

factress too has her wishes fulfilled. These diamonds are magnificent, and are probably worth 3,000 crowns. With this sum you may pay your debts and be fully re-established in your business. Keep the wooden cross as a memorial, that it may always remind you of your obligations to it for the comfort you will enjoy."

The excellent old man then proposed to Sophy to shew the cross to a jeweller in the town, who examined the diamonds and made an estimate of their value. The priest asked him if he intended to buy them, and at what price. The jeweller said he would pay three thousand crowns for them; one thousand on the day of purchase, another in twelve, and a third in eighteen months. This information delighted Sophy who thus beheld an end to her sufferings. She wrote an account of it to her husband to console him, and remained in the town until the bargain should be concluded.

Two days after the jeweller came to the priest to sign the agreement, which being done, he gave a thousand crowns to Sophy in part payment, and took away the cross.

The affair however was soon reported in public, and came to the ears of Madam de Linden's relatives. It produced a great commotion amongst them. They met together to devise the best means of recovering the cross from the jeweller, and of annulling the contract between him and Sophy. She herself was ordered to appear before the family, and it was with fear and trembling she obeyed, and after getting the advice of the good clergyman, she was received with cold indifference; they did not even offer her a chair to sit down. When all the family had been assembled one of the ladies said to Sophy,

"My good woman, we have heard a very ugly story about you. We always had a great opinion of your honesty until now, and how is it that you have deceived us? Can it be true that the wooden cross which you chose contained a gold cross set with diamonds and valued by a jeweller at three thousand crowns? And you had the boldness to keep the article after you had discovered this, and never to tell us one word about it! Now this is open robbery, and we did not expect such a thing from you. Give us up the cross therefore, or if not, we are determined to take legal steps to oblige you to restore it."

Mr de Hagen of whose honesty and disinterestedness we have spoken before, here observed :

"My dear cousin, I confess I am less astonished at Sophy's selling an article which really belonged to her, than at hearing you talk in this manner. How could you conceive the least idea of Sophy's dishonesty? For, what is the question in dispute? You either acknowledge Sophy's right to have made her choice, or not? If you admit her right, and you cannot deny it, what have you to complain of? Do you remember your conduct on the day we were

dividing the property, and the insidious way in which you urged her to select a dress? And when at length she decided on taking this cross, it drew a pitiful smile from you, and you laughed at her simplicity."

"Sophy is a mere hypocrite," replied the lady in a furious passion, "for she knew well what was in the cross, or she would not have asked it."

"Well, suppose she did, said Mr de Hagen; tell me how could you prevent her from selecting the cross? You certainly could not. And what then can you do, or why do you complain? Your injurious suspicion of Sophy is quite destroyed by her noble conduct to Madam de Linden. If she was aware of the treasure contained in this cross, why should she wait until this moment for the purpose of selling it. You know how hard pressed she was to pay for her house. You know the sad state of her affairs since the failure of the banker who had the care of her property. You have heard that the farmer who had advanced her what was necessary to support herself and family, was on the point of selling all her property! and how can you imagine that if she knew she possessed such a treasure she would allow matters to come to such a crisis? It is contrary to common sense to believe it; and I cannot suppose she would have endured so much if it were in her power to retrieve her affairs by legitimate means. Hence, do not tell me any more that Sophy is a hypocrite, or that she has appropriated to herself an article which did not belong to her. You have no right to molest her, and the law, for I have taken legal advice, is against you. I have now one advice to give you, and that is, to put an end to this affair as soon as possible, and to say no more about it, for the public, which already knows too much of the matter, will laugh at you in its turn, will censure this discreditable conduct, and will accuse you as you deserve, of a disgusting rapacity."

The relatives of Madam de Linden who were so enraged against poor Sophy, had not a word to say in reply to this conclusive reasoning, and kept a sullen silence. Sophy wished to add a few words in her own justification to this excellent defence, but Mr de Hagen begged her to say nothing. She therefore went away satisfied, and hastened to the Priest to tell him all that had occurred. This worthy man congratulated her on her triumph, and advised her to set out at once for her village, and to bring the thousand crowns to the farmer.

Before leaving the town poor Sophy went to the church where she had formerly prayed with so much fervour, and knelt on the steps of the very same altar at which Madam de Linden had found her twenty years before plunged in grief and sorrow for the death of her mother. There, tears of gratitude flowed from her eyes at the remembrance of all the benefits of the Lord since that period. She besought him to continue his mercies to her and