

went off into the town.

"Sandu," said the mistress, when the workmen had gone, "if you are not going anywhere, come back in an hour when we have finished with the dinner things and sit with Gheorghitza, for to-day is Sunday and perhaps visitors will come to the house."

Ana looked at him; Sandu hardly understood the mistress's words, and could not answer her.

"Speak, are you coming or not?"

"I will come." And he went out as though he had been pushed.

At three o'clock came the mistress's mother, a woman of about sixty years of age, rosy in the face and well made. She was wearing a dark coloured skirt, and on her head a kerchief of black silk which reached nearly to her knees, and in her hand, like all old women, she carried a yellow handkerchief.

She rarely came to see her daughter, partly because she knew her time for going out in society was past, but especially because Mistress Veta was not glad to see her on feast days; she would not have come to-day, but she had not been for a long time and she was desirous of seeing her grandchildren.

Inside the front room she rejoiced over the beauty and good manners of her grand-daughter, who, with her mother, was removing the last speck of dust, or putting back in its right place anything that had been left about.

Ana sat down by her grandmother, and her grandmother stroked her head and looked tenderly into her face. She never grew tired of saying: "Such grandchildren, such dear grandchildren." But just when she was feeling happy the door opened.

"Ah, Mr. and Mrs. Naraschievici!" said Mistress Veta, jumping up to receive them as though some royal party had arrived.

"Pray sit down."

Mr. and Mrs. Naraschievici accepted the invitation, while their daughter, a pale, plain girl of over twenty years of age, did not forget to kiss the mistress's hand.

"I kiss your hand, aunt," said Ana, too, while Mrs. Naraschievici in her turn embraced her on the forehead, and could not help expressing her wonder at how tall Ana had grown and how pretty she was.

Ana blushed and joined Miss Naraschievici, while the mistress's eyes shone with pleasure.

"You must not tell her so; you must not turn her head," she said, just for something to say, while her mother was asking herself the question as to why on earth her grand-daughter had said that "Aunt."

It is true that neither Ana nor Mistress Veta was related to the Naraschievici family; however, Mr. Naraschievici said it was "aristocratic," and all he said was right in Mistress Veta's eyes.

"Is Master Dinu at home?"

"No. You know what he is--he cannot bear to stay at home."

As she said this, Mistress Veta approached her mother, who looked as if she could have taken the whole Naraschievici family and put them outside the door, so angry was she because they had spoilt the happy hour she had hoped to pass with her grand-daughter.

"Mother," she whispered in her ear, "it would be kind if you would go downstairs to Gheorghitza, who ought to be up now."