

The old lady was at the door before she had finished speaking: with her hand on the latch she looked furiously at her daughter and at Mr. and Mrs. Naraschievici, choked back some words and went out.

She was going away, saying to herself that she would never again set foot inside the house, when she remembered Gheorghitza. When the old lady went in Sandu was telling him tales.

"Here is kind Granny, here is kind Granny," cried Gheorghitza gaily.

He got up quickly, put his arms round her neck and kissed her over and over again.

The old woman forgot her distress as she held Gheorghitza in her arms. He began to untie the handkerchief and feel in the pocket of her gown.

"Look what Granny has brought for Gheorghitza," she said.

It was her habit to bring some toy for him.

Now that he had a plaything, Gheorghitza was no longer ill. His kind Granny made him forget it. The old lady watched him for some time, and then she looked at Sandu.

"How is the work getting on?"

"Well."

"And business is profitable?"

"Profitable."

As Sandu said this Mistress Veta came into the ante-room, took a plateful of cakes out of a cupboard and went quickly away again.

During the noise she made the old lady looked intently towards the window.

"She takes them upstairs, but she did not invite me," and her eyes filled with tears. "That is how she esteems me," said the old lady, steeped in bitterness. "It's a sad world. I have reached an old age when my own daughter is ashamed of me. She sends me out of the house as if I were a nobody. May God not punish her, for she has children. But it hurts me to see her pay no attention to me just because of some bankrupts, some wretches who have fled from Temishoara to avoid their creditors. But I did not come to get something out of her. I did not come like those bankrupts to get something to eat. Thank God I have all I need at home, but that she should belittle me in such a way as to make me ridiculous in their eyes--Lord, Lord, did I rear her for this? Is it for this I watched over her?"

"Sandu," said the old lady, sighing heavily, "give her my thanks, tell her how I appreciate the honour she has done me, and that all my life I shall never forget that she received me as she should receive her mother. But listen to me; tell her, too, she may wait a long time before I cross her threshold again, and she need not send to me when she wants anything. Let her go to the gentleman, to the bankrupt Naraschievici."

And away went Mistress Veta's mother, so angry that she could not see where she was walking, while Sandu sat with drooping head.

In about half an hour Ana came. She was disappointed to hear her grandmother had gone, and wanted to know why.

Sandu did not like to tell her, and because his heart would not let him lie he said to her in a low voice:

"Well, she went because she could not stay."