

THE SACRIFICE;

—OR—
FOR HER FAMILY'S SAKE.

CHAPTER XVII.—(Continued).

Frau Elfrida tossed her head angrily and rustled back to her daughter-in-law. "You have no room here for your husband's picture, I suppose?" she inquired sharply.

Lora turned a shade paler. "No, she said calmly, 'there is absolutely no room here,' and she pointed to the thousand things that filled every corner."

"Then move out that old rubbish—that is a splendid place for the ease and the picture," pointing contemptuously to the writing-table.

"No," replied Lora, still calmly. "I beg you will leave the table here; it is a souvenir of my home."

"Of your home," cried the old lady, even her diamond bedecked ears turning crimson with anger. "It may be a very good thing, to be sure, to have constantly before your eyes a reminder of that poverty-stricken place you have been so lucky as to escape from. But it is easy enough to forget that, when you are in a comfortable home, as well as the gratitude you owe to—"

Lora remained perfectly calm. These angry words no longer affected her. "I have never missed outward splendor in my home," she replied, "and therefore I do not look on it as a great advantage. I should have been content with so much less."

Frau Elfrida was furiously angry; this wrath was the only genuine thing about her, and savored strongly of the bar at the "Three Elver Swans." She struck out at the old table in the midst of a perfect flood of coarse abuse; the leg that she happened to hit, being weak, broke off, and the table toppled over, scattering the little knick-knacks upon it far and wide, and they were thrust into remote corners of the room by vigorous kicks from the angry woman.

Lora was standing in the window, looking out; she pressed her teeth tight together, and did not look round. She had no right even to blame her mother-in-law; she was a loving mother, and grieved with her for showing so plainly her dislike to her son, who was her own husband. The offensive words buzzed about her ears like a swarm of bees, and now and then one hurt keenly.

But she did not flinch, it was a matter of such indifference to her; it would pass, and then would come quiet, eternal quiet. She did not turn round till her mother-in-law broke into nervous sobs, and dropped into a chair.

"I beg your pardon," said Lora; "it is hard for me to pretend to what I do not feel."

"But that is outrageous!" screamed Frau Becher, breaking out afresh; "and you say it so as a matter of course. What! He might have got somebody better than such a poverty-stricken girl, whose brothers have to have their debts paid to keep the family from disgrace! That is all the thanks we get for paying out thaler after thaler, so the high-born Frau von Tollen can pay her butcher and her shoemaker."

"My mother!" inquired Lora, grasping at the arm of a chair, "you have given money to my mother?"

"What can I do, I should like to know, when the legs of me?" cried the shrill voice; "here is the third letter within a few days—here, look at it, if you don't believe it." And she felt in her pocket and took out a card with a black border, and threw it down on the floor in front of Lora. "There's a luxury for people who have to be always begging for money—there must be black edges on the cards—but it's all of a piece with the whole establishment!"

Lora picked up the card and read:

"Dearest Frau Becher:
"Could you lend me twenty marks more, till the 1st of January? I have had so many expenditures on account of my husband's death and Lora's marriage, which look out so many little sums, that I find myself in some difficulty. Pray excuse me for troubling you again."

"Yours,
"MARIE VON TOLLEN."

Lora was crimson with shame. She had refused to ask for money for her mother, and now she had gone so far as to ask for her daughter's mother-in-law! "How much did you lend my mother?" she inquired.

"Twenty marks—of course in the eyes of people who do not know how hard it is to earn a penny, that is nothing at all—nothing!" she cried.

Lora went to the broken table, drew out a drawer, and came back with four ten-mark pieces.

"Here is the amount you lent my mother," she said, putting it down before Frau Becher on a marble table.

"I am sorry I did not know the full extent of my mother's needs," said Frau Elfrida's angry face put on a smiling smile. "It is charming when one is used in one's own full," she exclaimed, and began to laugh as hysterically as she had cried before.

"You are mistaken," said Lora coldly. "It is the last money that I earned by my work. I have never yet taken anything from him whose name I bear."

