

poor Sophy's heart with terror ; but although she lost all hope of preserving her mistress, she always remained calm, and never betrayed the least emotion in her presence. During a cold winter night Sophy was reading a book in an arm-chair near the bed, when Madam de Linden, struggling with pain, asked her for a little tea. She immediately arose, and went to prepare it. She soon returned, and handed the drink to her sick mistress, who took the vessel with a trembling hand, drank the tea, and said to the young girl,

" My dear child, you are a great comfort to me, and the care you so tenderly bestow on me would, if any thing could, prolong my existence ; but I feel that all will be soon over with me. Well, I could not be ungrateful to you. Since you came into my house, you have faithfully served me, and my friendship for you prompts me to secure your future prospects. I have made every arrangement in my will to insure a suitable provision. My heirs will advance you a sum of money, which will one day suffice to establish you comfortably in life. I hope you will remember me in your prayers. I have always loved you, and it is right I should not forget you at the hour of my death ?

These words drew tears from poor Sophy who covered her face with her hands and conjured her not to afflict her by speaking of so melancholy an event. She endeavoured to inspire her with confidence with regard to her health ; but after a few moments silence, Madam de Linden resumed.

" Do not attempt to mislead me, my dear Sophy. I understand my present state better than you imagine. Death, though it seems dreadful to the eyes of nature, has no terrors for the Christian, for it releases us from the chains of the body, and reunites us to our God. We were not created to remain always here below. A few years more or less, and we must sooner or later encounter this journey, from which nothing can save us. Pilgrims as we are in this world, we should be satisfied to quit this vale of tears, to hasten to the enjoyment of our Creator's presence. I have had the happiness to know and serve God, and notwithstanding the sins with which I have to reproach myself, I hope through his mercy that I shall be received into heaven. As for you, dear child, who are yet so young, and who are so likely to live many years, remember that you also have a heaven to gain. Make only a prudent and safe use of this world, and never lose sight of your true interest. Always preserve the fear of God, and place it as a sentinel at the door of your heart. Be faithful to the maxims of our holy religion ; avoid sin ; do good ; exercise charity whenever you shall have an opportunity, and according to your means ; return from your whole heart the

injuries and offences which you will meet in the course of your life. Always lead a Christian life, and death will one day appear even pleasant in your eyes." Then unfastening a little crucifix which was attached to the curtain of her bed, she applied the sacred image of our salvation to her lips, and said with deep emotion,

" Now, that every thing in this world is passing away from me, I should more than ever press to my heart this sacred symbol of the redemption of mankind. The cross has always been the object of my meditations ; but at the moment in which I am quitting the world, it ought to be my sole resource, my only consolation. O sacred wood ! thou who hast been heretofore watered by the blood of our Saviour, be my safeguard, protect and defend me. Thou hast witnessed the sufferings of the Man God. Thou hast heard his sighs and his last words. It was upon thee he terminated his holy career. Thou art the throne of his graces, be thou also the sacred standard under which I may one day reunited to that divine Jesus, who has so excessively loved us. Yes, this amiable Saviour has been my tender father, during my existence in this world, and I have never spent such happy moments as those which I have spent in meditating on his holy law, and on the glorious examples he has left us. I knew, and I particularly know at this important hour, that there is no salvation for us except in the accomplishment of the precepts of religion. Oh what consolation have I not derived from the faith ! What strength have I not found in the frequent perusal of the Gospel, and in making myself acquainted with the beautiful maxims which this admirable book contains. Ah ! how I now bless the Lord for having given me the gift of faith, for if I had no religion, I should now, at the hour of my death, be the most miserable of beings."

Madam de Linden ceased speaking ; her illness did not permit her to continue this edifying discourse. Sophy kept constantly beside her, wiping away her tears, and promising to follow her wise and charitable advice. Nevertheless the patient grew worse and worse every day. She received with an angelic fervour the sacraments of the Church, and a short time after slept in the sleep of peace in the midst of transports of the greatest piety.

Sophy was inconsolable at the death of her who had been for so many years a mother to her. She wept for her for a long time, and did not forget to pray for her. Every one acknowledged that her tears were sincere, and that her grief was unfeigned.

No sooner was the death of this good lady made known throughout the country than the poor were seen flocking from all parts to behold for the last