

my father, and it was only last Sunday my poor mother was interred. I have no longer any one in the world, and I know not what to do. The little chamber which my mother occupied is about being closed against me this very day; the owner would not let me keep it any longer, because I am unable to pay him. Whither shall I flee for refuge?"

"You have therefore no relations who would take care of you?"

"I have many relations, Ma'am, but they are very poor themselves, and have several children. The Parish Priest of this Parish, who administered the last sacraments to my mother, has already been frequently with them to induce them to take me; they have as yet given no decided answer, and I can well understand the reason: when we are in want ourselves, we can do nothing for others."

"You are therefore acquainted with the Parish Priest?"

"Yes, Ma'am."

"Well, come with me, and shew me where he lives."

"I dare not go so far, Ma'am: it is now late, and I must return to the house."

"But there is no fear of your going too far. Come along, I will manage all that."

The lady quitted the church, leading the little girl by the hand, and bent her steps towards the house of the Parish Priest.

This respectable clergyman enjoyed the well-merited confidence of his flock. He was already advanced in age. He had gained all hearts by his zeal, his virtues, his simple manners, his extensive knowledge, but above all, his boundless charity. When Madam de Linden entered with the little girl, he was engaged in writing a letter. This lady left the child a little behind, and after the customary salutations took a chair, and said to the man of God: "Reverend Sir, I happened to meet this little girl in your church; she told me she was an orphan, and bereft of all assistance. Will you have the goodness to tell me your opinion of her?"

"I have nothing but what is satisfactory to tell you," replied the priest, "concerning the little Sophy's family, as well as the child herself. Her parents, very good Christians, were always remarkable for their excellent qualities; they were poor, but not through their own fault. They had many sufferings to endure, but especially long illness. Sophy attended them with a kindness, and understanding, far above her age. She is of a very gentle disposition, fond of industry, has sound religious principles, and having received an early training in the school of misfortune, she promises to become a virtuous girl."

"I am very happy, Sir, to hear so flattering an account from your mouth of this little creature. I am a widow, have no children, and possess a good fortune; I am going to adopt her, and if she perseveres in good conduct, I will take care of her future prospects."

"You will never, Madam, find a better opportunity of doing a good work. Sophy really deserves that you should feel an interest in her. I imagine that I still see her mother, a few minutes before death, raising her feeble hands to heaven, and invoking the protection of the Lord on this child. I fancy I still hear her saying to God with a lively confidence, 'O heavenly Father, you who have given me so many proofs of your love during my husband's life, do not abandon a poor little orphan! If I die send her a mother. I am cheered by this hope.' Then giving her blessing to her daughter, she again exhorted her to remain sincerely attached to her religion, and peaceably slept in the Lord, whilst the little one was drowned in tears. Never shall I forget that heart-rending moment. The prayers of this virtuous woman have been heard. It was not by chance, Madam, but by the express permission of God, that you were led into the church this evening to discover little Sophy there. Yes, you will serve as a mother for her, and God will repay you one hundred fold, every thing that you shall do for this little orphan."

Madam de Linden, affected even to tears by the words of the excellent clergyman, called Sophy, and told her she was going to take charge of her, and bring her to her country-house. On hearing this news, the little one threw herself at the feet of her benefactress, to testify her gratitude beforehand. Tears of joy ran down her face. The lady kindly raised her up, and said to her, "Courage, my child! your misfortunes will have an end. If you conduct yourself well, you will always find in me a tender mother and protectress."

"Yes," added the priest, "you ought to bless Providence, my child, who has this day given you so great a proof of his tenderness. For, what would have become of you, if this charitable lady had not met you? At the very moment you thought you were lost without redress, the Lord sent you a comforter, and even your future prospects are ensured. Never forget the advice which your dying mother gave you in such affectionate terms. The blessing of a virtuous mother is a treasure to her daughter. Imitate her example, and strive to become one day as virtuous and prudent as she was. Always remember that God does not afford his protection to the wicked, and that the apparent prosperity of sinners is a chastisement which he inflicts upon them; if then, hereafter, prosperity should befall you, receive it with humble thankfulness; if, on the contrary, adversity, learn to bear it with resignation. Labour unceasingly to acquire more and more friendship of God. Whoever serves God well, will also pro-