, Cap. IX, 23.

of men, and of gods conducts the soul to the nether shore<sup>57</sup>-- even the word for soul, "vele", is feminine!

Birth is the other pole of the drama of life. It is a great event. All the well-wishers of the newly born child seek to assure him good fortune by a multitude of superstitious practices. The pagan Lithuanian woman asked Laima--Luck, the goddess of good fortune, for help when the days drew near for her to be delivered. Laima (Dohla) adjusts the sheets under the laboring mother and thus her parturition is accomplished swiftly and without mishap.<sup>58</sup> As the time approaches the husband calls in the "bohute"--midwife. In earlier times the "bobute" was always a venerable old woman who had had a great deal of experience in her task. Everyone must leave the room of the mother when her labor pains begin: it is easier for her when nobody is pitying her.<sup>59</sup> In order to help the mother to bear the child, baths are prepared from birch leaves and other medicinal plants, and other potent herbs are burned to provide sanative smoke.<sup>60</sup> At this very time witches work

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57 Matthaeus Praetorius, "Festa veterum Prussorum," in Deliciae Prussiae, V Buch, Cap. XI, 2-3.

58 Paul Einhorn, "Wiederlegung der Abgoetterey," in Reformatio gentis Letticae in Ducatu Curlandiae, Riga, 1636, Cap. VII, 588.

59 Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," p. 89.

60 This writer's Collection of Superstitions. Rec. from Kotryna Makauskiene, Lekeciai, 1936.

in malign frenzy to thwart nature and cause some evil to befall the child and its mother.<sup>61</sup> There is always the danger that the midwife herself is a witch and will work some spell against a happy birth.<sup>62</sup> But the magical branch of the mountain ash can neutralize evil enchantments and save the mother and her new-born.<sup>63</sup> When the first cries of the baby announce his birth the midwife, rejoicing in the triumph of her art calls in the father who kisses her and the new child and signs them with the sign of the cross.<sup>64</sup> In pagan times a special drink was prepared in gratitude and devotion to Zemyna the goddess for having blessed the birth. The father would first pour a libation on the ground for Zemyna. Then the cup was given to the midwife, then the father, and finally the mother.<sup>65</sup>

During the period when the mother is confined to bed the father prepares her meals and brings them to her. And at a little table by her bedside the two parents and the midwife take their meals.<sup>66</sup> Both of the parents honor the midwife a

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61 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Raganavimai," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 280.

62 Juozas Mickevicius, op. cit., pp. 89-90.

63 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniu. Chicago: Lithuania, 1903, p. 342.

64 Juozas Mickevicius, op. cit., p. 93.

65 Matthaeus Praetorius, "Festa veterum Prussorum," in Deliciae Prussiae, V Buch, Cap. IX, 8.

66 Ibid., Cap. IX, 9.

great deal, and later the child will grow up to honor her on account of her very important role in helping him off to a propitious start in life through her skill and knowledge.

If one wishes the child to become wealthy the placenta must be hung in the garret under the roof.<sup>67</sup> If he is to be hospitable and friendly the placenta must be put under the ceiling and above the table.<sup>68</sup> If the placenta is hidden under the threshold, the child will love his home very dearly and never leave it.<sup>69</sup> If it is hidden in one's own field the child will turn out to be a rich peasant, proprietor of many fields and pastures.<sup>70</sup> To make sure that the child will be blamelessly chaste (and this is especially desirable for girls) the placenta must be packed in a new and spotless white linen cloth. If it is packed in linen and put in the church yard the child will grow up to be a priest.<sup>71</sup> If it is put in the schoolyard he will be a fine scholar.

The first bathing of the child is supposed to have a great influence on his whole life, and, consequently, many

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67 Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," p. 92.

68 Ibid.

69 Albinas Kriauza, "Vaikai ir Ju Auginimas Kupiskio Apolinkeje," p. 215.

70 Ibid., p. 216.

71 Ibid.

superstitions are connected with it. To ward off witcheries of all sorts a branch of mountain ash is put in the bath. A bit of milk is sure to result in a flawless complexion and bright, pink cheeks, and is, therefore, especially recommended for girls. A bit of salt in the bath water and the baby will grow up to be strong and healthy.<sup>72</sup> The Catholics will add a few drops of holy water to guarantee the health of the child.<sup>73</sup> Even the manner in which this first bath is given will give a great influence on the child's future; and one cannot be too careful about where the used bath water is disposed of: if it is poured on a bifurcate tree the child will be very passionate, if it is a girl she will marry at a very early age;<sup>74</sup> if it is poured under the stove the child will have a great love of home and family;<sup>75</sup> if it is poured out the window the child will be seized by wanderlust.<sup>76</sup> The goddess Laima decides on the fortune of the child,<sup>77</sup> and the "laumes"--fairies--who have been watching

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72 Albinas Kriauza, op. cit., p. 217.

73 This writer's Collection of Superstitions. Rec. from Kotryna Makausjiene, Lekeciai, 1936.

74 Augustinas Janulaitis, "Is Lietuvos Folkloro, Burtai ir Prietarai," in Epe Lituana, 1923, Vol. 1, p. 338.

75 Albinas Kriauza, op. cit., p. 217.

76 This writer's Collection of Superstitions. Rec. from Ursule Gumauskiene, Lekeciai, 1932.

77 Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai. Tuebingen: Patria, 1948, Vol. 2, pp. 76-77.

at the window determine his fate! Nature and all cosmic forces, seasons, days of the week, phases of the moon, and so on must be reckoned with both at the time of conception and at birth.<sup>78</sup>

A child born under the new moon will grow up tall, energetic and lively, but not very serious minded. He will also be of an amorous sort.<sup>79</sup> To make sure that the child will be strongly attracted to the opposite sex new-born girls are put immediately on their father's trousers, and new-born boys on a woman's apron.<sup>80</sup> If a child is born under the full moon he will be plump, good-natured, and fertile. If he is born under the moon at the end of its wane he will have a face old beyond his years, a furrowed brow a pensive, even melancholy, turn of mind, and short in stature.<sup>81</sup> Many other things may give foreshadowings of the child's temperament and character: the phase of the moon when the child nurses and is weaned, and the things (e.g. a book, a doll, a bottle, a rosary, etc.) he touches first after being weaned.<sup>82</sup>

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78 Albinas Kriauza, "Vaikai ir Ju Auginimas Kupiskio Apylinkeje," p. 206.

79 Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," p. 93.

80 Albinas Kriauza, op. cit., p. 216.

81 Juozas Mickevicius, op. cit., p. 93.

82 This writer's Collection of Superstitions. Rec. from Kotryna Makauskiene, Lekeciai, 1932.

The mother has always nursed the child herself, and only in case of her death or a severe illness is a wet-nurse called in, but this was always frowned upon because the child was supposed to drink in its character with its mother's milk.<sup>83</sup> The nursing period is very long: from six to eighteen months for an ordinary child, and up to two or two and one half years for a weak or sickly one, because to cure a child's sickness and prevent him from getting sick, mother's milk is the best medicine.<sup>84</sup> Just as the natural birth of the child was a great event, so also his supernatural birth, his baptism, was the occasion for feasting and rejoicing among all his relatives.

#### The Christening.

If a child was born in normal good health he was baptized from seven to ten days post partum. A frail or sickly child was baptized immediately by the "bobute" or someone else.<sup>85</sup> An unbaptized child goes into the murksome shades where the souls of the good pagans dwell, but, unlike them, a bright star shines upon his brow as an inheritance from the oil with which his parents were aneled at their baptism. The rayless and piteous pagans crave this brightness so much

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83 Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," p. 89.

84 "Motinos pienas yra geriausias vaistas vaikui," in this writer's Collection of Superstitions. Rec. from Agnieszka Makauskiene, Village of Netonys, Kaunas, 1938.

Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," p. 97.

that they are forever groping for it, and so the child has no peace throughout eternity.<sup>86</sup> The parents choose the godparents with great care, for the child will frequently follow the ways of his godparents. Hence it is a signal honor to be chosen to be a godparent. But nobody wants to be the godmother of an illegitimate child--"mergos vaikui".<sup>87</sup> Only married people are guests at the Christening. They come in gaily decorated carriages bringing gifts of food and sweet drinks. The festivities continue for three days. At the sacred moment all the people touch the child as do the priest, the godparents and the sacristan.<sup>88</sup> All the guests express good wishes for the child and make glowing predictions of his future. After the sacramental laver the midwife incenses the child with the smoke of the rue used in the parents' marriage ceremony; for a girl it is the very rue of her mother's rue wreath. This assures the child a long and healthy life. To shield the child from sorcery a tiny pich of salt is put in the diapers, and the mother adds little garlic - a potent weapon against evil spells of all sorts.<sup>90</sup> At Christening time many customs

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86 Ibid., p. 98.

87 Jonas Baldauskas, Dr., "Sirateliu Dalia," in Gimtasai Krastas. Siauliai: Krastotyros Drayfija, 1938, Vol. 5, p. 259.

88 Juozas Mickevicius, op. cit., p. 100.

89 Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," p. 100.

90 Juozas Miskinis, "Trys Simtai Dzuku Burtu ir Prietarų," in Epe Lituana, 1923, Vol. I, p. 465.

and superstitions are observed which are supposed to benefit the child: They eat heartily to make sure that the child will always have many possessions. They converse long and merrily so the child will be affectionate and clever.<sup>91</sup> If the child is a boy the father wears wooden shoes, if it is a girl he wears high boots, this will assure the child's being rich.<sup>92</sup> If the child cries during the ceremony he will have a long life and good health. If his candle sheds a bright light he will be happy.<sup>93</sup> Light plays a leading role in Lithuanian superstitions. From the time the child is born to the time he is baptized a light must be kept burning. This protects him from evil spirits, enchantments, and the powers of darkness.<sup>94</sup>

Praetorius describes the old pagan customs connected with the naming of the child:

The midwife kills a hen which has laid its eggs and boiled it very carefully, making sure not to spill a drop. The soup and meat is eaten only by the mother, the midwife, and women who play a role similar to that of godmothers. The midwife starts the ceremony with a prayer to Laima for the child's happiness. She then pours some beer on the ground

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91 Juozas Mickevicius, op. cit., p. 100.

92 Juonas Miskinis, op. cit., p. 467.

93 Juozas Mickevicius, op. cit., p. 100.

94 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniu, p. XI.

in honor of Zemyna. Then the women drink three glasses of beer each and (with the exception of the mother) eat while kneeling. After the hen has been eaten the midwife and the other women put money on the table for the child's good luck. The mother then gives the midwife a "nuometas" and the other women waistbands. Finally the mother kneels down at the chair where the hen was eaten and drinks three glasses of the same beer.<sup>95</sup>

After the child has been brought home from baptism the godmother runs very fast and then removes the child's swaddling clothes so the child will be a swift runner and will start to walk early.<sup>96</sup> At the Christening party the godparents should sit very close together - this will assure the child an even and well-spaced set of teeth.<sup>97</sup> They must avoid drinking too much, but should be merry and friendly to each other; this will make the child affable and gay and at the same time temperate in drink.<sup>98</sup>

The most festive part of the Christening celebrations is the "kumu pietus pyragai"--<sup>99</sup>the dinner which the godparents give in honor of their godchild. Many extra cakes and drinks are prepared, and after they banquet they are distributed to the village children.<sup>100</sup> Many lights burn brightly--at least

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95 Matthaeus Praetorius, "Festa veterum Prussorum," in Deliciae Prussiae, V Buch, Cap. IX, 13-14.

96 Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," p. 112.

97 Albinas Kriauza, "Vaikai ir Ju Auginimas Kupiskio Apylinkeje," p. 222.

98 Ibid., pp. 221-222.

99 Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," p. 102.

100 Ibid., p. 105.

twelve candles must be lit and many songs are sung about the godparents and the godchild:

Kumas kuma mylejo,  
Perlaukeli lydejo.<sup>101</sup>

The godfather loved the godmother,  
He followed her through the field...

There are funny songs to put the guests in a gay mood:

Eiks, kumete i darzinaiti,  
Virksciu ieskoti, susivynioti...<sup>102</sup>

Come, godmother, into the garden,  
To look for a stalk or vine in which to wrap  
yourself...

The young mother, especially if it is her firstborn, is honored in every way. All during the nursing period she keeps herself to the same exacting regime she followed during her pregnancy; for "whatever happens to the nursing mother happens to the child."<sup>103</sup> If she becomes nervous, angry, or unhappy her milk is spoiled and the child gets sick.<sup>104</sup> To prevent this the whole family is very solicitous for the nursing mother. It is their duty to visit her often and cheer her with their good wishes, congratulations, and compliments

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101 Ibid., p. 106.

102 Ibid.

103 This writer's Collection of Superstitions. Rec. from Kotryna Makauskiene, Lekeciai, 1936.

104 Ibid., rec. from Ursule Gumauskiene, Lekeciai, 1936.

about her child. The visitors bring gifts for the baby and the mother, and, if there are no other women in her family, they show their friendship by also helping her. Only a quarrel or severe disagreement would dispense a person from the duty of visiting the young mother.

Whether the child be her first or her fifteenth, the mother belongs and devotes herself heart and soul to her child. While bearing and nursing the tiny creature, she exercised great care and caution that nothing might harm him in body and soul. So, when he starts growing up, talking, understanding and imitating his mother and other members of the family, she is all the more cautious and watchful not to scandalize him by a word or deed that would mislead him. As the mother in every nation and race is considered a holy person, so in Lithuania, she is often called "small heroine" or "small saint".<sup>105</sup>

### 3. The Children's Guardian and Guide.

A mother is as necessary and as taken for granted as the earth on which we live or the air we breathe. But just as we seldom wax poetic about air the Lithuanian folklore and song contain relatively little about the mother. Far more

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<sup>105</sup> Feliksas Kapocius, kan, "Lietuvos Motina," in Darbininkas, May 11, 1951.

songs glorify the romantic love in general. Just as one might comment upon the scent of a rose while failing to remark the necessity and beauty of oxygen.

This paucity of songs extolling her well suits the mother, for she is modest and self-effacing; her only concern is to sacrifice herself for her children's happiness. In this sacrifice itself, rather than in any praise won by it, lies her own truest joy. If we say that a person blesses someone by wishing good for them and asking Heaven to help him, then we must admit that a mother is constantly blessing her children. She is a kind of natural priestess of the home whose unflagging sacrifices are offered up always to God to call down abundant blessings upon all its occupants. Indeed, in the very beginning of her maternal life she suffers pain gladly, and in the first great act of magnanimity--during the difficult moments of birth--she is willing to give her life for the well-beloved life she yearns to bring forth.

Even to this day the mother's behavior towards her children remains the same as it is pictured in the folklore; at least this is true of the simple peasant families. The Lithuania mother is traditionally more indulgent and gentle than those of neighboring lands. She is always extremely kind and gentle with her children. Her words bespeak a warm

and devoted heart. Even her voice is mild and mellifluous when she addresses her daughter:

Tykiai, tykiai Nemunelis teka,  
Nuotykiausiai mani motule saukia.<sup>106</sup>

How sweetly and how gently the Nemunas flows,  
But more sweetly and gently still my mother  
calls to me.

She calls her daughter "drkrele lelijele"--my lily daughter:

Kelk, kelk, dukryte,  
Grazi negelkyte.<sup>107</sup>

Get up, get up, daughter,  
My beautiful carnation.

For the Lithuanian peasant family life was very hard. Even the children had to get up at sunrise with their elders in the summertime. But the mother's unfailing kindness made things easier. When a girl is awakened by the soft caress of her mother's hand and the dulcet tones of her voice she does not mind the chill of morning or her job of tending the geese.

