

THE SACRIFICE; The Farm

OR

FOR HER FAMILY'S SAKE.

LIME AND THE SOIL.

CHAPTER XII.

Major von Tollen was buried with all the sorrowful pomp and ceremony which the little town could bestow on an old officer who had worn the Iron Cross. The Soldiers' Society had borne their banner, the Shooting Guild had joined them, and the funeral train had passed through the streets to the notes of "Chopin's Funeral March." Immediately behind the coffin had walked the two sons, and after them the son-in-law—the young husband whom pitiless death had robbed of his wedding journey, with more an air of vexation than of sorrow. The people in the town all knew that the young, newly-married pair had come back the same night, and that Frau Lora Becher had been in despair when, hurrying from the station directly to her father's house, she had learned the fatal news.

Yes, life is surely strange. The old major might at last have held up his head a little, and summed himself in his children's magnificence—and now he was taken away!

Well, the Bechers would have to put their hands pretty deep into their pockets, for there couldn't be much left for the widow and children.

So judged the women who were left behind in the Tollens' parlor, with the feminine portion of the family, so whispered the men in the long funeral procession; and so said the gaping crowd in the street.

"Yes, it is wretched enough, when people in that rank have no money, and yet must always be considering their position. Lora, now, has done very well for herself," remarked Frau Engel, as the last man of the procession disappeared round the corner, to her pretty servant-maid, who was standing in the street. Then she shut the window against the cold December air, which had lowered the temperature of the room by several degrees, and placed a pair of felt shoes near the stove, so her Gottfried might be made very comfortable when he returned from the cold walk to the church-yard.

And Lora sat, the day after her father's funeral, at the round table, opposite her mother, occupied in looking through the papers and documents of the dead man. Her brother, with his wife, and Helen, and her betrothed had gone away early in the morning. The former had magnanimously resigned all claim on the "pittance" which the old man had saved up and deposited in the bank; there were two thousand thalers. He had taken out a thousand marks for Lora's outfit, and she was not entitled to any more; the rest was to be divided between the other two girls. Rudolph received nothing, as the year before debts had been paid for him to an amount which far exceeded any rightful claim of his. This memorandum the old gentleman had put into a sealed envelope, with his personal papers, and with it was a sum of money, which was destined for his burial. With this was a slip of paper, on which he had written:

"No more is to be paid out than this. An oak coffin is not necessary; carpenter Thienemann knows already; I have spoken already to him about it, and he will make it for six thalers. And no wine or cake shall be given out. I wish my uniform to be put on, and my sword, which I used in my campaigns, to be laid on my coffin, as well as the laurel-wreath, over the picture of the emperor, which Lora gave me when she was a little girl, when I came back from the war. If the Soldiers' Union wish to fire a salute over my grave, they shall be allowed to do it. Furthermore, my wife and children shall not wear mourning longer than four weeks, because I have always disliked black dresses, and I know they will mourn for me sufficiently without that."

"VON TOLLEN."

Lora had just finished reading this remarkable document, and now was leaning back in the old chair, in which her father had always sat, sobbing violently.

"Thank God!" said her mother, who with red eyes and a sorrowful face, was looking through the papers. "Thank God, child, that you can cry at last."

"Mamma, do you think that papa expected me back? Did he really look for me?"

"Yes, Lora; we had told him that you had been telegraphed for."

The young wife had already asked a hundred self-remembering questions about her father's last moments. "And he always kept looking at the door," she murmured, "and I did not come, and I never dreamed of it!" She sprang up, and pressing her handkerchief firmly against her face, she walked up and down the room in a hurried and nervous manner, that was quite unusual with her. She looked strangely altered in her mourning dress, which fitted so closely to her figure, and which made her skin seem whiter, and her hair darker than ever.

"Mamma," she began at length, "if Babor should come—I think he said something about it—to fetch me, tell him I have gone with Katie to the church-yard—"

"But, Lora, why? Consider that you have been here four days, now, and that he has a right to demand that you should come to his house, now."

Lora remained standing at the door. "A right!" she murmured, as if to herself, and looked at her mother with eyes so full of a deadly anguish that Frau von Tollen suddenly understood it all.

"Why, Lora?"

"Tell him I am ill," she murmured, and as if she had taken a sudden resolution, she stood before the doorway with clasped hands; "or tell him the truth," she said suddenly and hurriedly; "tell him that I will never come to him; tell him I hate him like—like nothing else in this wide world. That he is as repulsive to me as a snake that might cross my path! That he—"

She pushed the table aside and fell on her knees before her mother, with no vestige of a tear, now, in her burning eyes.

"Mamma," she entreated, "do not send me away; let me stay with you! I cannot go with him—by everything that is sacred to me in the world, I cannot!"

Frau von Tollen did not stir. She was stunned by this turn of affairs. "But—"

—but—my God!" she cried at length, taking her daughter by the shoulder.

"Lora, do you know what you are saying? You are not engaged to him now, you are his wife! You must, do you hear? You must!"

"No, no! I must not, mamma, do not say so!"

Then Frau von Tollen drew herself up. "You are no doubt ill," she said gravely, "forcibly keeping down her fears, "or you would not say such things. What can you be thinking of, child? You knew what you were doing when you engaged yourself to him. You should have considered the matter then, my love. Why did you accept him?"

"Why, mamma! You ask that—you?" and Lora sprang to her feet and began to laugh. It was a dreadful laugh, coming from those pale lips, and with those angry eyes.

