

"Ah?" said she within herself, "I have made hay to-day for the last time in my little garden; the first yellow plums which I plucked to-day for my Felix are the last that my child will ever enjoy from the tree which his father planted for him; perhaps this is the last night we shall spend under this roof. To-morrow the house will be the property of another; and who knows whether we may not be turned out immediately? Where shall we find a shelter to-morrow? Perhaps we may have no roof to cover us." And she began to sob violently.

Felix, who till now had not stirred, came nearer, and said, "Mother, do not weep so bitterly. Do you not know what my father said when he lay dying on the bed? 'Do not weep,' said he; 'God is the father of the widow and the orphan: call upon him in the time of trouble, and He will take care of you.' He said so; is it not true?"

"Yes, dear child," said Mary, "it is indeed true."

"Well, then," said Felix, "why do you cry so? Pray to God, and He will help you. Oh, when I was with my father in the forests and he was cutting wood, if I was hungry, or if a thorn had run into me, I did not cry a good deal; I went to my father (for he was then alive), and he gave me bread, or he took out the thorn. And God is our Father, and will He not help us his children?"

"Yes," said the poor mother, still crying.

"My father often said the whole world was God's; then why should we weep! Come, mother, let us pray to God: He will certainly help us."

"My dear child, you are in the right," said Mary, and her tears were somewhat moderated, and comfort began to take the place of grief. She knelt down and raised her eyes and hands to heaven; and the little child did so too. Mary began to pray, and Felix repeated each word after her.

"Holy and heavenly Father," said she, "look upon the widow and her child. A poor widow and a poor orphan look up to Thee; we are in great want, and have no refuge on earth. We pray to Thee that Thou wilt not suffer us to sink under our sorrows; but if, in Thy wisdom, Thou seest fit to afflict us, at least to find another home; and give us comfort in our hearts, and true confidence in Thee, through our Lord Jesus Christ."

Mary's sobs prevented her from proceeding; she looked towards heaven, and was silent; when Felix, who was still by her side in the attitude of prayer, jumped up, and stretching out his hands, exclaimed; "O, mother, what is that? There is a little light hovering there; it is a star flying. See it is hovering about the window! Oh! see, it is coming in! How beautifully it shines! It is like a green light. It is almost as beautiful as the evening star. Look, now it is hovering about the ceiling. It is very wonderful."

"That is a fire-fly, my child," said Mary; "by day it is a mean little insect; and by night it is very beautiful."

"May I catch it?" said the child. "Will it not hurt me, and shall I not be hurt by the light?"

"It will not burn you," said Mary, and she smiled through her tears; "catch it and examine it carefully without hurting it: it is one of the wonderful works of God."

Felix had now forgotten all his sorrow, and tried to catch the glittering fly, which was at one moment under the table, and at another under the chair, and sometimes near the floor.

"But, oh dear!" said the child, for the fly had concealed itself behind the great chest that stood against the wall at the moment when he held out his hand to catch it.