The children obey such a mother not out of fear of punishment but out of fear of hurting her and saddening her. They do not call her simply mother--"motina", but "motinele sengalvele"--<sup>108</sup> dear gray-headed mother, "motinele sirdu-

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<sup>106</sup> R. Meulen, Dr., Gamtos Prilyginimai Lietuviu Dainose ir Raudose. Vilnius: Lietuviu Mokslo Draugija, 1919, p.12.

<sup>107</sup> Ibid., p. 21.

<sup>108</sup> Ibid., p. 49.

zele"--<sup>109</sup>tender-hearted mother, and such pet names: "Dar as turiu motuze, baltaja galbuze."<sup>110</sup> - "Even though my life is poor and my toil is hard I still have my dear mother, my white swan."

The language alone well attests the devotion the people have to their mother: there are more than one hundred familiar words for mother.<sup>111</sup> They all contain the same root, "mot", "ma" (Sanskrit matha, Lithuanian motina, mama), to which many suffices are added to express tenderness and affection: motina, motynele, motonaite, motuse, motuze, motuzele, mociute; mama, mamuze, mamuzele, mamule, mamulyte, etc.

The education of the children is the mother's task until they grow older, but even then she intercedes for them when the father goes to punish them. The mother instills in her children a deep religious spirit. She trains her children to be good in order to please God and to escape His punishment.<sup>112</sup> When she punishes her children she tries to make it as lenient as possible: they must apologize to her, kiss her

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<sup>109</sup> Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, pp. 82, 85.

<sup>110</sup> Victor Jungfer, Dr., Antlitz eines Volkes, in Feliksas Kapocius, kan, "Lietuvos Motina," in Darbininkas, May 11, 1951.

<sup>111</sup> Antanas Gricius, "Vaiku Auklejimas Senoveje," p. 101.

<sup>112</sup> Antanas Gricius, "Vaiku Auklejimas Senoveje," p. 103-104.

hand or feet, or kneel on peas.<sup>113</sup> Only boys are spanked, and then only for serious offenses like stealing from a neighbor's orchards, stealing a friend's toys,<sup>114</sup> or destroying a bird's nest--this last was a very evil thing, it was killing.<sup>115</sup> Lithuanian children were always very shy in the old days. They were brought up that way. When guests came they did not have to stay in their presence; they only had to greet them. They usually did this by kissing the hands of adult visitors.<sup>116</sup> Women visitors were called "teta" or "dedina"--aunt; men visitors were called "dede"--uncle. One of the most effective punishments was for the mother to keep silent, to refuse to speak to the children, caress them, or kiss them. Grown-up children are chastened when they see their mother crying over their misdeeds.

Her tears and silent endurance of sorrow are a Lithuanian mother's most characteristic and most powerful psychological weapon in the education of her children. When some misfortune befalls the family the mother does not rant and scold. Seldom does she reproach the children. She is passive and patient in the face of wrong doing and ill-fortune, but her

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113 Albinas Kriauza, "Vaikai ir Ju Auginimas Kupiskio Apylinkeje," p. 233.

114 Ibid., p. 234.

115 Antanas Gričius, op. cit., p. 106.

116 Juozas Mickevicius, "Zemaiciu Krikstynos," p. 107.

passivity is not an indifference or an ataraxia. It is the passivity of suffering meekness, and so it makes a deep and very active impression on the children. Realizing that their wrongs have made their tender-hearted mother suffer so they understand their enormity. It teaches them far more than a whipping would, and it is precisely because of this passivity that the mother has such authority and prestige in the home.

What appears to be weakness in her strength, if strength is judged by its effective results. For when she asks her adult son so shyly and almost timidly to be good to his wife<sup>117</sup> or forgive someone who has insulted him she appears like a helpless and powerless child, and her son is moved to supply his strength for her weakness and comply with her request.

One folk song characterizes the rearing of children as the fruit of a long suffering mother's sighs--"dusavimas":

Ei, tu, mociute- dusuonele,  
Dusavai ryta-vakareli...  
Lid uzauginai devynius sunus...  
O sia desimta dukrytele.<sup>118</sup>

Oh you mother of sighs!  
Every morning and night you sighed  
'Till you have reared nine sons  
And a daughter too.

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<sup>117</sup> "Mano suneli, dobileli, ...nemindziok rutdes, ne virkdyk mergeles..." in Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 175.

<sup>118</sup> R. Meulen, Gamtos Prilyginimai Lietuviu Dainose ir Raudose, p. 35.

All her heartaches and disappointments find expression in her sighs.

Her inward suffering is never greater than when she must let her son go off to war in defense of his homeland, but even then she masters her feelings and suppressed her frenzied fears--she only sighs:

Visus devynis vainelen eme,  
Bent, Dievai, laikyk dukterytele.<sup>119</sup>

All nine of them have gone to war.  
Oh God! Save at least the daughter.

It is she who loves her child more than any other; it is she who is most faithful to him: his sweetheart follows him through the gate: his mother through nine fields--"per devynis laukelius."<sup>120</sup> The mother prepares--ever so carefully--all her son needs to go off to war, and the night before his departure she cannot sleep--"uzdek, motuse, zvakele".<sup>121</sup> The son tries hard to hide his own feelings of sorrow at this separation in the bravado of a war song as he says goodbye:

Uzdainavom tevui, mociute,  
Sugraudinom mociutei sirdele...<sup>122</sup>

119 Ibid.

120 Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, pp. 156-165.

121 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Karo Dainos," in Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, p. 153.

122 Mylolas Birziska, Dainu Atsiminimai is Lietuvos Istorijos. Vilnius: Lietuviu Mokslo Draugija, 1920, p. 28.



Her grieving for her lost children is frequently compared to the doleful song of the cuckoo in the forest.<sup>126</sup> An unhappy wife hears a cuckoo and thinks it is her mother who has come to console her:

Isgirdau girdejau  
Girioj balseli  
Mislyjau, dumojau,  
Motule saukia.<sup>127</sup>

I have heard a voice  
In the forest  
And I have thought, I have dreamed  
That my mother is calling me.

The soldier dying in battle is comforted by the song of the cuckoo; he imagines it is his mother, come to bid him farewell. And if a cuckoo perches on a nameless soldier's grave and takes up its lament it is his mother come to mourn over him:

Ir atlekus geguzele  
Gailia, uzkukavo,  
Ir atejus motinele  
Labai graudziai verke.<sup>128</sup>

There came a cuckoo  
And it sung sorrowfully,  
And the mother came,  
And she was weeping dolefully.

In all their problems and troubles the children call upon their

126 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 59.

127 R. Meulen, Gantos Priilyginimai Lietuviu Dainose ir Raudose, pp. 48-52.

128 This writer's Collection of Songs. Rec. from Magde Paplauskiene, Village of Komenka, Marijampole, 1937.

mother, and often they call in the notes of the cuckoo<sup>129</sup> and other birds. Thus the mother always knows when her children are downcast and in trouble. When loneliness gnaws at her heart she goes out of the house into the garden, and leaning on the fence she anxiously scans the road for a sign of her dear ones:

Oi ziba ziburelis,  
Kai aukso liktorelis,  
Ten stovejo sena mociute  
Ant dvarelio isjeu,  
Tvoreles pasiremus.<sup>130</sup>

A small light gleams  
Like a golden lantern.  
And the mother went into the yard,  
And she stood leaning on a fence.

As the sun is to nature so the mother is to her children, and many songs compare a mother to the sun. Orphans feel that their mother is kissing them when the warm, dew-drinking morning sun warms their faces. This frequent comparison may well be a survival from the old pagan religion and mythology of Lithuania. The moon is spouse of the sun, and the stars and planets are their daughters.<sup>131</sup> Earth then is a child of the sun, and we earth-dwellers are siblings of the stars and offspring of

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<sup>129</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., op. cit., p. 112.

<sup>130</sup> Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 85.

<sup>131</sup> Jonas Baldauskas, Dr., "Sirateliu Dalia," in Gimtasai Krastas, 1938, Vol. 5, p. 259.

the sun.<sup>132</sup> After death a soul goes to heaven--"daisos",<sup>133</sup> but before this it may linger for a time with its relatives on earth. Sometimes it takes the form of birds or animals (mitigated metempsychosis).<sup>134</sup> A mother who has died stays a while with her children, and, since she is the noblest of beings, she must assume the noblest of forms. This is the form of the great yellow sun. She becomes the "saule mociute"--<sup>135</sup>sun mother. Whether she has died or is still living the mother is compared with the sun, for the sun makes nature come to life, gives it joy, blossoms, smiles, warmth, and daily benison. The mother's role is much the same for her children: it is she who gives and quickens life, warms it, gives it joy, burning herself out for the good of others, even until her generous and loving heart is stilled forever.

#### 4. The Stepmother.

As already pointed out in the life of the orphan girl, the stepmother is quite unpopular; in tales she is always called

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<sup>132</sup> Ludwig J. Rhesa, Betrachtung ueber die littauischen Volkslieder. 2nd ed. by Pranas Kurschaitis, Berlin, 1843, pp. 92, 220, 351.

<sup>133</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniau, p. 21.

<sup>134</sup> Ibid., pp. XII-XXXVI.

<sup>135</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, pp. 100, 101, 113.

"pamote ragana"--stepmother witch. The partial accuracy of this estimation is based on economic and mostly psychological factors. Since the first-born son is the heir to the farm, the second wife will tend to jealousy as her own children, cherished above all else, will be slighted in this and many other respects. Moreover, to the virgin, the prospect is not very bright and inviting to marry a widower who, in most cases, has loved his first wife the most. Besides the sorrow of discontented and inadequate married life, the stepmother must endure the impossible and frustrating task of substituting for the mother of her stepchildren. In their eyes no person, however perfect, can replace their own mother. What chance then has the average person with ordinary human weaknesses? This mortifying fate casts a shadow over the maiden's aspirations and instills a great reluctance to marry a widower.<sup>136</sup>

O tu seni nasli,  
 Is po juodo debeselio  
 Pas mani atjojai...  
     Kur cerkele stovejo,  
     Ta vieta naikinsiu,  
     Kur naslelis sedejo.  
     Su razu istrinsiu.<sup>137</sup>

Oh, you old widower,  
 You came to me  
 From a black cloud...

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<sup>136</sup> Albinas Konce, "Panevezio ir Paystrio Parapiju Dainos," in Epe Lituana, 1926, Vol. 4, p. 548.

<sup>137</sup> Antanas Vireliunas, "Kupiskenu Dainos," in Epe Lituana, 1926, Vol. 4, p. 585.

I will destroy this place,  
Where his glass stood,  
I will scrub well the chair  
Where the widower was sitting.

Here she recounts how the old widower came to her from a black cloud -- unhappiness. She has refused her consent, and as soon as the widower and his matchmaker have departed, she hastens to banish every trace of the unpleasant visit. If the parents have consented, as likely in the case of a rich widower, against her will, she sobs and grieves silently:

Tykliai, tykliai Nemunelis teka,  
O dar tykliau mus sesele verkia.  
Sesut, sesut, ko taip gailiai verki?  
Zada mane motinele uz naslelio leisti.<sup>138</sup>

Quietly, so quietly, the Nemunelis flows.  
Yet, more softly our sister weeps.  
Sister, O sister, why do you weep so bitterly?  
My mother has promised me to a widower.

The widower has many children; they always ask her, "Where is our mother?" Try as she may, she will never fill the place of their own mother in their hearts:

Oz naslelio, seserele,  
Kam ejai, kam ejai?  
Didi suri naslaiteliu  
Atradai, atradai...  
Ar sugris mus motinele,  
Ims tau klaust, ims tau klaus...  
Ar mokesi prie sideles  
Juos priglaust juos priglaust...  
Pirmutine motinele  
Vis mines, vis mines

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<sup>138</sup> Vincas Kreve, "Dainavos Krasto Dainos," in Epe Lituana, Vol. 3, p. 532.

Tavo jauna sirduzele  
Vai skaudes, vai skaudes.139

Why, dear sister, did you marry the widower?  
There you have found a swarm of orphans.  
Will our mother return?  
They will ask you over and over again.  
Will you be able  
To caress them to your bosom?  
The name of the first mother  
Is always on their lips.  
And your young heart  
Will ache and pain.

The orphan child weeps as she tells her story:

Aisiu ant kalnelio  
Ant motules kapo,  
Pasiskusiu motulei...  
Ku vyrgdzia zmones  
Many sirateli.  
Pabarkie susiedelius.  
Kad nesibartu,  
Blogai nekalbetu.140

I will go up on the hill,  
To my mother's grave,  
I will complain to her  
The people scold and calumniate me to the  
point of tears  
Me, a poor orphan girl.  
Defend me, mother,  
Tell them not to scold me,  
Not to speak evil about me.

At her mother's grave, she bemoans the fact that she always  
has so much work and no time to prepare her dowry:

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139 Balys Sruoga, Dr., "Lietuviu Dainu Poetines Prie-  
mones," in Epe Lituana, 1925, Vol. 3, p. 73.

140 Vincas Kreve, "Dainos, Surinktos Merkines Parapi-  
joje," in Epe Lituana, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 324.

Jos sarvelis nesukrautas,  
 Jos darzelis neaptvertas,  
 Jos drobules nesuaustos,  
 Pasogeles nesuougytos.<sup>141</sup>

Her hope chest is empty,  
 Her rue garden is not weeded,  
 Her linen is not woven.  
 For her there is neither dowry nor allotment.

The orphan cries for her mother; sorrow darkens her life like the night. She cannot complain to her stepmother:

Kam pasiskusiu...  
 Didzioj bedalej, sunkiam vargely  
 Tai nuvys akeles  
 Liudnoj dzienelej, sunkioj dalelej  
 Prazus jaunyste.<sup>142</sup>

To whom can I complain...  
 In my sorrows, in my troubles?  
 My eyes shall melt away in tears,  
 My youth shall waste away in misery...

The stepmother in her jealous ill temper mistreats her stepdaughter.<sup>143</sup> This fact, like so many others in tales, songs and narratives, is qualified and explained in the wisdom of the folk. They explain that the Creator comforts the orphan grieving for her mother and recompenses this loss with gifts of uncommon beauty,<sup>144</sup> virtues, diligence and modesty, which

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141 Ibid., p. 425.

142 Ibid., p. 421.

143 Jonas Balys, Dr., Istoriniai Padavimai. Chicago: Lithuanian Catholic Press Society, 1949, p. 70.

Also Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos, Vol. 2, p. 192.

144 Vincas Kreve, "Pasakos," in Epe Litwana, 1924, p. 251.

sparkle all the more for her unaffected and unassuming graciousness.<sup>145</sup> All these qualities enkindle the jealousy of the stepmother who compares them to the ugliness, ill nature and pride<sup>146</sup> of her own daughter. Therefore, the stepmother tries to slight and vanquish her daughter's rival.<sup>147</sup>

The contest is hard fought, for the stepmother conjures up (easily, for she is a sorceress herself)<sup>148</sup> the powers of darkness, ghouls and ghosts to champion her black designs. The poor lonely orphan girl is shielded and defended by all the good cosmical forces and natural powers (invoked in a special way by her dead mother who asks some animals, a cow, a dog, etc. to help her child.)<sup>149</sup>

For the defenseless orphan, the sun warms in a special way, the moonlight pierces the night's darkness to light her path and calm her fears, and the stars fall down and turn into silver money in her lap.<sup>150</sup> Nature herself displays magical

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145 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., op. cit., pp. 60, 64.

146 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Pasakos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 36.

147 Ibid., pp. 36, 70-71.

148 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., op. cit., pp. 155-160.