She went past the hysterical woman into her bedroom, and shut the door behind her. Then she went to the window and looked out into the wintry park. A heavy black cloud hung over the trees; on a tall poplar in the foreground sat a row of melancholy crows; otherwise there was no life in the landscape that stretched out before her as sad and desolate as her own existence.

"Only to see him once more, and then—and then—"

She was conscious that she was doing wrong, according to the laws of God and man; but deep as were her religious feelings, she could no longer endure the duties that her marriage imposed upon her. She considered that these were rights, sacred rights, which stood higher than those which bound her to the man whom she could not love, and as she no longer possessed these rights she had firmly decided to call to her aid a power before which all must give way—right, duty, honor—everything. "And then—then," she murmured again.

She could no longer pray, her mind was so filled with one idea. She had not slept well for a long time; as soon as she lay down she heard the soft ripple of the quiet little river behind her parents' house. And in the daytime, when she was condemned to inactivity, and sat alone at her dressing-table, she pictured to herself how it would be when the announcement was made that young Frau Becher was dead—drowned! She thought out every detail. She knew exactly what people would say of her, how each one of her brothers and sisters would judge her. She could see the pompous funeral her husband would have for her, and Frau Elfrida among the mourners; how she would lament in her shrill voice over the misfortune that had befallen her. She would even fancy that he might walk in the funeral procession; only one thing made her hesitate, while a shudder ran over her—when she thought of her mother! She saw again and again the rigid, despairing face of the unhappy woman as it was on the night when Rudolph was going to America. She wished she could take her with her.

The gardener was coming up the broad walk which cut through the park; he had a large evergreen tree on his shoulder. Ah, yes; it would soon be Christmas, and Frau Elfrida had spoken of a tree and a little gathering in her salon.

What a farce it would be! Ah, and how easy and pleasant the Christmas-eyes had been at home, poor in gifts though they were! Last Christmas, her father had given her Immermann's "Oberhof," and a pair of gloves for her next ball; and her mother had had neck-chains made for her and for Katie, out of a long gold chain of her grandmother's; Lora wore on hers the thin gold locket given her by her god mother at her confirmation, and beside was a forget-me-not, that he had picked for her once at a picnic.

Very of her father's house seemed to her a golden treasure, which was irretrievably lost to her. Ah, if she could only turn time backward once more, for eight weeks!

At this moment Frau Elfrida knocked loudly on the door.

"Come out, Lora; we will not quarrel with each other," she cried.

The young wife opened the door. Her mother-in-law rustled in.

"Don't write about it to Adalbert. I beg of you, child," she said gently, "it is true I was rather violent—well, we can't always be angels, and when two people live together, of course there will sometimes be a difference of opinion."

Lora made no reply.

"And this afternoon you will go with me to buy the last things for Christmas; and then we will unpack that box from Herzog's, from Berlin; the servants' presents are in it."

"I am sorry," replied Lora, "I am going to mamma."

"Quite right, I will—"

"Mamma and I wish to speak to you alone; you cannot refuse me the privilege of having a few hours in my mother's house?"

"Oh, heavens, how you misunderstand me," complained Frau Elfrida. "I only meant to go to the door with you."

"Thank! I can find the way alone," she said, her golden head slightly, and going into her dressing-room, began to pick up the things which had been scattered about the room, in the fall of the much-abused table.

In the afternoon she was not prevented from leaving the house, and she went on foot to her mother's house. The streets seemed so strange to her, as if she had been absent for years. The people looked at her so curiously, and several windows were thrown open behind her. This slender black

figure seemed like the ghost of the lovely, blooming girl. She returned the greetings of those she met, though she scarcely bent her head. Before she had always had a pleasant smile in her beautiful eyes, and now, they thought, she was "mad with pride." Ah, she had a full purse behind her now!

Her mother had a fire in the dining-room, and had the lamp already lighted, she was making up her accounts, and had some money beside her.

"Is it you, Lora?" she asked.

