

for only so will he learn to love life and live charitably with his neighbours. The man who, through his own fault or owing to other causes, only feels the bitterness and sorrow of this world cannot love life; and, not loving it, he despises in a sinful manner the great gift of God.

What kind of people are the lazy people, the people who make no effort, who do not stretch out a hand to take this gift? They are sinners! They have no desires--only carnal appetites. Man has been given pure desires which he may gratify with the fruit of his labours; longings are put into his heart that he may conquer the world while God Himself contemplates him with pleasure from on high. To work is the first duty of man; and he who does not work is a sinner.

After this, the Father sketched in words which seemed to give life to his ideas the miserable existence of a man perishing from hunger, and he gave his faithful hearers the thoughts which had germinated in his own intelligent brain--how they must work in the spring and in the summer, in the autumn and in the winter.

The people had listened; the Father's words were written on their faces; going home they could only talk of what they had heard in church, and each one felt himself more of a man than before.

Maybe there were many among them who only waited for Sunday to pass that they might begin their first day of work.

"There has never been such a priest in Saraceni!" said Marcu Flori Cucu, as he parted from his neighbour, Mitru.

"A priest that does honour to a village," replied Mitru, as if he felt that his village was not exactly honoured.

Other Sundays followed. Father Trandafir was ready with his sermon. The second Sunday he had no one to address. The weather was wet, and people stayed at home. Other Sundays the weather was fine; probably then the people did not remember in time; they were loath to part from God's blue sky. And so the Father only had in church some old woman or some aged man with failing sight and deaf ears. Sometimes there was only Cozonac, the bell-ringer. In this way he made no progress. Had he been a different kind of man he would have stopped here.

But Father Trandafir was like the goat among cabbages in the garden. When you turn it out at the door, it comes in through the fence, when you mend the fence, it jumps over it, and does a lot more damage by destroying the top of the hedge.

God keep him! Father Trandafir still remained a good man.

"Wait!" he said. "If you will not come to me, I will go to you!"

Then the priest went from door to door. He never ceased talking from the moment it was light. Whenever he came across anyone he gave him good advice. You met the priest in the fields; you found him on the hill; if you went down the valley you encountered the priest; the priest was in the woods. The priest was in church; the priest was at the death-bed; the priest was at the wedding; the priest was with your next-door neighbour--you had to fly the village if you wanted to escape the priest. And whenever he met you, he gave you wise counsel.

During a whole year, Father Trandafir gave good advice. People listened gladly--they liked to stay and talk to the priest even if he did give them good advice. All the same, the old saying holds good: men know what they ought to do, but they don't do it. The Father was disappointed. After a certain time he ceased to give advice. There was not a man in the village upon whom he had not poured the whole weight of his learning: he had nothing more to say.

"This will not do," said the priest once more. "Advice does not pay. I must start something more severe."