149 Ibid., p. 192.

150 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Pasakos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 36.

powers for her; for her alone, an apple tree bears golden apples<sup>151</sup> and a well changes its water into wine.<sup>152</sup> But the most friendly of all are the domestic animals and the harmless, sympathetic inhabitants of forests; a hare, a squirrel, a fox and even the big bear and the wolf, who would carry on their backs either an orphan boy or girl.<sup>153</sup> The birds are among her best friends--the cuckoo, the falcon, the pigeon, the swan, the crow, the duck, etc.<sup>154</sup>

The stepmother's witchcraft seems to gain the upper hand for a short time, and causes the poor orphan girl to suffer, but only thereby to strengthen and enhance her virtues for an ultimate victory. It is noteworthy that the popular wisdom, in creating these stories, furnishes a wholesome and vivid lesson in the rewarding of good and the punishment of evil.

As just mentioned, the stepmother prevails for a short time. She kills the cow<sup>155</sup> and the dog<sup>156</sup> and the other animals

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151 Ibid.

152 Ibid.

153 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos, Vol.2, pp. 154, 157.

154 Ibid., pp. 154, 157, 161.

155 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos, Vol.2, p. 156.

156 Jonas Basanavicius, Lietuviskos Pasakos Yvairios, Vol. 2, p. 229.

guarding the orphan, and plans to kill her brother metamorphosed into a lamb by evil incantation.<sup>157</sup> When the poor orphan is stripped of all defense, with nobody to shield her, the evil stepmother unleashes the full force of her witchcraft. She throws her into the water on the way to her future husband, the king, or transforms her into a swan or a duck,<sup>158</sup> or banishes her with her child while her husband, the king, is away at war.<sup>159</sup> In another case, the stepmother might impose her own daughter as the king's wife. Other tales, though less numerous, depicts the stepmother casting a spell over her stepmother in order to liquidate her rival and to impose herself as the king's wife.<sup>160</sup>

But, the victory won by necromancy and treachery at the expense and injury of an innocent orphan is short-lived. For, the wicked stepmother usually meets a dreadful end--torn asunder by two horses or thrown alive into a flaming fire.<sup>161</sup>

The stepmother's daughter, however, is spared this frightful fate, for she was considered as unwillingly under

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<sup>157</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., "Pasakos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 41.

<sup>158</sup> Ibid.

<sup>159</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos Yvairios, Vol. 2, p. 259.

<sup>160</sup> Vincas Kreve, "Pasakos," in Epe Litwana, Vol. 2, pp. 251-255.

<sup>161</sup> Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos, Vol.2, p. 159.

the spell and orders of her mother. The daughter thus has another chance to win some happiness by her good deeds. Unfortunately, this chance is usually squandered, because she is spoiled, proud, very lazy,<sup>162</sup> impolite to old people,<sup>163</sup> unfriendly to birds and animals, and unsympathetic to the sufferings of others.<sup>164</sup> The justice meted out to her is frightful--with the words falling from her lips come not jewels, but leaping toads, or she becomes twice as ugly as before.<sup>165</sup>

On the contrary, the orphan, obedient to the advice and example of her dead mother and faithful to her words and wishes, is virtuous, kind and good-hearted. Thus the mother's fond care and skillful training, even after her death, bless her daughter with the virtues making her loved by people, birds, and animals. In this way, nature continues in a small part the dead mother's blessing by lavishing special kindnesses on the orphan. Such is the esteem for the mother that even after death the blessing of her care and help is believed to continue in her influence and persuasion over nature.

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162 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Pasakos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 36.

163 Vincas Kreve, "Pasakos," in Epe Lituana, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 255.

164 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos, Vol. 2, p. 164.

165 Ibid.

## 5. The Immortal Mother.

When the wife or the sister dies they travel "i auksta veliu kalneli"--to the high hill of the souls; they fly away "i dausas"--to paradise<sup>166</sup> where they live a life like the one they lived on earth. But a mother, who has left her children, receives them after they have finished travelling on this earth--"pabaige sios zemes kelione"--to paradise. The grandmother is taking care of her small grandchildren in paradise.

When a mother loses her child she prays to her own heaven-dwelling mother to take the best care of her baby: "My dear mother! Bowing profoundly and humbly at your feet I send you my greetings through my son. Receive him, dear mother, him whom I send to you. Take him in your arms, for he is very small. He cannot yet speak; he cannot walk. Guide him and teach him, please. Be kind to him. Watch over him with care. You have there with you many of our kin--then take my little boy under your wing also."<sup>167</sup>

Everyone must meet defeat sooner or later at the hands

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166 Marija Alseikaite-Gimbutiene, Dr., Die Bestattung in Litauen. Tuebingen: C.B. Mohr, 1846, p. 236.

167 "Manu motynele, pasitik ir prijimk manu suneli atei-  
nanti, o pasinesioke ant baltu rankeliu manu ma ziukeli, manu  
nieku neismananti, be kalbales, ni ant kojeliu nepastatyta; tu pa-  
vadziok, tu ismokyk. Or ar pazinsi manu suneli, savu anukeli  
ateinanti. Motynele, juk tu turi dideli pulkeli dideli tunteli;  
tur but ne turi slugeliu, kad manu maziukeli pasidabojai: pasi-  
vadziok ir pasinesioke ant baltu rankeliu." Jonas Basanavicius,  
Dr., Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniu, p. XIII.

of death--the relentless and invincible enemy. But in Lithuanian folklore the mother alone triumphs over death through her sacrificing and love for her children. When the child needs her, when there is nobody to take good care of him, when he cries helplessly, his voice reaches her heart even deep in the grave. Straightaway she hastens to rise for the sake of her child. The call of her child means more to his mother than her eternal peace, and breaks the bond of death. When the time comes for nursing her child, she awakens from death's sleep, rises from her grave and goes to her child.<sup>168</sup> Even today some people, particularly peasants, in Lithuania believe that a dead mother is given the power of freeing herself from her grave to go look after her children. In the case of a small baby being left an orphan, it is reported that his mother returns to nurse him even in the daytime. Prolific imaginations lend a note of actuality to this report with stories that they have heard the creaking of the nursery door, or the sound of approaching footsteps, or that from the doorway they have seen the mother nursing her child.<sup>169</sup>

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168 "...ji vis savo mazaji bezindydama, nuo kapiniu namon ir vel ant kapiniu eina." Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniu, p. 95.

169 "Meskinycioj, Pilakalnio pav., Vingiliene, sesose mirdama, paliko maza ir pareidavo vakarais po sermenu ta pazindyt, ka stuboj esantieji matydavo duris atsidarant ir ja i vidu izengiant ir tad prie vygiu atsiklaupiant kudikeli zindant." Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniu, p. 97.

Sometimes, the dead mother implores her husband to look after their children. She tells him many times how much she suffers to see them unwashed, poorly dressed and undernourished. If the father heeds these complaints and takes better care of the children, the mother returns to thank him and troubles him no more.<sup>170</sup> If the stepmother mistreats or harms the orphans in secret, their mother rises in indignation, comes to her in the night, haunts her and even punishes her.<sup>171</sup> But, ordinarily, she comes in the night to wash the children, make their beds comfortable, cooks supper for them and washes their clothes.<sup>172</sup> This extraordinary practice is considered quite ordinary and unalarming by the family. If during the day the children were unable to accomplish some chore, or improperly, she returns to finish or correct it.<sup>173</sup>

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170 "Vyruį karta is Silakarcemos turgaus pro Publiu kapines, kur jo pirmoji pati palaidota, pareinant...toji tare:-rupink, idant mano vaikeliai graziaus selpiami taptu, nes man didele sirdpersa juos, ju dabartiniame pasilaikyme matant-...0 teipogi su jomi susikalbedavo. Su laiku, vaikeliams grazei aptopteletiems esant, ji con daugiau ne pasirode." Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniu, p. 96.

171 "...mokytojo pati mirdama dvejeta kudikeliu paliko; kai jis kita pacia vedes buvo...tai jei is pagalves priegalvius isplese, patalus ismete, paskui ir ja pacia ant zemes ismete." Ibid., p. 95.

172 This writer's Collection of Superstitions and Beliefs. Rec. from Kotryna Makauskiene, Lekeciai, 1935.

173 "...po jos palaidojimo viena vakara isejes arkliu ganyti, jau pries pusiaunakti juos parvedziau, tai pamaciau savo mamate su skepeta apsigobuse, nuo kleties manesp ateinant..." Ibid., p. 101.

The mother is inseparable from her children. Whenever they need her, she will defy and overcome all obstacles to help them. This indomitable desire removes the barriers of death and the grave, commands and changes nature's laws: the mother gives her eyes to her blind orphan child;<sup>174</sup> she fights death itself for the life of her child; she endures formidable hardships and pain. If he is lost, she braves the raging elements, and just as she is losing consciousness in the clutches of freezing and exhaustion, death recognizes her sacrifice and helps her find her child alive. But, just at the moment when she stretches out her arms to embrace her son, an angel appears and reveals to her that her son would commit a crime in future years. The mother's outstretched arms fall to her side and the painful words falter from her pale quivering lips: "Open the gates of thy kingdom unto him, O Death."<sup>175</sup> Thus, the mother's love for her child sustains her through pain and hardship, commands nature's forces and renders death amenable to her desire. This belief is again displayed in the story of the stepmother witch who cuts off the hands of the young mother and banishes her with her child while her husband, the king, is away at war. Kind people fasten the child to his mother's

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174 K. K., "Motinos Legenda," in Darbininkas, May 11, 1951.

175 Ibid.

breast, and she wanders into the wilderness of a dense forest. She is thirsty, and as she bends over to drink from a river, her child starts to fall from her. Instinctively, she reaches for him and at this moment her amputated hands are restored.<sup>176</sup> Love is a wonderful flower, but the love of a Lithuanian mother has a divine fragrance. The beauty of this holy self-sacrificing love conquers all and wins nature's sympathy and force in protecting her child.

This renunciation of relatives and her free life is further illustrated in another tale. A swan, when its feathers are burned, turns into a beautiful girl who marries a prince. Some years later when her swan relatives are about to migrate, they entice her to fly off with them. The longing for the free life under the boundless sky overpowered her and causes her to leave her child with her husband. In the blissful company of her swan relatives she forgets everything on earth except her son. Every night, she comes secretly to nurse her child. To make up for the stepmother's hateful neglect of her poor child, the swan mother spends the whole night caring for him. When the king punishes the stepmother witch with death, the swan's feathers are burned again, and thereby the mother

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<sup>176</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., "Pasakos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 69.

is restored to be with her child forever.<sup>177</sup> Indeed, the mother knows no happiness or freedom away from her child. Of course, for his sake, she can endure separation and all hardships. For him, and never for herself, she lives, struggles and ambitions. She is the sheltering rock whose shadow blends into the shadows of his every step. If the child is happy and not in need, she peacefully shares his happiness. When he is in trouble, need or danger, she is the first to come to his aid. Forgetting herself in every way and disregarding any humiliation, she would risk everything for him. Lithuanian legends glorify the shy and modest woman as the mother of undying devotion to her children - a radiant symbol of eternity.

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<sup>177</sup> Vincas Kreve, "Pasakos-Gulbe Karaliaus Pati," in Epe Litwana, 1924, Vol. 2, p. 252.

## CHAPTER IV

### THE STATE OF THE WOMAN

The shy and winsome virgin descending her pure dreams to her green rye, and altruistic mother devoting her toil, her thoughts, her whole self to her children were highly honored by the Lithuanian people. Womanhood was highly prized and respected, even more than manhood. Men represented strength of body and intellect. Theirs was the task of making great decision for the nation, judgment of war and of peace. The woman was not given credit for being able to make decisions of such sort: they were "ilgas plaukas--trumpas protas"--long on hair but short on wisdom. But if the man represents the head then the woman represents the heart. She incarnates goodness, tenderness, and beauty: "moteris yra namu siela"--the woman is the heart of the home. In the three preceding chapters the woman was considered in the three main periods of her life: maidenhood, the marriage, and motherhood. In this last chapter, we will consider the role of women in religion, in the national culture, and in society.

#### 1. The Woman in Religion.

The original religion--the pagan religion--reflects the national character and indicates what the folks value and

appreciate the most. One of the best indications of the high regard Lithuanians had for womankind is the role of woman in the old pagan religion, for religion embodies the highest aspirations and ideals of a people.

Pre-eminence of Goddesses in the Pagan Religion.

The old Lithuanian religion can almost be called a female religion, because most of the deities were female. Many chroniclers, however, consider Perkunas--Thunder to be the chiefmost god. He was said to rule the shy and all heavenly bodies, the whole universe.<sup>1</sup> In his honor the people kept alive an eternal flame.<sup>2</sup> But Mannhardt, the profoundest investigator of old Lithuanian and Latvian customs and beliefs does not agree with this view. He points out that there are other gods of the sky like Zwaigzdikis<sup>3</sup>--god of the stars and of light, and Occopirrus--god of the sky.<sup>4</sup>

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1 Constantine R. Jurgela, History of the Lithuanian Nation. New York: Lithuanian Cultural Institute, 1948, p. 38.

2 Aleksander Brueckner, Dzieje Kultury Polskiej. Krakow: Krakowska Spolka Wydawnicza, 1930, pp. 643-644.

3 Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre. Riga: Lettisch-Literarische Gesellschaft, 1936, pp. 531, 541.

4 Ibid., pp. 539, 564.

The god of the Lithuanians were more or less independent and their power was delimited to their own sphere. Perhaps the people had a strong if implicit inkling that above all the gods there was some Great Power who held the cosmos and even the gods under Its sway.

Among the female deities Zemyna holds first place both in power and popular cult.<sup>5</sup> Her role seems to have fluctuated somewhat during her long career. In the first century Tacitus describes her as mater deorum--the mother of the gods.<sup>6</sup> In the sixteenth century Strykowski describes her as goddess of the earth,<sup>7</sup> and in the seventeenth century Praetorius sees in her the vivifyer of all living beings, the creative spirit who gives and preserves life and even conducts the souls of the dead to the other world.<sup>8</sup> In all the critical moments of life, birth, marriage, and death, Zemyna was honored by ceremonial libations and sacrifices of food and drink.<sup>9</sup> Other gods and goddesses were worshipped on one or another occasion, but

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5 Wilhelm Mannhardt, op. cit., pp. 7-8, 280, 373, 540, 563, 569, 602.

6 Tacitus, Germania. Edited by Alfons Molder, Leipzig, 1778, Cap. 45.

7 Matys Strykowski, Kronika polska, litewska, zmudska. Koenigsberg, 1582, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, op. cit., p. 373.

8 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. VII, 15.

9 Matthaeus Praetorius, "Festa veterum Prussorum," in Deliciae Prussiae, V Buch, Cap. I, 2-8, Cap. III, 1-16, Cap. IX, 1-12.

Zemyna was always honored. Her most important cult was connected with fertility, and she had no rival for popularity. This aspect was so significant in the popular mind that several male gods had female counterparts: Zwaigzkis had Zwaidgzdunka,<sup>10</sup> the bride of the Sky who ruled the planets, Perkunas--Thunder, whose family includes eight brothers, and a sister, Perkunaite. Each of them rules a certain time. But when Perkunaite rules, her thunder is louder than all the others!<sup>11</sup>

As it was mentioned in this thesis, the woman plays the dominant role in the family, and through her influence she plays a leading role in national life. Similarly, the female gods have a dominant role. The lives of the people are in their hands, and they preside over life's great moments. Besides Zemyna, the Great Mother, there are many other very powerful goddesses.<sup>12</sup> Laima (from "laime"--the good fortune) determines the destiny of each person who comes into the world. Laume<sup>13</sup> the goddess of birth protects the mother and child in parturition; she waits by the window to announce the child's fate as soon as it is born. Dekla<sup>14</sup> takes care of small children, and

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10 Ibid., Cap. IX, 2.

11 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Perkunas Lietuviu Liaudies Tikejimuose," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1937, vol. 3, p. 172.

12 Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, p.482.