"Yes, mamma. Don't move; I will sit here. Please, mamma, never borrow money again of my mother-in-law."

Frau von Tollen started. "Oh, heavens, if I only knew of any other way to get it," she stammered.

"Sell what you have, but do not borrow anything of her."

"I sent to Lenz to come and buy your father's wardrobe, but he will not give anything for it."

"We have some silver still, mamma."

"Must I part with that, too?" was her plaintive reply.

"Yes, rather than beg of—"

Her voice choked over the rest.

"Did she say anything about it?"

"Yes; do not ask me, mamma, only grant my request."

"Very well, Lora. I only thought—I cannot pay it back now."

"Don't disturb yourself about that, mamma; I have already paid it. Where's Katie?"

Frau von Tollen did not know; she did not come back from her class yet. The little coffee-pot, with the thin coffee in it, was standing on the stove, waiting for the young girl, and on the table was bread and butter.

Lora had thrown off her cloak, and leaned back in the corner of the sofa. She did not speak. She only looked about her, and then she cut off a piece of bread and began to eat it. She had had no dinner at home.

"Is the carriage to come for you?" asked her mother at length.

"I don't know. Don't speak of my going away; let me stay here now."

"I am very glad to have you, Lora—I only thought—don't misunderstand me—"

They remained together till the clock struck six, scarcely speaking.

"You are so strange now, Lora," sighed Frau von Tollen, as her daughter rose and prepared to go.

But Lora made no reply. She kissed her mother and left the house. Katie had not made her appearance.

Lora went slowly through the streets and breathed in the heavy, foggy air to deep draughts. She could dream that she was free at this moment. Her husband's coupe rolled by her, going to take her home; she turned quickly into a narrow lane, through which no carriage could drive.

She walked on through the streets in an aimless manner, and at last crossed over to the Neustadt. She felt as if she could not walk enough. She looked up at all the windows where her acquaintances lived, and even stopped in front of the house where a married friend of hers lived; upstairs there was a light in the simple parlor of the young doctor's wife; she saw the hanging lamp swaying to and fro, and a woman's figure, with a child on her arm, pass through the room.

Then a man came rapidly up the street; he ran quickly up the steps and into the house. A few minutes later, the husband and a wife were standing together, caressing the little one, who lay in his arms.

It was half-past eight when Lora turned her steps at length homeward. But first she stood awhile before the Schomburg's house, and looked up to the gable window. She would have saved on forgetting the time, had not the light upstairs suddenly been put out, and the hall door opened shortly after. She walked quickly across the bridge, and there she looked round. In the faint moonlight she recognized Frau St., who was taking the way to the city. Her eyes brightened; her foot started forward; her first impulse was to follow him, to take his hand, to say "Forgive!" but the old maidenly shyness, bitter shame and fear, seemed to paralyze her limbs. She only gazed after him with eyes in which there was the concentrated longing of a whole lifetime. At length she went back to her own home and up to her room, with a feeling of helplessness and despair.

She looked so pale and shaken that Frau Elfrida felt the angry words with which she had meant to receive her die on her lips.

Upstairs, Lora sat down on her bed, and sat there until her weariness overpowered her. When the maid came in the next morning to make the fire, she walked her with the cry, "Good heavens! madam has not taken off her cloak and hat!"

CHAPTER XVIII.

At the station of Uelzen, a gentleman got into Hamburg express train. He had run breathless across the other side of the station where the Hanover train comes in, and looked with an occupied the coupe that the guard had opened for him, at his request. "Confound it! A man couldn't even smoke!" He leaned out of the window and called to the guard, with a powerful voice, "I want a smoking carriage."

"Excuse me sir, but the train is unusually full," was the reply. "It is just Christmas time."

The gentleman muttered something, and, after he had shut the window, sat down in the corner. He was a man of middle size, nearly seventy

years old, with rather grim soldier's face, out of which a pair of wonderfully clear eyes looked forth from under bushy white eyebrows. He wore a soldier's cap and a fur coat, and around the left arm a black woollen band, as a sign of mourning.

