

proprietors of the Chateau without any regard to his sad condition, told him one day that they had hired another gardener, and that in three months he should leave the little cottage which he occupied. They allowed him however a small trifle weekly and promised to supply him with wood and meal.

This new calamity which periled the very existence of the young couple, drew tears from William's eyes. Sophy tried to comfort him, and told him that this trial should not make him despair. 'But how are we to live and support our children?' said he.

I have a scheme in my head, said Sophy, and if we can accomplish it, I think it would serve us. As there is no huxter's shop in the village, we ought to open one in my opinion; and if the Lord should be pleased to bless our industry, we might succeed. What do you think?

I think very well of it, said William. My arm won't prevent me from attending the shop and you will still be able to earn something by your work; meanwhile our children will be growing up, and will be able to give us some help.

Thus by mutual agreement they adopted a means of earning an honest livelihood. An opportunity soon presented itself of making a cheap purchase of a house in the village. William and Sophy went to see it, and resolved to buy it. The house suited them very well being situated in the centre of the village, but it required extensive repairs. William's sickness had consumed their little savings, and they had very little left for the necessary expences. In this dilemma, Sophy applied to the banker in whose hands were left the two thousand crowns that Madam de Linden had bequeathed her; but he refused to pay, alleging that by the contract between him and the heirs, he was not bound to do so before another year.

This refusal greatly embarrassed William and Sophy, and they were on the point of abandoning their project when a rich farmer in the neighbourhood, understanding that they were to come in for two thousand crowns in a year, advanced them the sum necessary for the purchase and repair of the house, and for laying in some articles for sale. It was agreed on that they should pay him with interest in a year.

Thus all difficulties were removed, the house was purchased and repaired, and they and their children took possession. The shop was furnished with good wares, and was frequented by the villagers. The moderate price of their goods, the perfect honesty of William and his wife, the attention which they paid to every one, attracted even the custom of the neighbouring villages, and hence they began to

thrive apace. They every day returned thanks to the Lord for the blessings he bestowed them.

But their life was to be crossed by new trials, so true it is that happiness is not constant here below, and that sufferings always follow the brief enjoyments that are tasted here. Every thing seemed to smile on our excellent couple, when a rumour was suddenly spread that the banker in whose hands was Sophy's legacy had suspended payments, and was on the point of becoming a bankrupt. In order to know the truth William travelled to the town where their debtor lived and returned with the sad assurance that their money was in danger. In fact, a few days after, the banker failed, and his effects were sealed by order of the authorities.

We may judge of the embarrassment of William and his wife! The day was nigh, when reckoning on the two thousand crowns which Madam de Linden had left Sophy, they had engaged to pay the farmer the sum which he had advanced. But where were they to get the money? With the very greatest economy it would have been impossible for them to have realized profits sufficient to pay so heavy a sum as this. Moreover they were always anxious to pay at once for the goods that were sent to them, in order to sustain their credit. They therefore did not know by what means they should be able to discharge their debt.

Sophy went to the farmer, and with tears in her eyes explained to him the melancholy situation in which they were placed by the failure of the banker. She besought him to take compassion on them, and to grant them time to pay off the debt. She even went farther; she promised not to delay the payment more than was necessary—even to give him her weekly receipts, in the hope that thus by degrees she would be enabled to clear off the debt. Her request was accompanied by as many marks of sincerity and honesty as would have moved the hardest heart; but she could obtain no indulgence.

The farmer, like the servant mentioned in the Gospel, knew nothing of the precept of loving our neighbour. He was glad to serve one as long as he had any thing to gain by it, but his barren pity extended no farther. He at first listened in silence to Sophy's request, but all on a sudden he broke out in the most furious manner. He called her a low adventurer, loaded her with the vilest reproaches. He poured out a torrent of blasphemies, and threatened, that if he was not paid on the appointed day, he would sell, without mercy, her house, furniture and goods, nay, her very bed.

Sophy was more dead than alive when she returned home. She had not strength enough to tell her husband the sorrowful news which weighed upon her heart. Her tears spoke more than her words.

William, who did not expect so much severity from the farmer, was thunder-stricken. The cries of the mother made the children weep, and the whole house was filled with lamentation. The idea