13 Ibid., p. 542.

14 Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol.2, pp. 79.

determines their destiny as the Laima. Giltine--Death cuts the thread of life. In this she is assisted by her servant Magila<sup>15</sup> (a Slavic term meaning grave).

Laume, a mythological being, is known throughout Lithuania. In earlier times, this mythological class was represented as benevolent fairies,<sup>16</sup> helping everyone and especially mothers. If while working in the field a mother forgets her child, a laume takes care of it and dresses it elegantly in ribbons and silk.<sup>17</sup> Laumes like children very much, for they can never have any of their own.<sup>18</sup> They kidnap children and give them the best of care. When such a child has grown up to take care of itself, it is restored to its rightful parents.<sup>19</sup>

Thus, laumes can be considered as maidens playing the part of mothers. They were always represented as very beautiful and, because of their desire for motherhood, as "bathukolpian."<sup>20</sup> Although they are destined to remain maidens, they looked for husbands among people. When a man marries a laume,

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15 Ibid., p. 179.

16 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Laima ir Laumes," in Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. 2, p. 82.

17 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos, Vol. 2, p. 191.

18 Jonas Balys, Dr., op. cit., p. 83.

19 Ibid., p. 82.

20 Vincas Kreve, "Apie Laumes, Perkuna ir Aitvara," in Epe Litvana, 1925, Vol. 3, p. 336.

she becomes a perfect wife and mother.<sup>21</sup> Laumes work quickly and diligently and often help busy women.

After the Christianization of Lithuania, laumes depreciated in the popular imagination into malevolent, ugly, and ignoble intermediaries between devils and witches. Instead of friends, they became enemies of men. The mythical laumes enjoy immortality and inhabit forests, rivers, lakes and the "pirtis". There were many other goddesses: "Milda"<sup>22</sup>, goddess of love, "Medeina", goddess of the forests, "Zworuna", goddess of hunters ("Zverine", "zveris"--wild animal),<sup>23</sup> and finally, the goddesses of the sky: "Saule"<sup>24</sup> or "Saule Mociute", Sun, Sun Mother; "Ausrine"--Morning star; "Ausra"--Dawn; "Vaivorykste"<sup>25</sup>--Rainbow. Lesser tutelary deities were in charge of the various branches of agriculture: of fields, grains, shrubs, water, fish; deities of food: "Walgine", "Skalsa".<sup>26</sup> The

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21 Jonas Balys, Dr., op. cit., p. 83.

22 Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. IX, 2, 23.

23 "...Das sie opfern bringen den graeulichen Goettern Andaj, Perkun, Zwirona, Medeina..." in Wolynische Chronik 1252-1258 und Zusatz zu Chronographie des Johannes Malalas, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, p. 60.

24 "...pro deo colerunt omnem creaturam...solem, lunam et stellas..." in Petrus Dusburg, de, Chronicon Terrae Prussiae, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, p. 87.

25 Constantine R. Jurgela, History of the Lithuanian Nation, p. 38.

26 Matys Strykowski, Kronika polska, litewska, z mudska, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, p. 373-400.

serpent--"zaltys"--was revered as a house guardian, was supplied with milk, and in some places received the epithet "pene mate"--milk-mother.<sup>27</sup>

Before the twentieth century historians spoke of "Vaidilutes"--vestals. These were virgins who sacrificed their lives to the gods. It was their duty to continuously tend the sacred fire in the holy forests, one in Aukstaiciai--Highland, and one in Zemaiciai--Lowland. We find this "kilties ugnis"<sup>28</sup>--holy fire of the tribe mentioned by chroniclers. But the story about "vaidilutes" comes from Simon Grunau who frequently mixed authentic data about the Lithuanians with his own fancies and speculations: e.g. knowing that there were "Kriviai"<sup>29</sup>--pagan priests, he made analogy with the Catholic Church and invented a pope for the pagan Lithuanian priests who was called "Krivu-Krivaitis" (pontiff of pontiffs) and set him up in a temple, Romuva.<sup>30</sup> This is all quite imaginary, for the old religion had neither temple nor idol. In the same way, through

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<sup>27</sup> Paul Einhorn, "Wiederlegung der Abgoetterey," in Reformatio gentis Letticae in Ducatu Curlandiae, Riga, 1636, Cap. I, 642.

<sup>28</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. 2, p. 25.

<sup>29</sup> Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, p. 385.

<sup>30</sup> Romuva comes from "rumbota" which means a bifurcate tree. Erhard Wagner, Vita et mores Litvanorum in Borussia sub districtu Insterburgensi et Ragnitens degentium, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, p. 525.

analogy with the Roman vestal virgins, Grunau conjured up his "vaidilute". Dlugdosz and Rostowski in the sixteenth century simply passed on this fabrication uncritically. There may have been maidens who helped the priests in their sacrifices, but we have no reliable information on this, and it seems impossible to authenticate the information we have - the question of the "vaidilute" remains insoluble.

Because, behind all the trappings of polytheistic cults, the pagan Lithuanian religion had at least a vague notion of One Great, Independent and Supreme Deity above all the others, the Christianizing of Lithuania involved no great clash. Rather, it took the form of a long and slow process during which pagan beliefs lingered under a veneer of Christianity, gradually were evacuated of their religious content, and eventually degenerated to mere superstitions and customs. The process took about three hundred years, and during this time superstitions and survivals of the old beliefs were catered to by the "burtininkai" (descendants of the old priests), the "zinioniai", "raganiai", the "waydelei" and "maldininkai"--performers of the prayers, the "zaltonys" (sorcerers and necromancers), and the soothsayers or diviners for whom Praetorius alone has about twenty different names.<sup>31</sup> These names derived

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<sup>31</sup> Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. X, 4, Cap. XIV, 1-7.

from the objects by which they read the future, e.g. "szwakones"--by observing the candle flame; "dumones"--by observing smoke, etc. The old documents reveal that there were women and men among these persons: "Man findet nach fleissiger Nachfrage, dass viel Burtenicker, Wahrsager und Zauberer an Mann und Weib Personen unter den Littawen giebet..."<sup>32</sup>

Wigand von Marburg notes the great authority of the women when, in 1336 the Teutonic Knights were about to capture the castle of Pilenai. The last defenders of the fortress had decided to die rather than surrender: "There was an old pagan woman who slew one hundred men with an axe, and they received death gladly at her hands. Finally when the enemy broke in, she slew herself with the selfsame axe."<sup>33</sup>

#### Fire: Its Worship and Meaning.

Fire has a most important place in the life and religion of all Aryan peoples, and consequently it looms large in Lithuanian worship and customs. It was a deity itself and served

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<sup>32</sup> Die Insterburgische Kirchenvisitation v. 1638, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, p. 429.

<sup>33</sup> "...da eine alte keidinne gewesen sei, welche mit einer axt ueber 100 Manne, die gutwillig den tod von ihr entfiengen, und sich selbst zuletzt, da der Feind eingebrochen, mit der selbst axt den Kopf zerspalten habe..." Wigand Marburg, von, Chronicon Livoniae, in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum, Vol. 2, p. 542.

also as an excellent means of communication with other deities. It also served to help man express his gratitude to the gods by consuming his holocausts. It was greatly revered and burnt in all the homes to secure blessings and graces for the occupants. In general we can distinguish two kinds of fire worship, communal and domestic. We have already mentioned the former in the case of the Highlands and the Lowlands where priests tended a fire burning on the hill of a forest. The latter kind, family fire worship, is the older form. The mother is in charge; it is her duty to tend the hearth-fire. It is still kept up even today. The commonest name for this hearth-fire was Gabija;<sup>34</sup> Strykowski calls it Gabije,<sup>35</sup> the goddess of the fire, and Praetorius mentions Gabjauja, Ponyke;<sup>36</sup> today it is called Gabija, Gabjieta.<sup>37</sup> The fire--"ugnis" (feminine) has always been considered by the Lithuanians as something sacred and worthy of worship. The customs persist up to our

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34 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Gabija", in Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, pp. 25-32.

35 Matys Strykowski, Kronika polska, litewska, zmuska... in Wilhelm Mannhardt, op. cit., p. 389.

36 "Jeden Abend nadrawische Weiber, wenn Feuer verscharen, beten: "Szwenta ponyke, (ugnele) asz tau grazey palaidosiu, kad tu ne papykstumai." Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. IX, 23.

37 Jonas Balys, Dr., op. cit., pp. 25-28.

own times. Every evening the fire has to be "put to bed"--extinguished with clean water. To pour dirty water on the fire is no small transgression. Indeed, nothing unclean can be put in the fire. But holy articles of all sorts--pictures, crosses, statues, prayer books etc.--must be disposed of by burning. Holy articles may only be destroyed by that which is holy. After this, the embers are swept into a small mound and smothered by the dead ashes. The fire was "put to bed" with some appropriate accompanying prayers: "Holy Fire, I shall put you very nicely to bed in order that you may not be angry"; "sventa Gabeta, sugobta gobok, suziebta zibek"<sup>38</sup>-- "Holy Fire, be peaceful when you are put to rest, and gleam when you are kindled"; "Gyvenk su mumis ramybeje sventa Gabija"<sup>39</sup>--"Please live in peace with us, Holy Fire"; "Ugnele Gabijenele, nekurstema nedek, uzklostoma miegek ir nevaiksciek po siuos namus"<sup>40</sup>--"Dear Fire, Gabijenele, do not burn when you are not kindled. Sleep wneh you are covered, and please do not walk through this house."

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38 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Gabija," in Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. 2, p. 27.

39 Ibid.

40 Ibid.

The fire must be fed also. Offerings have to be made to it. When meals are cooked some salt is put on the pots and some is spinkled into the flame itself to satisfy its hunger: "Sventa Gabija, buk pasetinta"--"Take your fill, holy Gabija!"<sup>41</sup> says the housewife as she throws some salt into the fire. If the fire is properly fed and cared for and honored it is placated and peaceful and will not harm the house. This little custom is a millenial survival from the days when the Lithuanians offered sacrifices to the fire god. Fire is the brightest element in nature. It cleans and purifies and overwhelms all the powers of darkness--even vanquishing death itself.<sup>42</sup> We have already mentioned the importance of fire in wedding customs and its efficacy against charms on the eve of the feast of St. John the Baptist, and at the birth of a child. In pagan Prussia parents of deformed or incurably diseased children would commit the child and his malady to the flames.<sup>43</sup>

#### Vele, the Soul of the Dead.

"Vele" is the soul of a dead person, and "siela" is the soul of a living person;<sup>44</sup> both are feminine, as well as

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41 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Gabija," in Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, p. 26.

42 Marija Alseikaite-Gimbutiene, Dr., Die Bestattung in Litauen, p. 238.

43 Ibid.

44 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniu, p. XI.

the fire, which consumed the dead body to purify it for the resurrection.<sup>45</sup> The old pagan Lithuanians had a firm belief in the life after death.<sup>46</sup> As the body is consumed by the funeral pyre the pagan priest ("zynys", "vaidila", "krivis") can discern them flying through the sky, the men mounted on their chargers, brandishing their weapons, and surrounded by a brilliant aura of light.<sup>47</sup> For the people believed that the next life would be much like this one,<sup>48</sup> and they were anxious to dress the deceased with his best dresses, jewells, provide him with

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45 The term "vele" was known by all the prehistorical Indo-European nations. The root "ve" means to breath, to blow. The "vele" leaves the corpse through the mouth and goes out of the house through a window or, in ancient times, a hole in the ceiling. It can be seen in the form of a butterfly, a dove, or a cock. In Lithuanian folklore a woman's "vele" prefers to re-incarnate itself in female trees: lime and fir. The man's "vele" re-incarnates itself into a birch or oak. Marija Alseikaite-Gimbutiene, Dr., Die Bestattung in Litauen, p. 37.

46 "Prutheni resurrectionem carnis credebant," in Petrus Dusburg, de, Chronicon Terrae Prussiae, in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum, Vol. I, p. 54.

47 "...ac erectis in celum luminibus exclamantes mendaciter asserunt se videre presentem defunctum per medium celi volantem in equo, armis fulgentibus decoratum nisum in manu ferrentem et cum comitatu magno in aliud seculum procedentem" in Friedensvertrag des Deutschen Ordens mit den Preussen vom 1249, Februar 7, in Johannes Voigt, Geschichte Preussens, Vol. 2, p. 612.

48 "Credebant enim, si nobilis vel ignobilis, divis vel pauper, potens vel impotens esset in hac vita, ita post resurrectionem in vita futura." Petrus Dusburg, de, op. cit., p. 54.

whatever he would need or like to have in the next life.<sup>49</sup> For the men they put in the grave things and utensils for their work, hunting, weapons for soldiers. The women were buried with linen cloth and sewing kit with which they could mend their own and their children's clothes;<sup>50</sup> sometimes flax and a spinning wheel are also put in the grave.<sup>51</sup> When a little child died his mother would put his favorite toys in the grave with him.<sup>52</sup>

Death was a dread evil, and corpses were cremated to forestall corruption and putrefaction, and to destroy the power of death which was thought to linger in the dead body. It also protected the corpse and the dead man's kin from the tamperings and molestations of ghosts.<sup>53</sup> All the chroniclers from the ninth to the seventeenth century mention this custom of cremation! Wulfstan gives us a careful description of the

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49 "...daz man wapin unde pfert,..cleidin wert, jaithunde und vedirspil...mit den todin verbrante." Nicolaus Jerochin, von, Die Kronike von Pruzzinlant, in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum, Vol. I, 4071-77.

50 "...der weiblichen person legen sie 10-11 ehlen leinenwand drinnen..." Johann Arnold Brand, Reysen durch die Marck Brandenburg, Preussen, Churland, Liefeland, Pleskovien, Wesel, 1702, p. 98.

51 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., op. cit., p. XXIV.

52 Ibid.

53 Marija Alseikaite-Gimbutienė, Dr., Die Bestattung in Litauen, p. 238.

rites for the dead:<sup>54</sup>

The corpse was kept in a separate house for from two to six months: it was frozen and well preserved. During this time feasts and games for all the relatives and neighbors were arranged. When this period was over all the possessions of the dead man which were left over from these festive occupations were put into five or six parcels of graded size and value. The most valuable was put about six miles from the body and the least valuable was put about a mile from the body. The men then mounted their swiftest steeds and galloped off in the treasure hunt to get as much as possible of the dead man's former possessions.

The funeral rites of ancient Lithuania were characterized by two tendencies which may seem contradictory: mourning and rejoicing.<sup>55</sup> But both of these tendencies stemmed naturally from the "weltanschauung" of the people. Sadness came from the loss of a loved one, from the evil of sickness and death which has plucked him from the midst of his family and society. The

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<sup>54</sup> Wulfstans Reisebericht ueber Preussen, in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum, Vol. I, p. 733.

<sup>55</sup> "Dies natalios et funebres pari modo celebrant, mutuis scilicet commensationibus et comotationibus, cum lusu, cantu et tripudio, absque ulla moereris significatione cum summa hilaritate et gaudio. Sic enim sibi persuadebant, cum quis e vita pie migrasset, praesertim si per ignem transivisset, eum e vestigio in deorum conversationem avolare et ibidem iisdem voluptatibus perfini, quibus in hac vita fuisset oblectatus. - Cujus opinionis contestandae gratia, vita functos vestibus, quas vivi habuisset, optimis induebant, et cum eo maximam praetiosae suppellectilis domesticae partem humabant, addebant potum melleum vel ex tribico factum, in testaceis vasis, ne scilicet vel in altera vita, vel ad minimum in itinere commeatus deesset." Kaspar Schuetz, Rerum Prussicarum historia, Gedani, 1769, p. 8.

women lament and wail lyrically and poetically.<sup>56</sup> At the funerals of nobles and the wealthy, professional women mourners added their voices to the dirge.<sup>57</sup> The feasts, songs, and games stemmed from the strong belief the people had in the soul's immortality<sup>58</sup> and in the happiness of "dausos"--paradise, whither the souls of the just and pious went. The wicked and impious, on the other hand, went to a place of pain and sorrow.<sup>59</sup>

Death, it was believed, did not break the bond with the living. The departed and those on earth still constituted one family. For thirty days after a man's death his wife would kneel by his grave at sunset or dawn and there weep for him.<sup>60</sup> On the third, sixth, ninth, and fortieth day after his death his friends and relatives would go to his grave and have a sort of picnic, in which, they invited

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56 R. Meulen, Dr., Gamtos Prilyginimai Lietuviu Dainose ir Raudose, Vilnius: Lietuviu Mokslo Draugija, 1919, p. 2.