After he had carefully spread out his fur coat over his knees, he took out a newspaper and began to read, while the train sped on through the wintry landscape. It was gloomy, foggy weather; the sun seemed loath to battle with the thick, low-hanging clouds. The snow on the fields had almost melted away; only small dirty patches of it still lay in the ditches by the side of the road, and the willows looked dark and beside them. The wind was blowing from the west, and whenever the train stopped its monotonous wailing could be heard.

The lady, in the other corner of the carriage, sat motionless. Opposite her a child lay asleep, wrapped up in shawls and furs. Nothing was visible of the little creature but a head of golden hair, cropped like a boy's. The lady, who wore a simple travelling cloak, and a little cap of very cheap fur, looked steadily out of the window, and the old gentleman, whose glances occasionally turned in her direction, found nothing about her worthy of observation except a knot of beautiful hair, of a nut-brown shade.

It was remarkable how the carriage swayed and lurched. Reading was impossible. The old gentleman flung his newspaper on the opposite seat, and settled himself for a nap. It is astonishing how a man misses his cigar. He must really have slept a little, when the sound of a child's voice recalled him to the present.

"Shall we soon be with papa, dear mamma?" the child asked, in the English language.

His mother replied in a whisper that he must keep still, for the old gentleman over there was asleep. And thereupon a charming little fellow, about four years old, climbed up into the lap of the lady, who carefully wrapped her cloak around the dainty little figure, and then a low conversation ensued between mother and son, not a syllable of which escaped the listener in the corner.

It seemed as sweet to the old bachelor to hear as the twittering of the swallows in the sunny May-time. His thoughts went back, sixty years and more, to the time when he was just such a boy, sitting on his mother's lap, and was caressed and petted in the same way. And—confound it!—this was Christmas Eve!

"And will Bertie get a horse from papa?" inquired the sweet, childish voice.

"Yes, my pet."

"And a tree with lots of candy?"

"Yes, oh, yes; and papa will love his little boy so much!" and the boy received a kiss as a foretaste of the many things that were to follow.

"Mamma, Bertie is so tired," complained the child, "and this old carriage shakes so; it was better on the steam-car."

"Yes, darling; but now we shall soon be with papa."

"Mamma, will papa remember me?"

"Oh, of course he will. Don't you remember papa?"

The child was silent. "Yes," he said at length, "papa beat Bertie."

"Then my darling must have been naughty," was the reply, in a rather embarrassed tone.

"Bertie don't know," replied the child.

"You shouldn't think about that, my darling, but only how good papa was to you."

"Yes, mamma. Mamma, are you crying? Mamma, shall I sing something to you? Shall I sing 'Onward, Christian Soldiers'?"

"No, I am not crying. But you had better not sing now; you can repeat the Christmas hymn you are going to say to papa to-night."

And the clear, childish voice began at once:

"While shepherd's watched their flocks by night,
The angel of the Lord came down,
And glory shone around."

It sounded very sweet, from the lips of the little foreigner.

(To be Continued.)

DYSPEPTIC PHILOSOPHY.

They say a woman can't keep a secret. Ask one her age.

A woman can like any kind of hat, unless it looks like one.

Don't you believe that all who disagree with you are wrong?

Many a man who merely passes the hat gets a reputation for philanthropy.

People always remember, where they got a favor—when they want another.

The people who believe most strongly in luck are those who have never had any.

Politeness is gradually becoming confined to the people who want to borrow money.

There are all kinds of women, except the one who doesn't become enthusiastic over a baby.

"Laugh, and the world laughs with you," isn't true when you're laughing at your own jokes.

If a man finds fault with his dinner, and his wife doesn't get angry, it's a sign they're dining away from home.

Jealousy is a vine which produces a crop of sour grapes.

Men and chickens always scramble for the highest roost.

The Farm

DAIRY SUGGESTIONS.

