

absence, heard from him his story, his mind was in a strange tumult, and yet the result of his effort seemed favorable. But he learned more fully than ever that Christine was not perfect, and that her faultless beauty and taste were but the fair mask of a deformed spirit. But he dwelt in hope on the feeling she had shown at Ernst's story.

"She seemed to have two hearts," said the boy, "a good, kind one way inside the cold, hard outside one."

"That is about the truth," thought Dennis. "Good-night, Ernst. I don't blame you, my boy, for you did the best you could."

He had done better than Dennis knew.

CHAPTER XXIX.

A MISERABLE TRIUMPH.

After Ernst's departure Christine reclined wearily in her chair, quite exhausted by even the slight effort she had made, but her thoughts were busy.

"What a unique character that Dennis Fleet is! And yet, in view of what he believes and professes, he is both natural and consistent. He seems humble only in station, and that is not his fault. Everything he does seems marked by unusual good taste and intelligence. His earlier position and treatment in the store must have been very galling. I can hardly believe that the gentleman I sang Mendelssohn's music with the other evening was the same that I laughed at as he blacked old Schwartz's boots. And yet he saw me laugh, and blacked the boots, conscious that he was a gentleman. It must have been very hard. And yet I would rather do such work myself than live on charity, and so undoubtedly he felt. It was very fortunate that we got the store arranged before all this occurred, for I could not order him about now, as I did. The fact is I like *servants*, not dignified helpers; and knowing what I do, even if he would permit it, I could not speak to him as formerly. But he did show wonderful taste and skill in his help. See now that little ivory-twined basket of luscious fruit; it looks just like him. If he were only rich and titled, what a genuine nobleman he would make. He is among the few men who do not weary or disgust me—so many are coarse and commonplace. I cannot understand it, but I, who fear and care for no one save my father, almost feared him when under Miss Brown's insolence he looked as few men can. What a jumble the world is! He sweeps the store, while insig-

nificant atoms of men are conspicuous in their littleness by reason of high position.

"It was very kind of him to send me this tasteful gift after the miserable experience I caused him the other day. I suppose he does it on the principle of returning good for evil, as his creed teaches. Moreover, he seems grateful that rather gave him employment, and a chance to earn twice what he gets. He certainly must be promoted at once.

"Perhaps," thought she, smiling to herself, while a faint tinge of color came into her cheeks, "perhaps, like so many others, he may be inclined to be a little sentimental also, though he will never be as silly as some of them.

"What a noble part he acted toward those Bruders! The heart of a pagan could not fail to be touched by that poor little fellow's story, and it has made me believe that I have more heart than I supposed. Sometimes, especially when I hear or read of some such noble deed, I catch glimpses of a life infinitely better than the one I know, like the sun shining through a rift in the clouds; then they shut down again, and father's practical wisdom seems the best there is.

"At any rate," she said aloud, getting up and wa king the floor with something of the old restless energy, "I intend to live while I live, and crowd into life's brief day all that I can. I thank Mr. Fleet for a few sensations in what would otherwise have been a monotonous, dreary afternoon."

"What strawberries!" said Ludolph coming in. "Where did you get these? They are the first I have seen."

"Your man-of-all-work sent them to me," said Christine, daintily dipping one after another in sugar.

"Well, that is a good joke."

"A most excellent one, which I am enjoying, and in which you may share. Help yourself."

"And what has led him to this extravagant favor?"

"Consistency, I suppose. As a good Christian he would return good for evil; and I certainly caused him many and varied tortures the other day."

"No, he is grateful; from first to last the callow youth has been overwhelmed with gratitude that I have permitted him to be worth to me double what I paid him."

"Well, you have decided to promote him, have you not?"

"Yes, he shall have charge of the hanging of new pictures, and the general arrangement of the store, so as to keep up your tasteful and