57 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniu, p. XXXV.

58 "...credebant etenim caligine infidelitatis obfuscati, his decedentes alio in seculo, quam hic solebant, multum uti gloriosus." Laurentius Blumenau, Historia de Ordine teutonorum Cruciferorum, in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum, Vol. 4, p.49.

59 Lucas David, Preussische Chronik, in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum, Vol. 4, p. 49.

60 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniu, p. XXXV.

him through prayer to take part.<sup>61</sup> They ate without silver-ware and in silence, and each poured some food and drink on the ground where the souls were gathered to eat. If any food fell accidentally on the ground it was left for the shades who had no kin.<sup>62</sup> In the fall, when all nature is dying (November 1st), every family prepared a meal on the grave for their departed loved ones.<sup>63</sup> All the chroniclers have given much mention to this cult of dead souls.

The fate of the people, their birth, life, and death, is in the hands of goddesses. Even after death, in the thrall of eternity, it is Vielona,<sup>64</sup> mother of souls and goddesses, who takes care of them. Because of this preponderance of female deities and the womanly tenderness of its customs, the pagan Lithuanian religion is sometimes called the 'female religion', and the nation itself could well be called the nation of female virtues.

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61 Hieronymus Maletius, "Von jaerlichem gedechnis," in Sudauerbuechlein, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, p. 537.

62 Ibid.

63 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., op. cit., p. XXII.

64 "...Vielona deus animarum cui tum oblatio offertur, cum mortui pascuntur." Johann Lasicii, De diis samagitarum caeterorumque Sarmatarum et falsorum Christianorum, in Magazin. Mitau: Lettisch-Literarische Gesellschaft, 1868, p. 23.

## Devotion to the Blessed Virgin.

The transition from paganism to Catholicism was not hard for the Lithuanian mind. From the thirteenth century, when Lithuania held sway over many Russian and Slavic countries, the Lithuanians came into contact with orthodoxy. In the capital and in some other cities Orthodox and Catholic churches could be found, and the non-Christian people were tolerant and respectful towards the new religion.<sup>65</sup> For three hundred years the Teutonic knights fought to enslave Lithuania, and they justified their cruelty and rapine by calling it an evangelization done in the name of God. It only hindered the real Christianization of Lithuania.

But when Lithuania was finally baptized by its great Dukes Vytautas and Jogaila the naturally pious heart of the Lithuanians became staunchly Christian. Until the seventeenth century, however, superstitions connected with the old religion still survived. Often they were transposed to the saints of Christianity. The Blessed Virgin was heaped with honors, for she was so close to the traditions of the people--the embodiment of the highly prized virtues of a mother and a virgin. The country has two national shrines of the Blessed Virgin:

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<sup>65</sup> Adolfas Sapoka, Dr., Lietuvos Istorija. Tuebingen: Patria, 1951, p. 320.

Siluva,<sup>66</sup> in the Lowlands, is the Lithuanian Lourdes where the Blessed Mother is supposed to have appeared in 1612; and Vilnius, in the Highlands, where in 1665 the Church approved the miraculous picture. The Mother of God of Siluva--"Siluvos Dievo Motina"--and the Mother of God of Aurora's Gate--"Aurora Ausros Vartu Stebuklingoji Dievo Motina"--has been the object of veneration for centuries, and any hour of the day or night discovers her clients kneeling devoutly at the shrines. At times when indulgences are given thronging thousands of the faithful come to the shrines to sing hymns and pray the rosary. Many cures are recorded, and this increases in hearts devotion to the Mother of Grace. The great number of popular hymns, litanies, and special shrines of the Blessed Virgin attest to the strength of the people's devotion. Our Lady's most popular title is "Mother of Sorrows."

Lithuania has suffered much, and its people have a deep realization of the message of the Cross. It is a land of crosses. They form an inseparable part of the landscape. Their outlines follow the undulations of the fields and penetrate into the woods. They stand by each rural cottage, by the sources of rivers, by graves, on "piliakalniai"--the hills where castles once stood, in solitary and in much frequented places. According

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<sup>66</sup> Stasys Yla, kun, "Siluvos Sventove," in Darbininkas, September 8, 1950.

to one legend you find one every ten paces in holy Zemaitija--the Lowlands.<sup>67</sup> The cemetery at Vilnius is so crowded with crosses that there is no room for a tree. Though originally they were connected with funerals they are now planted on many occasions--they commemorate a birth, a baptism, the favorable issue of a lawsuit, etc. They are erected in times of pestilence or drought. To the peasant they are a constant reminder of the relation of life's joys and sorrows to Christ the Redeemer. The consecration of crosses was celebrated by ancient rites and banquets. To the Christian symbols are added elements which go back to pagan times.<sup>68</sup> They are hand carved from wood by "dievdirbiai"--God-makers and each is slightly different from the other. Elements from ancient worship of the celestial bodies still linger. The crosses are provided with small chapels, sometimes the chapels are erected alone. They are especially found in the Lowlands. These little chapels shelter small statuettes, pictures or engravings, as well as offerings. The commonest subject of the art work is the Pietà, the Virgin of the Seven Sorrows, or Christ seated or bearing the Cross. The Savior is sometimes quite small in relation to His mother. For the Lithuanians

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67 Jurgis Baltrusaitis, Dr., Lithuanian Folk Art. Edited by T. Vizgirda, Munich, 1948, p. 36.

68 Ibid., p. 41.

He has always remained the Child.<sup>69</sup> The great heart of the Virgin is exposed, and it is pierced with seven flaming swords. The relative sizes show what the common folk most revered--the heart of the suffering mother. This preference for the Mother of Sorrows can be explained by the sufferings and travails of the nation throughout its long history. Who could better understand and help a mother who had to watch her son martyred before her eyes, or who knew that they were dying far away in the enemy's territory that the Sorrowful Mother weeping over the body of her dead Son who has just been taken down from the Cross? The Virgin was the supreme model and teacher of the Lithuanian woman, especially in hard times. It was a family custom, especially in Advent, to sing a "valandas" or "karunka"--a song recalling the joys and sorrows of the Blessed Mother. During Lent the people went to church and sang "graudus verksmai"--the sad laments, and the Way of the Cross where the sufferings of Our Lord are seen through the eyes of His Blessed Mother.

In the martyred Lithuania of today where God and national culture must hide in the underground a very popular song about the Blessed Virgin--"Marija, Marija" has become the national

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69 Jurgis Baltrusaitis, Dr., Lithuanian Folk Art, p. 55.

anthem.<sup>70</sup> Small wonder that in the Middle Ages the popes called Lithuania "terra Mariana".<sup>71</sup>

## 2. The Woman in the National Culture.

The main elements constituting national culture, besides religion, are the domestic arts and folklore. Both of these elements in Lithuania are closely linked to agriculture; Lithuanians have been peasants from time immemorial. In both of these elements, the woman is the dominating figure; her influence is profound and all-pervading.

### The Woman in the Domestic Arts.

The woman contributed greatly to national art. It has already been mentioned how the women made clothes, knitting, linen and woolen goods by hand. She sang to the music of her weaving, which expressed at the same time her dreams, feelings and admiration for her flower gardens and the beauty of nature. Cotton, woolen, and particularly linen textiles constitute one of the richest and most ancient branches of popular art. Although the patterns of ancient carpets ("kilimai", derived

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<sup>70</sup> Daumantas, "Partizanai uz Gelezines Uzdangos," in Draugas, September 24, 1950.

<sup>71</sup> Stasys Yla, kun, "Siluvos Sventove," in Darbininkas, September 8, 1950.

directly from the Asiatic "kelims")<sup>72</sup> have not been preserved, foreign inventories of the seventeenth century assign them a prominent place.<sup>73</sup> From such information, artists and connoisseurs have employed sketches, drawings and outlines in an attempt to reconstruct these patterns.

In independent Lithuania national patterns were renewed in weaving and carpet making. In this line, there is now in Montreal a school founded by the Lithuanian artists Anastazija and Antanas Tamosaiciai; similar enterprises have been undertaken in the United States by a small number of such weavers. Lithuanian linen and fabrics have always been renowned and exported as far away as Hungary.<sup>74</sup> The linen is either used or mixed with cotton for sheets (according to later usage), table-cloths, napkins and towels. Large fabrics with damask decorations of infinite variety are so sturdy and durable that they have been handed down from generation to generation. Raw and bleached linen, and mixtures of cotton and linen are interwoven in such a way as to produce designs of checks, stars and intersecting circles. Designs of gray on gray, sometimes very intricate, bring about light effects to relieve the austerity

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72 Jurgis Baltrusaitis, Dr., Lithuanian Folk Art, p. 74.

73 Ibid.

74 Ibid.

of the material used. Ornamental patterns are drawn from nature, such as stars and especially plants, trees and flowers and whatever strikes the weaver's fancy.

Conventionalism is the outstanding trait of Lithuanian ornamentation.<sup>75</sup> Evidence of this is found in the strict geometrical quality of plant designs in popular Lithuanian art. Although used to some extent in the patterns of bedspreads and ordinary fabrics, colors served chiefly for the decoration of clothing. The most colorful and the most variegated products of their technic are belts--"juostos"--and aprons--"ziurstai". The former are remarkable for their antiquity of design; the latter, for their splendor and richness of decoration. Among the several technics and different weaves displayed in the making of "juostos", some are complicated and others are so rudimentary that a shepherdess watching her flock can work them.<sup>76</sup> The most ancient "juostos" are plaited from wool in three colors; red, white and blue (still to be found in eastern Lithuania. The oldest of the sewn "juostos" still remain in Suvalkai.<sup>77</sup>

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75 Juozas Lingis, "The National Character of Lithuanian People," in The Baltic Review, Vol. I, No. I, 1945.

76 Jurgis Baltrusaitis, Dr., Lithuanian Folk Art, p. 76.

77 Ibid.

The common method of weaving employs threads of different fibers and various colors. The motif of the pattern occupies a central position; swastikas with ramifications, rosettes and complicated polygons incorporating lozenges, squares, crosses, ladders, hooks, angles, windows, rakes, goat's hooves, nuts and multiple eyes.<sup>78</sup> Gay, bright rose-colored "juostos" are worn as a distinctive national garment by women as a waistband, or by girls as ribbons on their "vainikas" (headdress), or by men as a belt or necktie.

"Ziurstai" involve more skillful methods. The decorative needle-work incorporates various systems on the same apron. On a background of dark blue, garnet, green or even black, linen or cotton are worked into the following large designs: fleur-de-lys, idealized roses, or red, violet, blue and yellow tulips. These are combined in patterns of crosses, rosettes, zigzags, and solid blocks, and remind one of the sumptuousness and brilliant and extravagant colors of ancient Spanish fabrics.

These designs are either spread over the entire surface of the fabric or framed for greater attraction within a pattern of rays. One of the favorite decorative flower patterns in the Easter decoration is the tulip, known in early Lithuania and

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78 Ibid.

appearing as an emblem on aprons. Indeed, aprons are worn everywhere -- at work in the field and home and with Sunday dress. The apron for a Lithuanian woman is not only an ornament, but also a symbol of her virtue.<sup>79</sup> In fact, in the country, it is considered improper to be seen without an apron. Also adorned with colored patterns are the skirt and "kilikas" (a kind of bodice). In the nineteenth century this "kiklikas" was often made of precious brocade (possibly brought by soldiers from Napoleon's army).<sup>80</sup>

Another example of the Lithuanian peasant woman's art is the coloring of eggs at Easter, Whitsunday, and in some regions on St. George's Day. Two methods are used in the painting of the eggs. One method is to plunge the egg in a liquid dye and the design is then engraved with a knife.<sup>81</sup> Another way is to apply the design with wax, and dip the egg in the dye. When the wax is removed, the figure stands out in white. A great variety of shades is obtained by dipping the egg in a series of colored baths. Some pottery patterns, such as firs, rosettes, stars, dots, zigzags and types of flowers, are reproduced in miniature to cover the egg with a

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79 Ibid., p. 76.

80 Ibid., p. 77.

81 Balys Buracas, "Musu Grazieji Marguciai," in Jaunoji Karta, Kaunas, 1938, March, No. 15.

decorative network. The potter, thus, becomes a painter of eggs. These designs have distinctive, and more or less symbolic names, such as adder, chicken feet, the rake, butterflies, snow crystals.<sup>82</sup> The background is either black, or brown, or blue or red, and thus resembles an island forest more than an egg shell.

With these artistically painted eggs, the Lithuanian woman not only decorates her Easter table, already bedecked with special meats and food prepared carefully in the distinctive manner of each housewife, but also favors relatives, friends and especially neighborhood children and her godchildren. In this connection, there is a custom observed on the second day of the Easter celebration. The young boys in disguise go from house to house, especially where there are young girls, and sing Easter songs, then merry folk-songs, joke and finally ask for Easter eggs--"marguciai". The young group of singers, called "lalauninkai",<sup>83</sup> are warmly received with delicious refreshments, and collect many colorful "marguciai".<sup>84</sup>

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82 Ibid.

83 Antanas Urbonas, "Vaidinimai su Kaukem," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1937, Vol. 3, p. 94.

84 Anastasija Tamosaitiene, "Velyku Marguciai," in Draugas, March 23, 1951.

The dye for both "marguciai" and fabrics with many shades and hues is prepared, as in the earliest times, by the woman herself from the skin of onions, the bark of the oak, the alder, the birch, the leaves and roots of plants and herbs and from pieces of rusty iron.<sup>85</sup> Here again, her initiative, ingenuity and inventiveness are displayed as in her skillful transposition of surrounding nature into the richly decorative and geometrical patterns of her artistry.

The peasant dwellings of old Lithuania were very simple, but despite the poor means at her disposal the woman was able to decorate them tastefully and find an outlet for her feelings for beauty. She made many small things for the house, straw frames for holy pictures, "sietynas"<sup>86</sup>--a kind of chandelier made of fine ornaments and used only for decoration, etc. Every woman prides herself on her love for flowers. The young girl delights in her "rutu Darzelis"--rue garden, and between girls and between towns there are competitions to see who can raise the best flower garden. Around every country house, even the smallest cabin, a smiling flower garden testifies to the same appreciation of beauty of the simple Lithuanian peasant woman.

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<sup>85</sup> Balys Buracas, "Musu Grazieji Marguciai," in Jaunoji Karta, March, 1938, No. 15.

<sup>86</sup> Jurgis Baltrusaitis, Dr., Lithuanian Folk Art, p. 69.

## The Creator and Preserver of Folklore.

Folklore is the spiritual treasure house of a nation. Each nation reveals in its folklore its "Weltanschauung", its worship, its ideals, its aspirations, wars, victories and losses. Folklore could be called the spirit of a nation. It is born with the nation, grows with it, and dies with it. It can be written down to save it from vanishing for scholarly science; but a merely written folklore which is already dead on the lips of the people tells us only about a nation's past, just as the pyramids tell us only of Egypt's past. Under the general designation 'folklore' we include all the traditional tales, songs, legends, popular sayings, proverbs, narratives, enchantments, superstitions, amusements and games.<sup>87</sup> It is a question of survivals which are passed on from mother to daughter, from father to son--usually by word of mouth. Its sources lie far beyond the memories of the oldest inhabitants. "A certain thing has 'always' been done, and it has been done this way--therefore we must do it this way."<sup>88</sup> Thus, through popular conservatism do these things remain. The conservatism of the Lithuanian peasants is deep-rooted and very tenacious. They

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<sup>87</sup> Jonas Balys, Dr., "Pasakojamoji Tautosaka ir Jos Tyrinejimai," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 256.