1. Have the herd examined frequently by a skilled veterinarian. Promptly remove any animals suspected of being in bad health. Never add an animal to the herd until certain it is free from disease, especially tuberculosis.

2. Never allow a cow to be excited by hard driving, abuse, loud talking or unnecessary disturbance; do not unduly expose her to cold or storms.

3. Clean the entire body of the cow daily. Hair in the region of the udder should be kept short. Wipe the udder, and surrounding parts with a clean, damp cloth before milking.

4. Do not allow any strong-flavored feed, such as garlic, cabbage or turnips, to be eaten except immediately after milking.

5. Salt should always be accessible.

6. Radical changes in feed should be made gradually.

7. Have fresh, pure water in abundance, easy of access, and not too cold.

8. Dairy cattle should be kept in a stable, where no other animals are housed, preferably without cellar or storage loft. Stables should be light (4 square feet of glass per cow), and dry, with at least 500 cubic feet of air to each animal. It should have air inlets and outlets, so arranged as to give good ventilation without drafts of air on the cow. The presence of flies may be reduced by darkening the stable and removing the manure as directed below.

9. The floors, walls and ceilings of the stable should be tight, and ceilings kept free from cobwebs, and whitewashed twice a year. There should be as few dust-catching ledges and projections as possible.

10. Allow no musty or dirty litter or strong-smelling material in the stable. Store manure under cover at least 44 feet from the stable in a dark place. Use land plaster daily in gutter and on floor.

11. Cans should not remain in the stable while being filled. Remove the milk of each cow at once from the stable to clean cow; strain immediately through cotton funnel or absorbent cotton; cool to 50 degrees F. as soon as strained; store at 50 degrees or lower. All milk houses should be screened.

12. Milk utensils should be made of metal, with all joints smoothly soldered, or, when possible, should be made of stamped metal. Never allow utensils to become rusty or rough inside. Use milk utensils for nothing but handling, storing or delivering milk.

SOILING.

Soiling is that system of feeding cattle in which the animals are deprived of pasture and kept in a small inclosure, food of every kind being brought to them. It especially applies to the system of culling and bringing to cattle roughage in a green state. The process began in Europe, and very naturally developed. First, the cattle were tethered and allowed to pasture within a certain circle indicated by the rope that held them.

As they devoured the green herbage growing within this circle the herbage cut and brought to them grass and other food plant from fields in which the cattle would not be allowed to go. The Europeans early conceived the idea that on the recently tilled soils, producing grass and heavy growth of it the tramping of the cattle would compact the soil and make it unproductive by crushing the soil particles to such a degree that no air could be admitted. The land had by that time become so valuable and the holdings of the farmers so small that they could not afford to lose the use of a single foot of it. The European herdsman in the best tilled portions of Europe learned from experience that he could raise more grass on a piece of land by keeping it in a meadow than by allowing it to be used as pasture. This was in part due to the fact that he would not cut the grass until it was at a height where it would produce the best weight an acre. The roots of such grass struck deeply and drew nourishment from a thicker layer of soil than the pasture grasses that were kept fed close to the ground. It will thus be seen that the soiling system has developed as a natural result of the increased value of land.

WHEN TO PLOW SOIL.

The damage done by cut worms has become so alarming in some sections that the question has arisen whether the practice of turning over the sod in the spring has not something to do with it. Some figure out that by allowing their sod ground to stand over they get the full value of the late pasture. Sod ground should be turned in the fall. Make it as late as you want, but get it turned before the ground freezes up. This is a plowing will enable one to get the full worth of the late fall growth, and the ground is in just the condition to weather till spring. If there was no other reason, fall plowing is better, as it will help to get rid of the cut worms and other insects which have been hibernating during the last four or five years. Many complain that their soils are not as nice to work as they were several years ago. That no doubt is due to the system of plowing and cultivating. We do too much spring plowing, with the result that the seed-bed is very dry or soggy all through the summer. Turn under the sod this fall, and then dis the next spring. That's the place to expect the bumper yield of oats.

Men and chickens always scramble for the highest roost.