

another, or are they, perhaps, inseparable? Anyhow, they are always like light and shade, one alongside the other.

By now Father Trandafir had three children. When he returned from the bishop, he found his wife in bed. There was a fourth little blessing in the house. A sick wife, three little children, a fourth at the breast, and a tumble-down house; the snow drifted through the walls, the stove smoked, the wind came through the roof, the granary was bare, his purse empty, and his heart heavy.

Father Trandafir was not the man to find a way out of this embarrassing state of things. Had it been some one else in his situation, he could have helped him; he could not comfort himself. For a long time he stood in the dim light of the little lamp; every one around him slept. The sick woman was asleep. Now there is nothing more conducive to melancholy than the sight of people asleep. He loved those sleeping forms; he loved them and was responsible for their happiness; he lived for them, and their love made life precious to him. Thoughts crowded into his brain. His mind turned to the past and to the future; considering the state in which he found himself, the future could only appear depicted in the saddest colours. His children! His wife! What would become of them? His heart was heavy, and he could not find one consoling thought, one single loop-hole of escape; nowhere in the world was there anything to give him a gleam of hope.

The next day was Sunday. The Father went to church with bowed head, to read Matins.

Like the generality of mankind, Father Trandafir had never given much thought to what he was doing. He was a priest, and he was content with his lot. He liked to sing, to read the Gospel, to instruct the faithful, to comfort, and to give spiritual assistance to the erring. His thoughts did not go much beyond that. Had he been asked at any time whether he realized the sanctity, the inner meaning of his calling, maybe he would have laughed to himself at all those things which a man only grasps in moments of intense suffering. It is man's nature when his mind comprehends a series of more or less deep thoughts, to measure the whole world by this standard, and not to believe what he does not understand. But man does not always think in this way. There are events during which his brain becomes inactive: in danger, when no escape seems possible; in moments of joy, when he knows not from what source his happiness is derived; at times when his train of thought seems to have lost all coherence. Then, when man has reached, in any way, the point where the possible becomes indistinguishable from the impossible, he ceases to reason, instinct asserts itself.

Father Trandafir went into the church. How many times had he not entered that church! Just as a blacksmith might enter his forge. But this time he was seized with an incomprehensible fear, he took a few steps forward and then hid his face in his hands and began to sob bitterly. Why did he cry? Before whom did he cry? His lips uttered these words only: "Almighty God, succour me!" Did he believe that this prayer, expressed with all the energy of despair, could bring him help? He believed nothing; he thought of nothing; he was in a state of exaltation.

The Holy Scriptures teach us that just as the ploughman lives on the fruit of his toil, so does the spiritual pastor, who serves the altar, live by the result of his service at that altar. Father Trandafir always believed in the Holy Scriptures; he always worked only for the spiritual welfare of his people, and expected that they, in return, would furnish him with his daily bread. But the world is not always in agreement with what is written and commanded; only the priest agreed with it, the people did not. The Father got little from his office, anyhow not enough; this is to say, four pieces of ground near the village, a poll-tax on the population, and baptismal and burying fees.

Taken altogether, it amounted to nothing, seeing that the earth