<sup>88</sup> William Reginal Halliday, Greek and Roman Folklore. New York: Longman, Green and Co., 1927, p. 4.

have clung resolutely to customs and beliefs which go back into time immemorial, which are common not only to the Indo-European parent stock but to all other people: belief in the immortality of the soul; worship of the sun, the creator of nature and of man; the mysterious relationship between fertility and the manifestation of some of the powers of nature;<sup>89</sup> and the worship of thunder. Some superstitions, like divination by scrutiny of the liver and other entrails, were practices in all the ancient nations of Asia Minor and Europe, and are even practiced today in Borneo.<sup>90</sup> Lithuanian folklore abounds in such traditions which are well nigh impossible to track down to their origin. We must agree with Halliday that "at a certain stage of intellectual and social development the human mind reacts to similar circumstances in similar ways. A number of simple general ideas of this kind must have developed independently and spontaneously in different places. They are rooted in human nature. Whenever or wherever people have attained a certain level of civilization they are observed to occur."<sup>91</sup> It is obvious that some of the folk traditions

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89 "Hat das weibliche Naturprinzip einen die cerealische Stufe des Stofflichen Lebens umfassenden Ausdruck erhalten, so ist maennlich zeugende und befruchtende Potenz als tellurische Wasserkraft zu erkennen, ... Aus der vereinten Einwirkung auf den weiblichen Erdstoff geht alle tellurische Fruchtbarkeit hervor." Johann Jakob Backofen, Mutterrecht und Urreligion. Stuttgart: Kroener Verlag, 1941, p. 44.

90 William Reginald Halliday, Greek and Roman Folklore, p. 8.

91 Ibid., p. 5.

belong to a dim and distant past. These popular traditions of the nation must have been preserved by women folk; for they, being physically weaker, must have been more in awe of the power of the natural elements. By nature the women were more superstitious, and more conservative about keeping intact all the inherited experience of her ancestors, so as to influence nature favorably through magic. The Lithuanian woman is especially conservative, and this comes from the fact that the life of a peasant is so close to the soil. The farmer loves the land he tills and develops an aesthetic, almost mystical, attitude towards it.<sup>92</sup> Since the Lithuanian woman has such a great affection for her native soil, she loves everything related to it. She loves her forefathers who have lived in the same house, watched the sun rising over the same hills, seen moon turn the furrows of the same field into corrugated silver, and mingled the sweat of their toil with the rich brown earth. In their honor she follows strictly their mode of life, their traditions, customs, and habits.<sup>93</sup> To change the every day practices of her forebearers seems to a Lithuanian peasant woman to be an insult to their memory. The very tools used by their ancestors were revered as precious

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<sup>92</sup> Juozas Lingis, The National Character of Lithuanian People, p. 7.

<sup>93</sup> Juozas Vaizgantas, Pragiedruliai. Vilnius: Svyturys, 1920, p. 51.

keepsakes. In fact this stubborn reverence for the past served to impede the agricultural modernization of Lithuania. On the other hand, this same tenacity has preserved for generations the nation's greatest cultural treasure--the national folklore. In former times the education of the children consisted largely in the example of the parents and learning of stories, songs, and proverbs which contained the accumulated practical wisdom and moral insight of the entire race.

In pagan Lithuania there were men called "vaidilos"<sup>94</sup> who were a sort of wandering priest-minstrels. They travelled from castle to castle praying with the people and singing traditional songs and song-narratives to them to the accompaniment of a "kankliai"--a harp-like national instrument. Through these songs the people were educated in the riches of their national culture and were taught to love the national virtues.<sup>95</sup>

From the cradle to the grave the Lithuanian is accompanied by songs. The mother puts her babe to sleep with the same softly crooned lullabies to which she once fell asleep in her mother's arms. The shepherd lad sings to beguile away the

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94 "...ihre Maldininkai und Waidullen, der mit Gott im Gebet kaempft." Erhard Wagner, Vita et mores Litwanorum sub districtu Insterburgensi et Ragnitensi degentium, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlehre, p. 527.

95 "Der Weydellut...gebetet...einen Sermon gehalten von ihrem Herkommen, alten Gebrauechen, Glauben, Zemyna, Perkun und andere genennet." Matthaeus Praetorius, Deliciae Prussiae, Cap. VII, 15.

lonesome hours in the meadows with his flock. The girl sings at her loom, in the fields, in her garden--every kind of work has its special songs (cf. the chapter on Diligence infra). Every season of the year, every feast and festival, has its own songs. Most of these songs are the songs of the women. In the monumental song collections of the Tautosakos Archyvas and other general folklore collections about eighty per cent of the songs are songs of women.<sup>96</sup> A grandmother is an inexhaustible source of songs, tales, and legends. She entertains the whole family with them during the long nights of winter and autumn as they sit around doing their chores: the women knitting and spinning; the children fluffing the feathers for the beds; and the men working on the tools, vehicles, and home and farm utensils or carving wooden dishes.

According to the folklore (as we have already mentioned) the bride has a very hard time of it in her mother-in-law's home. The latter is reluctant to give advice about ruling the new household. This is customary--the bride is given the keys to the house in a ceremony indicating that she is the ruler of the household affairs.<sup>97</sup> But an envious mother-in-law can

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<sup>96</sup> "Didzioji liaudies dainu dalis yra moteru sukurta ir islaikyta." Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 193.

<sup>97</sup> "Smirdi kaip marti anytai," in Vincas Kreve, "Ptarles, Priezodziai ir Issireiskimai," in Epe Lituana, 1925, Vol. 3, p. 387.

make life miserable for the bride<sup>98</sup> who--she may feel--is competing with her for her son's affections. The poor, distraught girl has no one to whom she can confide her tribulations, for her husband either sides with his mother or--more frequently--does not wish to be involved in the petty squabbles of women. She is, therefore, forced to entrust her misery to song. She sings, with the warble of the cuckoo, of her mother and her burning desire to return to her childhood home, to her days of maidenhood, security and joy.<sup>99</sup> She yearns for the wilted rue wreath which crowned her head when her heart was carefree and gay. The songs are saturated in poignant melancholy--sometimes they are depressingly sad and forlorn--but always they are subtle of melody and phrase. Such songs are very numerous. They can be divided for convenience's sake into three classes: (1) those which contrast her life at her own home (where she flourished as the green rue, as the red rose, as the white lily) with her new life in the home of her mother-in-law (where she is faded like the sun-scorched grass, like the stinging nettle, where her once rosy cheeks grow wan);<sup>100</sup> (2) those which describe her mistreatment by her

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98 This writer's Collection of Proverbs. Rec. from Sofija Vysniauskiene, Village of Netonys, Kaunas, 1938.

99 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 59.

100 Ibid., pp. 38, 39, 54, 55.

mother-in-law (she is treated like a "sluzankele"<sup>101</sup>--servant girl; she is overworked and assigned chores which repel her;<sup>102</sup> and (3) those in which she does not complain or rail against anyone or anything but simply begs to be transformed into a duck<sup>103</sup> or swan so she may swim near her home or into a cuckoo or other bird so she may fly away to perch near her mother's home. This class of songs is especially beautiful. The girl dreams of fluttering and singing by her house in the form of a bird. None recognize her save her sweet and loving mother who invites her to come in and stay.<sup>104</sup> But the Lithuanians do not tolerate any separation of married people, and so the girl must sadly and coyly refuse her mother's invitation. She tells her mother that she will come home to stay when the rue wreath will regain its verdant hue, or when it will grow and bloom in the same day. She promises to return home when her mother can give her back the rue wreath<sup>105</sup>--in other words when her mother can remake her a virgin she can return... Nevermore! The songs of the "marti"--daughter-in-law--are as sad as the songs of the orphans, always lyrical and tender and

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101 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 148.

102 Ibid., pp. 121, 149, 161.

103 Ibid., p. 64.

104 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., op. cit., pp. 64, 168.

105 Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 85.

totally free of any vulgar realism. They are among the finest expressions of folk-poetry and song.

Although some of the songs originated in the old pagan Lithuanian religion, songs of mythological origin are not numerous. They are about the sun,<sup>106</sup> the moon,<sup>107</sup> venus (Ausrine),<sup>108</sup> and the Pleiades (Sietynas).<sup>109</sup> The celestial bodies, fancifully invested with human qualities, are the protectors of orphans.<sup>110</sup> Some of these songs are connected with annual feasts<sup>111</sup> and particular works. War songs are neither numerous nor inspired with the usual apotheosis of martial heroism and prowess. True to the human and lyrical nature of the nation itself, the dominant theme of these martial airs, also created by the women,<sup>112</sup> is lyrical.

106 "Ein saulele aplink dangu..." in Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 100.

107 "Menuo tevelis dalele skyre..." in Grazina Krivickiene, Dainos, p. 33.

108 "Vakarine zvaigzdele, visa dangu isvaiksciojo..." in Jonas Balys, Dr., op. cit., p. 100.

109 "Sietyns brolelis lauku lydejo..." in Grazina Krivickiene, op. cit., p. 33.

110 "Tu saulele raudonoji, kur taip ilgai uztrukai? Uz kalneliu, uz aukstuju naslaitelius raminau." Jonas Balys, Dr., "Tautosaka apie Dangu," in Draugas, November 15, 1950.

111 Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 100.

112 "Be to, zymi dalis dainu apie kara irgi yra moteru sukurta." in Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 199.

The Lithuanian balades also reflect the national character; they are sensitive and sad (a sign that they are younger than the Scandinavian "magnificent cruelty").<sup>113</sup> The majority of these songs are about maidenhood, the days of youth, the maiden's dreams, and her social relations with "bernelis". The numerous wedding songs can be properly included in this same division; for example, the bride's plaintive farewell to her fond rue wreath and the daughter-in-law's longing for bygone days of youth. Although the word 'love' does not appear in these songs,<sup>114</sup> they can be properly considered as love songs -- very tender and shy, but very rich in their expression and lyricism.<sup>115</sup>

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113 Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 200.

114 "Naturalnosc, wzjeta z ust narodu, 2. Zartheit der Empfindung, 3. czysta moralnosc, 4. nadzwyczajna rzewnosc i mila melancholja. Milosc jest mimowolnym i swietym uczuciem natury...ze w tej dziwnej sklonosci musi zawierzac sie cos wyszego, Boskiego." in Ludwig Rhesa, Betrachtung ueber littauischen Volkslieder," in Jonas Balys, Dr., "Tautosaka is Kossarzewskio Lituanicos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1937, Vol. 3, p. 110.

115 "Das litauische Volkslied gibt alles in einem Klang, Seele und Symbol, im Zauber der einfachsten Worte, der natuerlichsten Mittel, es ist keusch und verhalten. Es hebt die Dinge der Wirklichkeit oft auf eine zweite Ebene des Erlebens, in eine Ideale Sphere, in der all das als Wirklichkeit erscheint, was auf Erden nur ein Traum bleibt." Victor Jungfer, Dr., Litauischer Liederschrein, p. 8.

"Raudos"--lamentations--are considered by authorities on Lithuanian folklore as the oldest Lithuanian songs.<sup>116</sup> Some of these authorities, however, prefer to classify them as belonging to folklore, rather than songs.<sup>117</sup> Recent authorities, on the other hand, would stamp "sutartines" or "giesmes" as the oldest songs.<sup>118</sup> "Sutartines", sung by two, three, or four groups in polyphony, differ according to their contrapuntal and canonic renditions. The second part of the melody, consisting of two parts, is sung in a higher key than the first. The first part of "sutartine" has a meaning--"rinkinys"; the second part, without meaning, has words only for keeping the rhythm--"patarimas". It seems that "sutartines" are not only the oldest kind of Lithuanian songs, but that in the earliest times all Lithuanian songs were of this kind.<sup>119</sup>

Some of the "sutartines" must be supposed to date from prehistoric time. This type of song, connected with work or dance are no more to be found in European nations,<sup>120</sup> except

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116 "...quod post mortem et casum scirent carminibus de fortibus factis se laudandos." Johannes Dlugosz, Historia Polonica, in Mykolas Birziska, Dainu Atsiminimai is Lietuvos Istorijos. Vilnius: Lietuviu Mokslo Draugija, 1920, p. 5.

117 Balys Sruoga, Dr., "Lietuviu Dainu Poetines Prie-mones," in Epe Litvana, 1925, Vol. 3, pp. 7-8.

118 Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 195.

119 Ibid., p. 196.

120 Jonas Balys, Dr., op. cit., Vol. I, p. 196.

in northeastern Lithuania, where they still survive. Although all Lithuanians enjoy singing and folklore, they seem to flourish with the greatest enthusiasm in Dzukija, where the soil is the poorest of any area. Zemaitija (the Lowland), an area of fertile soil and rich farmers, seems to be less creative in the field of folklore. Evidence of the popularity of singing in Lithuania Minor a hundred years ago can be found in a considerable amount of old and original songs, especially the catchy fishing songs.

It is difficult to determine precisely the date of birth of these spiritual and cultural offsprings as well as the name of the person conceiving them in the national matrix. Some of them are created by one person, usually a woman; some, such as the "sutartines" must be credited to a collective authorship.<sup>121</sup>

Despite the fact that the Lithuanians' lyrical character has changed little throughout the ages, the vicissitudes and conditions of modern life have infected the observance of customs and the organism of folklore with the germs of a slow death. The golden age of folklore glittered in the sunny and favorable living conditions of the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. The country population living in villages

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<sup>121</sup> Ibid., p. 194.

with houses nestled closely together on both sides of the village road enjoyed the advantage and joy of an intense and intimate community life. The fields and meadows were located some distance from the village. The villagers gathered together in collective force to accomplish the farming and peasant activities -- cutting hay, harvesting, threshing, the processing of flax, spinning. The collective workers started the rounds of their respective fields by beginning with a field located on a hill where the nearness of the sun ripened the grain first. From the hills across the fields to the village, from early in the morning till late at night, the air was filled with the sound of the collective work and singing.

All this started to change after 1861 when serfdom was abolished by law. The peasants started to build "vienkiemiu sistema"<sup>122</sup>--their settlements in the middle of their own fields, far from each other. The next step in this same direction occurred in independent Lithuania with the agrarian reform of 1922. It is easy to evaluate the great social economic importance resulting from the government's dividing of large estates into smaller farms of twenty-five to eighty acres and thus dividing the villages into separate settlements.

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<sup>122</sup> Adolfas Sapoka, Dr., Lietuvos Istorija. Tuebingen: Patria, 2nd edition, 1951, p. 477.

Few villages of the earlier type remain.<sup>123</sup> With the coming of a new system, old habits also changed. With the decreasing of collective work, fewer songs are sung, fewer tales are related, and the attraction of folklore lost its magnetism.

"Talkos" is a term denoting all group works, be they in the field or the home, but it is especially applied to the latter kind. The women gather in the autumn evenings to pluck and sort the feathers and process and spin the flax. The girls assemble their spinning wheels in the largest house in the village, and as they work they sing the songs their mothers have taught them. Thus the "talkos" is a great boon to the preservation of folklore. Since marriage between persons of the same village was not very common<sup>124</sup> there were always many new songs and stories coming in to swell the tide of the common folk-culture. The work became easy and the hours fled by when all ears were listening and the heart throb kept the beat.