"Yes, you are right, mamma. Why did I accept him?"

And she sat down by the window and looked out into the street, in which the snow had begun to thaw, and where the boys with loud shouts and laughter, were busy making a great snow man.

CHAPTER XIII.

"Lora," began Frau von Tollen, after a long pause, "you had better stay here to-day; I will tell him you are not well—I am sure you are not, the shock of your father's death has upset you so. Your face is burning; I am sure you are feverish."

But Lora thrust her mother's hand away, and her eyes were turned toward the door, as if she must get away and hide herself somewhere. But there was no longer any place that belonged to her alone, for Katie had taken possession of her little room the moment she had left her father's house; this she felt as an injury beyond all others, an actual robbery, for those four plain walls had been witness to all the dreams of joy and happiness which she had dreamed there; had seen all her rejoicings, and all her tears. She might, perhaps, have found peace, even now, if she could have fled thither, and drawing the bolt behind her, could have given vent to her despair unscathed. Nevertheless, she got up. Should she go into the garden? It lay buried deep in snow. She came back and sat down again. Her mother gazed up at the papers, to put them away in the drawer. She felt hurt at Lora's words; large tears sprang again to her already swollen eyes. And this horrible anxiety—this oppressive weight of care! If Rudolph would only come, if he could only tell her whether Becher would advance him some money for their immediate wants? What could the poor fellow do? Becher would not? She could not pay anything for him with her little pence.

The bell rang; Rudolph's steps came up the stairs, and immediately after he entered the room. He looked disturbed as he threw his wet overcoat down on a chair, and his cap on the table. "There!" he cried, "that is all we get! Your husband, Lora, offered to get me a situation in America, in the office of his former partner, and as he is going to start for there this evening, on business, he proposes that I should come with him, at once—to keep him company, I suppose."

Lora turned her head, and her faint, final gloomy eyes looked at him uncomprehendingly. She thought he must be intoxicated.

"I am quite in earnest," the boy declared, and assured her, "Your husband was just packing his portmanteau for a little run to New York; I fed before the storm of curses that was raging. When his mother entreated him to stay, he nearly took her head off."

"What has happened?" asked Lora, leaning her head back in her chair.

"He received a despatch, and that is all I know about it. I was just arranging with him about some money—that he was only going to lend me, of course."

Canadian farmers have not, as a rule, paid as much attention to the subject of liming their soils as have their counterparts in Great Britain and the United States. It is true that in many parts of the country there is no need of liming owing to the abundance of lime element already in the soil. The limestone districts, however, are clearly deficient, and it is outside of these districts that the application of lime is necessary and is likely to yield the best results. Lime is of considerable importance to agriculture, as it is found in the ash of all plants and is an essential constituent of all good soil. It exists naturally as limestone, marble, chalk, coral, etc. Quicklime or caustic lime is made by burning limestone or any carbonate of lime in a very high temperature. Quicklime is more energetic in its action than the carbonates. When it is added to the air it gradually slakes and breaks down into powder and becomes a carbonate of lime or mild lime. It has a very beneficial effect upon the soil or physical condition of the soil. It tends to make heavy clay soils open, porous and friable. Loose soils become more compact when mixed with lime. Acid soils, freshly tilled muck lands, are sweetened by use of lime, and consequently produce more readily crops like clovers.

Lime appears to act on the insoluble phosphates of potash and phosphoric acid in the soils, making these ingredients more available for the use of plants. It decomposes organic matter, and thus promotes nutrition and increases the power of the soil to fix and retain such valuable material as ammonia, etc. It is claimed that meadow grasses, like sorrel, are checked, and the growth of valuable forage plants is encouraged by the use of lime. In rapidly worn-out soils green manuring and liming go hand-in-hand. On heavy soils quicklime is frequently of great value, and is applied at the rate of 20 bushels per acre. A moderate application should first be made to see how the soil reacts. On light lands poor in vegetable matter, mild or small applications of lime are likely to give the best results. It is best to apply lime to the soil in a slacked condition, and it should be broadcasted and cultivated in the soil. On permanent grass lands should be applied with barnyard manure, poultry manure or nitrogenous fertilizers, as it may injure them by fixing off the ammonia. It is frequently applied to composts of coarse materials like straw, cornstalks, etc., with view to hastening decomposition. Experiments indicate that timothy, hard grass, clover, barley, oats, rye, mangels and garden crops, such as parsnips, onions, red raspberries, currants, are greatly benefited by liming.

LIVE STOCK NOTES.

Wool will absorb a heavy quantity of rain if the sheep are left out in the open.

Animals which chew foreign materials like boards, rags, etc., to satisfy a craving for some element lacking in their bodies that is supposed to have been exhausted by giving it out in the manure. They are satisfied by feeding on salt, wood ashes and bone meal in small quantities.

Animals are finding out that to have plenty of lean meat they must feed something besides corn. More and more they are keeping their swine on the summer on grass and clover, only feeding corn enough to finish off. Another method is to sow peas and oats together, and when the crop has reached the proper stage of growth, to cut it up and "hog it down." This method is very wasteful of the crop, but it saves labor. Where they have the skim milk of a dairy, that is a valuable adjunct, and helps to make meat.

POULTRY TALK.

M
O
S
T
O
F
T
H
I
S
P
A
G
E
M
I
S
S
I
O
N