The task of preparing the feathers was usually reserved to the young girls and boys who tended the cattle. They loved to tell hair raising stories about the wicked ghosts.<sup>125</sup> These

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123 Ibid., pp. 571-574.

124 "...Kuciu vakara, isnesusi sasiavas, atydziai klausosi, kurioje puseje sunes loja, nes is ten atvaziuos pirsliai." Jadvyga Ruzgyte, "Nuo Advento iki Triju Karaliu," in Gimtasai Krastas, 1942, Vol. 9, p. 126.

125 Liudas Nezabitauskas, "Zemaiciu Talkos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1935, Vol. I, p. 127.

communal chores start in October and the work lasts from sunset to dawn.<sup>126</sup> There is a separate small building at the outskirts of the village, far removed from the dwellings, where they gather to process the flax. In this "pirtis" they take time out for a meal and a little rest for one or two hours at about midnight.<sup>127</sup> In the center of the "pirtis" a bonfire burns in a ditch dug into the ground. The workers gather around the fire for warmth, and the door is left open to let the smoke out. The black restless shadows cast by the leaping red flames, the distant and eerie howling of dogs and the banshee wail of the gusty autumn wind stirring the sere leaves like a witch's ladle provide a perfect setting for dreadful tales of ghosts and demons--especially those in which they prey on flax workers.<sup>128</sup> In these stories the woman's position is central. The most dreadful and unbelievable things happen to her while she is in the "pirtis", for the "pirtis" is empty most of the year and is haunted by legions of devils, "laumes"--good and bad fairies, and evil sprites of all sorts. These are wont to molest the unwary woman who does not protect her-

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126 Ibid., p. 125.

127 Ibid., p. 126.

128 Jonas Balys, Dr., "Pasakos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 30.

self with the magic spray of mountain ash.<sup>129</sup> When the mood of horror and dread reaches a peak and everyone begins to look about uneasily with wide eyes the young fellows break the tension with songs, riddles and puzzles.

Lithuania is a singing nation.<sup>130</sup> The men, however, sing less than the women. They seldom sing when they are alone, only when there are women about to listen or to join in the song. The women, on the other hand, sing always, whether they are at home or in the fields; they sing to break the silence of solitude and make the yielding air throb to their moods and sentiments. We are told nowadays that the heart is eased when one can express his feelings. The Lithuanian woman does this in song, confiding her joys and sorrows to the attentive sky.<sup>131</sup> No gathering, feast, or party would be complete without song<sup>132</sup>--even at funerals mournful then joyful songs are sung. Women are looked to as the chief singers and lovers of the folk-music, and they must be given credit for preserving the rich and varied treasure of national songs.

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129 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos, Vol. 2, p. 195.

130 Victor Jungfer, Dr., Litauischer Liederschrein, p. 8.

131 Ludwig J. Rhesa, "Dainos," in Mykolas Birziska, Lietuviu Dainu Literaturos Istorija. Vilnius: Lietuviu Mokslo Draugija, 1919, pp. 53, 82.

132 "Kur tik susirenka didesnis burys lietuviu, ten skamba ir daina." Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 193.

It is the Lithuanian woman who has largely created the treasure of folklore.<sup>133</sup> Seeking ways of shielding her loved ones from ghosts and dark powers and of obtaining favors for them from benevolent powers she originated hundreds of superstitions. Observing the changes of nature she conceived them as dependent upon magic formulae. Human beings are thrown defenseless and ignorant into an unfamiliar and mighty cosmos--their happiness seems to depend upon the ever warring powers of good and evil. But to communicate with these powers requires special gifts which all do not have. Those women who have them are called "ragana" or "zinione". "Ragana" derives from the verb "regeti"--to see (cf. English--seer, French--voyant), and means a woman who can see into the future and read signs beyond the vision of the ordinary person. "Zinione" derives from the verb "zinoti"--to know, and means a woman who can divine the hidden causes of things. Though "raganos" and "ziniones"<sup>134</sup> know how to communicate with the good powers they usually conspire with the evil powers and malevolent ghosts and thys they are always making mischief and bringing harm to people. The "ragana" is unfailingly imaginative in creating enchantments and superstitions. To them the women come to improve their knowledge of superstitious practices

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133 Ibid.

134 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos, Vol. 2, pp. 146-188.

and add to the lore they have learned from their forebears. From earliest times up to the nineteenth and even our own century every village had its "raganos" and "ziniones"; they were the first physicians, surgeons, hygienists, and druggists. From them the people also learned many useful facts about the control of their environment.<sup>135</sup> These women learned their science from the old priests and handed it down faithfully, adding to it from their own acute gifts of observation and intuition. Folklore lives with a nation and changes with it, even superstitions adapt themselves to new situations. The Lithuanian peasant is extremely conservative, and the lore of the past dies hard and only little by little. The drastic modernization which took place in Independent Lithuania--especially in farming methods--dealt a great blow to the old ways and beliefs. Many old bits of lore live only in the memories of centenarians, and when they die they take their memories with them. Today many of the old spells and so on are sung in a joking way, and the girls turn more to modern songs. But the creator of these songs today, as in the past, is still the Lithuanian woman.

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135 "Tai ka raganius su Dievu yra sutarti sudares, kad viskas vyktu, kaip jis pasako." Vincas Kreve, Raganius. Bavarija: Sudawija, 3rd edition, 1948, pp. 14, 19, 32, 39.

The whole character of the Lithuanian folklore, especially that of the songs bears the unmistakable stamp of the woman's heart. The sentiments have about them a tenderness, coyness, and exquisite lyrical melancholy which can only come from a woman. Who but a woman could describe the loss of virginity with such artless shyness: "Up came the mighty north wind and it blew the rue wreath upon the river waves...<sup>136</sup> Oh Mother dear! My green rue is fading..."<sup>137</sup> etc. In the love songs the word 'love' is never mentioned; indeed, all of the foreign scholars, investigators of the popular folklore have marvelled at its purity and modesty of expression. All creation bears the features of its creator, and it takes scant perspicacity to see in Lithuanian folklore the bright reflection of its source--the soul of the Lithuanian woman.

### 3. The Social State of the Woman.

We might be led to expect that the daughter-in-law singing sadly with the doleful voice of the cuckoo would be subject to the will of her husband. But the high respect for womanhood saved her from all servility and gave her great

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<sup>136</sup> "Ant tiltuzio vej's uzkiolo ir nupuole vainikelis." Ludwig J. Rhesa, Dainos, in Mykolas Birziska, Lietuviu Dainu Literaturos Istorija, p. 76.

<sup>137</sup> "Motule mano senoji, Vysta rutele zalioji." This writer's Collection of Songs. Rec. from Ursule Daugirdiene, Udrija, District of Alytus, 1936.

influence and prestige. The word for wife is "pati", it means "domina", mistress (cf. the Sanskrit "vespats"--lord: "ves"--public, and "pats"--lord; the Latin, potens).<sup>138</sup>

From time immemorial the husband is called "pats" and the wife, "pati"<sup>139</sup> - dominus and domina. The very words indicate a kind of equality.

From an economic point of view they are also equal, for the families arranging the marriage are especially careful that neither should be financially dependent upon the other. This may occasionally happen, however, in a love-match. But it is the cause of much heartache and friction, for the poorer party must always feel beholden for every trifle he or she receives from the family of the other. The spouse who came with nothing--"tuscio rankom"<sup>140</sup> is given scant pity by the peasants. Such a one has little freedom to make decisions and is made to feel that "atejo ant musu gero"<sup>141</sup>--he came to use our wealth.

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<sup>138</sup> Antoine Meillet, Introduction à l'étude comparative des langues indo-européennes. Paris, Hachette, p. 85.

<sup>139</sup> Ibid., p. 391.

<sup>140</sup> "Ne tam auginau sunu ir turta kroviau, kad jis kampininko dukteri i namus parvestu." Vincas Kreve, Raganius, p. 31.

<sup>141</sup> Julija Zemaite, Rastai. Kaunas: Svyturys, 1921, Vol. 2, p. 87.

But when both parties are free and equal each has his own domain of interests, rights, and duties. The husband is called "seimininkas" or "gaspadorius": he is the head of the farm and everything connected with it.<sup>142</sup> The fields, the livestock, the harvests, the hired men are under his control. The wife is called "seiminke" or "gaspadine"--housewife. She is the head of the home and all of its concerns: the children, girls, and hired women are under her control.<sup>143</sup> The husband and wife divide their jurisdiction: in domestic matters she is supreme; the pantry, stables and pens and coops are her concern.<sup>144</sup> All the other buildings, the fields, and so on are his concern. The money the farm makes is put in a common chest which is usually in her care. From this all the expenses of the farm are paid--the taxes, debts, repairs, and wages for the hired hands. Besides this common till each partner has his own private money box. The woman puts into her box the money she makes from selling eggs, poultry, milk products, and (sometimes) textiles. The husband makes his own money by selling horse hair, and working in the woods during the winter. Either party can spend his private savings without

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142 Stasys Daunys, "Vyro ir Zmonos Primavimas Ukyje," in Gimtasai Krastas, 1941, Vol. 8, p. 273.

143 Ibid., p. 275.

144 Ibid.

consulting the other.<sup>145</sup>

If husband or wife takes over all the management of affairs it is regarded as anomalous. The wife who is dominated completely by her husband is an object of pity for her neighbors. But if, on the other hand, the husband "sedi po zmonos kuntapliu"--sits under his wife's slipper, he is a laughing stock. People call him "nevyras"--not-a-man, and "bobos bernas"--a woman's servant.<sup>146</sup>

To prevent such things the parents of the marriage partners take great pains to pair off appropriate temperaments: the quiet man is given a gentle and reticent wife; the fiery and vivacious girl is provided with strong-willed and assertive husband.

In all questions pertaining to the children, even in the choice of spouses the husband yields his authority to his wife. All the folk songs and sayings testify to the equality of men and women and to the superior moral authority of the woman.<sup>147</sup>

Since Lithuania derives many of its traditions from the Indo-European parent stock we might expect to find a Lithuanian

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145 Ibid.

146 Ibid., p. 276.

147 "Originally superiority was given to the woman, but she made poor use of her authority." Jonas Balys, Dr., "Pašakos," in Tautosakos Darbai, 1936, Vol. 2, p. 185.

traditions some survivals of the inferior status of women. In India, for example, the status of the Hindu woman is very low--widows are even burned to death on their husband's funeral pyre.<sup>148</sup> In pagan Lithuania a man's charger, his hunting dogs, and his weapons were sometimes burned in his pyre. These were things he could use in the next world.<sup>149</sup> Some double graves have been found in which the woman is buried with the man, and in some graves the skeletons of a woman and child are found together in a man's grave.<sup>150</sup> This indicates that it may have been the custom for the Lithuanian woman to immolate herself on her husband's pile. Strykowski mentions that with the body of Keistutis, Grand Duke of Lithuania, his most faithful servant, his favorite battle steed, his hunting dogs and falcons were burned.<sup>151</sup> Together with Strykowski, Dusburg and others speak of the fiery immolation of servants and even of the widow.<sup>152</sup> Dr. Gimbutienė flatly declares that in prehis-

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148 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniu, p. LXXVII.

149 "Wulfstans Reisebericht ueber Preussen," in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum, Vol. I, p. 732. Also Petrus Dusburg, de, "Chronicon Terrae Prussiae," in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum, Vol. I, p. 54.

150 Marija Alseikaite-Gimbutiene, Die Bestattung in Litauen, pp. 226-236.

151 Matys Strykowski, "Kronika polska, litewska, z muds-ka..." in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum, Vol. I, p. 467.

152 "...velems mirusiuju galiunu inkapems duota ir ju tarnus bei tarnaites, o neretai, regis, ir ju pacias..." in Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Is Gyvenimo Veliu bei Velniu, p. LXXVII.

toric times the wife was burned alive with the body of her husband.<sup>153</sup>

It is safe to conclude from all this that while the immolation of the wife probably obtained in prehistoric times it died out long ago; for it is practically unheard of in the folklore. It probably only could happen when the wife was childless, for, if not, she would be called upon to look after the children; and for the Lithuanian woman her children--not her husband--came first. It is also noteworthy that many chroniclers<sup>154</sup> speak of the wife mourning by the grave of her husband for thirty days.<sup>155</sup> The "raudos"--lamentations point up the fact that she must lament over the body of her husband during the long obsequies. (We have already spoken of the Prussian practice of preserving the body up to six months by keeping it frozen.)<sup>156</sup> No, the folk traditions, in which even the most primitive practices often survive, or at least are mentioned, contain no traces of wife immolation. This custom has completely vanished. So too, all subjection of the wife to her husband has vanished, though at one time it may have

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153 Marija Alseikaite-Gimbutiene, Dr., Die Bestattung in Litauen, p. 238.

154 Paul Einhorn, "Wiederlegung der Abgoetterey," in Reformatio gentis Letticae in Ducatu Curlandiae, Cap.VII, 645.

155 Johannes Maletius, Epistola de sacrificiis et idolatria veterum Borussorum, in Acta Borussica, 1557, Vol.2, p. 410.

156 "Wulfstans Reisebericht ueber Preussen," in Scriptores rerum Prussicarum, Vol. I, p. 736.

existed as a survival from very ancient Indic customs. The paradox of the shyness and exquisite modesty of the Lithuanian woman and her extremely exalted authority and esteem can be explained by the fusion of several cultures in the life of the nation. Lithuanian culture has developed from two principle strains: the matriarchal culture of the aboriginal European nations and the nomadic culture of the Aryan peoples.<sup>157</sup> These strains have contributed something which the Lithuanian people developed into something distinctive.<sup>158</sup> Christianity has transfigured and transformed the old forms, enriching them with its own dynamic content, but it has not obliterated them--*gratia supponit naturam*. Matriarchy has left its imprint in the great respect the nation gives to woman. In its early state matriarchy means the complete dominance of the mother in all fields of life. The man is only the father of the children.<sup>159</sup> He marries her and comes to her home. In a later stage he visits her in her home, and in the final stage--which marks the decay of matriarchy--she is bought and comes to his home. The children take their family name from the mother of her brother.

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157 Zenonas Ivinskis, Dr., "Lietuviu Kulturos Tarpsniai," in Aidai, June, 1949, No. 23.

158 Ibid.

159 Johann Jacok Backofen, Mutterrecht und Urreligion, p. 64.

From these matriarchal traditions comes the great authority and influence of the woman in all fields. The brother retained his role as protector of his sisters--even after they were married. In all the songs and stories she turns to him for help.<sup>160</sup> The bartered wedding still survives in the marriage customs even though it has lost its original significance. In the family the mother still has a great scope of jurisdiction: she has complete authority over the children, and even in the case of their marriage she has the last word. In the home betrothment ceremony before going to the church the matchmaker asks the mother for her consent, when this has been given the ceremony is complete. This consent of the mother in the presence of witness still constitutes a legal marriage.<sup>161</sup> The strictness of their monogamy is also a feature derived from matriarchal society.<sup>162</sup>

Though the father is mentioned much less than the mother in folklore, the Lithuanians have derived many customs from the nomadic strain also. The son is the inheritor of the farm, and the girl only inherits it when there are no sons. Sons

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160 "Vaduok mane, broleli, Vaduok," in Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Ozkabaliu Dainos, p. 126; also pp. 43, 69, 75, 82, 119.

161 Jonas Balys, Dr., Lietuviu Tautosakos Skaitymai, Vol. I, p. 165.

162 Zenonas Ivinskis, Dr., "Lietuviu Kulturos Tarpsniai," p. 59.

are more sought after than daughters,<sup>163</sup> and a mother is honored less if she gives birth to baby girls only.<sup>164</sup>

The Lithuanians have great respect for all old people, but they reserve the greatest esteem for grandmothers. Children and grandchildren show their respect by greeting her with a kiss on the hand. They call her "senele", "mociute", and "bobute". In all family gatherings and feasts she takes the place of honor--"kristasuolej pacioj garbingiausioj vietoj senele sedejo."<sup>165</sup> Grandmother is supposed to have the last word of wisdom and sound advice and frequent recourse is had to her. The folk stories and songs always put the sage counsel on the lips of the old woman, and her counsel can save those who are in trouble.<sup>166</sup> "Reganos", the witches--women seers, are almost always well advanced in years. Marburg testifies to the authority of the old woman in the famous passage<sup>167</sup> we have already mentioned describing the old woman

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163 "Sunus- i namus, dukte-is namu." Stasys Didziulis, "Senuju Kalbos," in Epe Lituana, 1926, Vol. 4, p. 515.

164 Zenonas Ivinskis, Dr., op. cit., p. 59.

165 Juozas Vaizgantas, Pragiedruliai, p. 154.

166 Jonas Basanavicius, Dr., Lietuviskos Pasakos, Vol. 2, pp. 56, 68, 82, 89, 116, 176.

167 Wygand Marburg, Chronicon Livoniae, in Wilhelm Mannhardt, Letto-Preussische Goetterlenre, p. 120.

who slew one hundred men with an axe and then herself rather than surrender to the besiegers of the castle.

In the mind of the common folk the grandmother is the embodiment of radiant peace, tenderness and piety. Her days of troubles, joys, sorrows, and dreams are past. Now her eyes are clearly fixed on the everlasting hills. Now with her rosary in her hand with a sharpened awareness, she walks serenely across the meadows, through the garden and into the house to lighten the work of her loved ones with the help of these tireless hands. Only on Sundays, while the others are at church, she sits idly on the balcony or in the sun-bathed garden surrounded by her loving grandchildren. She tells them the stories they love to hear, and as she speaks, her hands caress the curly heads of her grandchildren, who never forget such happy moments:

When I was alone with my grandmother, it seems as if all nature hung upon her lips. A holy peace poured in upon my heart, and I kissed the gnarled and wrinkled hands, which seemed to me so sweet and soft. The shining sun, the trees, the blossoming flowers, grandmother, and the story she was telling me seemed to blend into a single reality and I wanted nothing more than to be a part of it for a long, long time...<sup>168</sup>

The grandmother is a model of piety. She is always praying for those who have gone on before her, for the family, and

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<sup>168</sup> Marija Ramuniene, "Is Aliutes Dienorascio," in *Eglute*. Brooklyn: Lietuviu Kulturos Institutas, No. 5, May, 1951, pp. 140-141.

for the farm. She is forever blessing her dear ones and her native soil.<sup>169</sup> Indeed, to have such a saintly mother is in itself a great blessing for a family.<sup>170</sup>

As we have seen the social status is equal to that of the man, both from the point of view of property and authority--each has a certain independence in his own sphere. But we must not forget that the family is first and foremost an inseparable union. Husband and wife work in harmony and co-operation. In the great questions that arise the husband and wife collaborate and come to a decision together.

The woman's influence predominates in the fields of religion and folk-culture. She is the spirit of Lithuania. She won this high position in her own way, not by usurpations and nagging, but by being an utterly lovable person--the shy and virtuous virgin, the modest and industrious woman, and the selfless mother who sacrifices everything for her children, her beloved children.

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169 Alfonsas Griauslys, "Tu liepsnosi Tamsoje," in Laikas. Argentina: Buenos Aires,, June, 30, 1950.

170 "Daznai jauciu gaivinancius lasus ant lupu lasant nuo jos ekstazej i dangu iskeltu pirstu." Ibid.

## CONCLUSION

As a result of our descriptive and narrative thesis the following points stand out very clearly:

1. That the ideal of the Lithuanian woman was created by the syncretism of pagan and Christian cultures.

2. That the pagan culture itself was a fusion of matriarchic and nomadic influences, but that the matriarchic influences are still dominant especially in the apotheosis of woman in domestic and national life.

3. That the Lithuanians are very conservative and have preserved their old traditions very well.

4. That Lithuanian folklore is very old and very rich and can be useful in the study of our earliest Indo-European ancestors.

1. In the old pagan religion the nature worship took the form of an apotheosis of the creative or female principle. This was expressed in the predominance and the importance of the female deities. Even in pagan times the ideals of the virgin and the mother were the only ones for a woman. Woman was never considered merely as a consort or a servant of male appetites. Lithuania accepted Christianity gladly and developed a special devotion to the Blessed Virgin who represented in one unique being the paradoxical combination of the two ideals of the woman -- virgin and mother.

2. Matriarchic influences and traits are revealed in many aspects of Lithuanian life. The virgin is highly honored. Her brother, not her lover, is her protector. The husband's home role is slight. He is considered simply as the father of the woman's children. There is nothing in the folklore exalting the romantic love of the married couple for each other. The thought uppermost in the bride's mind is to become a mother. The mother consecrates herself completely to her children as soon as they are conceived. Her love is considered so strong and so highly is she honored that death cannot destroy her. In the legends she returns to succour her children, even from beyond the grave. To insult one's mother is so nefarious as to merit death. The very very strict monogamy is a typical matriarchic feature. The mother, not the father, gives the daughter in marriage. The stability of farm life is ideal for the dominance of the woman. They are bound to the soil and the homestead. Another trait is the great influence and prestige of the grandmother -- almost deified. Matriarchic influence in art is marked by a lack of daring and extreme conventionalization, extreme conservatism and symmetry. In the old pagan religion the intimate participation of woman is outstanding in acts of religion. The continued influence of sorceresses and female seers. The

aboriginal inhabitants of the land were matriarchic while the Indo-European peoples migrating into the land and settling there were nomadic and pastoral.

Survivals of nomadic and Indo-Aryan culture are the extreme gentleness, modesty and submissiveness of the women and the complete devoting of themselves to their children and especially the fact that it is never they who punish the children. Everyone, women and children were submitted to the rule of the men, the rulers of nomadic groups. Also, the severe punishment for girls who lose their virginity is a nomadic trait. The form of inheritance by which the eldest son inherits the farm is, of course, nomadic. In the actual family life, the nomadic and matriarchic strains are blended by a division of responsibility and authority between the parents.

3. They are very conservative and this was due to their geographical isolation from the rest of Europe for such a long time and the relative freedom from constant wars and immigrations which can overthrow completely the culture and traditions. The series of bitter wars with the Teutonic Knights made them cling all the more tenaciously to their national traditions which embodied their independence. The matriarchic culture is by its nature extremely conservative

in all fields, because of the need of women for security and social stability in their role of motherhood. Inseparable from this matriarchy is agriculturalism. Peasants accept changes with great difficulty. The Lithuanian customs, even when they have changed, the change has not been by substitution, but by accretion in which the old customs are modified and preserved even when they have lost their full original meaning. For example, the nomadic custom of the stealing of the bride has been preserved in the modified form of the bride hiding herself as though her suitor and matchmaker were going to steal her. The buying of the bride is retained in the sublimated form of the token purchase of the rue wreath. The old custom of putting food and utensils with the dead leaves its vestige in the custom of having a funeral banquet at a certain time after the burial during which hymns are sung. The folk culture has grown as the mighty oak grows by the addition of one layer upon another.

4. Since Lithuanian folklore is so conservative, it has preserved with great care an abundance of survivals from the traditions of the aboriginal Europeans and the pre-historic Aryan invaders. Its language is very close to Sanskrit and is an immediate offshoot of the primitive Aryan language.

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ABSTRACT OF

Woman in Lithuanian Folklore<sup>1</sup>

Lithuania with the close affinity of its language to Sanskrit is the closest relative to the ancient Hindu nation and is one of the oldest European nations. For long centuries in its distant past, Lithuania lived in isolation unperturbed by the historical forces of Western Europe. In the thirteenth and fifteenth centuries Lithuanians battled bravely against the invading Teutonic Knights, who under the pretense of evangelization pillaged ruthlessly and subjugated part of the nation. Lithuanians' violent reaction to these depredations inspired them to cling all the more tenaciously not only to their soil, but also to their ancestral religion and customs. The two factors of a relative long isolation and a three-century-old defense of freedom and national life engendered extreme conservatism. Old customs and ways were not extirpated immediately with the planting of Christianity, but lingered on together with the old religion under the supremacy of the Cross. Even up to the First World War, most of the old pagan traditions and superstitions were kept alive by each generation.

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1 Ph.D. Thesis presented by Maria Paplauskas-Ramunas, in 1952, to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Ottawa, 306 pages.

Such a strict conservatism has preserved customs from the earliest times, and the freamy lyric spirit of the people has created and developed new spiritual goods throughout its age-old life and with the accompanying changes. From those two sources, Lithuanian folklore constitutes a varied and abundant treasure.

Native and foreign scholars have already enhanced this treasure by collecting and classifying Lithuanian folklore material. Yet, a great part of it remains unrecorded. Fortunately, however, it lives on even today upon the lips and in the hearts and minds of the people.

From such living sources the writer of this thesis started to collect and record folklore material in her high school days and travelled extensively for this purpose through villages and hamlets during summer vacations.

Although a comparatively recent branch of science, the study of folklore with its contributions to history, archeology, linguistics and history has made encouraging progress and promises to broaden and deepen our understanding and research of early European culture and racial stock.

Unfortunately Lithuanian scholars have not had sufficient time and tranquility to analyze the rich collections of Lithuanian folklore already at their disposal in such a

way as to bring out in relief dominant national characteristics.

This writer has thus undertaken to draw from this treasure of folklore to paint a picture of the Lithuanian woman. Within the limits of the chosen subject, Woman in Lithuanian Folklore, the portrayal is meant to represent dynamically the national ideal of woman throughout the ages in her education, vocation, and her cultural role in the nation. She is seen as the educator of her children and through this young generation, the basis of her society. She is viewed in action as the conscientious custodian and perpetuator of national and family traditions. Her movement through a long history should trace the distinctive features of the national and family life.

This investigation focusses the light of folklore on woman as living in the national consciousness, and not in any particular period or class. Since, however, Lithuania has been chiefly a peasant country, this ideal will stand principally for the peasant woman.

Woman is portrayed here in the three most important phases of her life: virgin, wife and mother, and her position in national life.

The Lithuanian maiden is usually called "mergele"--virgin. The language is rich in affectionate names for her

and more than half of the folk-songs deal with her and the symbol of her virginity, the rue wreath. Chastity, modesty and diligence constituted according to the national conscience the virtues proper to a maiden and embodied the ideal which directs her education today as in the earliest centuries. Thus, it was the popular attitude to associate with the virgin all that is pure, bright and noble. An honorable place was reserved for the virgin in the ancient pagan religion and national life. Indeed, severe punishments were meted out to the girl who lost her virginity dishonorably -- in early times she was buried alive, and frequently public shame drove her to suicide. The "mergele's" protector is not her lover, but her brother who even accompanies her to the home of her groom to ease the transition. But the poor girl who had no parents and especially no mother is so miserable that all the folk and even nature take pity on her and come to her aid.

The family is considered as the basis and center of personal and national existence. In keeping with this view marriage was arranged by the parents, and socio-economic factors played a leading role in the arrangements, which are negotiated through the mediation of the matchmaker. His function is very important -- he even performed the marriage ceremony in early pagan times. Essential rites in the nuptials

are the following: the bride's leaving of her home and welcome into the groom's family; ceremonies employing superstitions and various magical means to gain the favors of fertility and prosperity for the newly founded family. Among the many customs of the long wedding ceremony are old Indo-European and pagan Lithuanian traditions such as the stealing of the bride (from nomadic period) and the buying of the bride (from the third matriarchic period). Although the original meaning and form of such customs have been modified throughout the centuries, they survive even today. The family was considered so sacred, and the task of educating the children so serious, that the marriage was strictly monogamous and stable. Divorce was unknown. The wife is not mentioned in folklore as the beloved or loving companion of her husband. The holy duty of rearing their children was uppermost in the estimation of both husband and wife.

For motherhood, woman's central and guiding vocation, the maiden was prepared from early childhood by her own mother. The mother is the soul of the family. Like a candle she consumes the substance of her life to shed light into the lives of her children, to whom she consecrates her every thought and deed from the moment of their conception. Her great authority and prestige within the home come from her gentleness and the inspiration of her self-sacrifice. From earliest

times she has been considered holy, so much so that to insult her was a capital crime. The folklore pictures her love as so great that it triumphs over death; she returns from the grave to look after her children. The stepmother, on the other hand, is pictured as a malevolent witch whose cruelty and chicanery are eventually punished.

The national estimation of womanhood was very high. In the pagan religion, where nature and sky were deified, the goddesses far outnumbered the gods, and presided over all the great moments of life and death. Especially strong was Zemyna, goddess of the earth, of creating power of nature, who gives life to nature and people. Other goddesses were Dokla, of birth, Laima, of fate, Giltine, of death, and Ugnis, of fire, which played a prominent role in the old religion and customs. Various female deities were associated with branches of agriculture, the home, forests and lakes -- Laumes, fairies etc. The pagan Lithuanian religion was a female religion. After the evangelization of Lithuania, this deeply rooted devotion to woman as a sacred object was sublimated into an intense devotion to the Blessed Mother of God which the popes remarked when they called Lithuania "Terra Mariana."

The dominance of woman in the domestic arts finds expression in the love for geometrically conventionalized

decorative patterns in everything from Easter eggs to embroidery. Her work on textiles, wool, cotton and particularly linen is one of the most ancient branches of popular art. Geometrical designs imitating plants, flowers and stars are worked into white linen, table-cloths, towels, and other fabrics. Damask decorations display an infinite variety, and colored bedspreads, waistbands, national garments, and all kinds of knitting glow with all the subtle colors of her rue garden. Every woman takes great pride in her flower garden and in the beautifying of her home where she is the esthetic arbiter.

Feminine inspiration and creation monopolize folk-songs, tales, proverbs, and superstitions. The grandmother, spinning during the long fall and winter nights, tells the old legends, narratives and tales to all the family. The mother sings lullabies at her child's cradle. The young daughter-in-law sighs about her hard fate and longs for her days of youth. The young maiden sings her dreams to her rue garden and her flowers. Indeed, the women are the true upholders of old Lithuanian culture -- its folklore. The gentleness, delicacy, and purity of Lithuanian folklore give ample evidence of its feminine origin, and it is the woman who deserves the greatest share of credit for preserving this lore, because of their conservatism and work in passing on the ancestral cultural heritage to her children.

Modest, shy and tender, the Lithuanian woman is respected by her husband, and the Lithuanian home reveals no absolute dominance of the husband. The wife is "pati", the "domina" or mistress. She is equal to her husband, and each has a sphere of concern which is presided over with autonomous authority. In momentous decisions, however, husband and wife consult, come to an agreement and act in concord. The exalted position of woman in the whole consciousness of the nation gives us a revealing glimpse into the cultural and social state of Europe's earliest inhabitants, a glimpse which indicates that they were possessed of a high degree of humanity and civilization.

So, it is seen that the matriarchic pagan culture and religion, and the super-imposed Christian culture, with its great devotion to the Blessed Virgin created among the Lithuanians a high ideal of womanhood, especially in its two aspects of virginity and maternity. Although this pagan culture was a combination of nomadic (patriarchic) culture derived from the Aryan migrations and the underlying matriarchic culture of the aboriginal inhabitants, the matriarchic influences remained dominant. Lithuania itself constitutes an excellent field for folklore research because of the intense conservatism of the people which resulted from their strongly agricultural social organization, their long isolation from extraneous

influences, and their wars with the Teutonic Knights. Thus, the very old, rich, and pure currents of Lithuanian folklore are of great help in determining the ways of our oldest European ancestors. Moreover, detailed aspects of this folklore merit investigation by ethnologists and students of folklore.