

musical in quality completed the charm, and added no little to the confidence which his countenance inspired. Nor did it belie a nature at once ardent and sensitive.

"So, Benedict," said Antoine Pomereul, "you refuse to draw aside the envious veil which covers your statue. Your apprentice, Cleomene, has just brought it here, and I am longing to see it. But I assure you I respected its folds, as if they were those of the ancient Isis."

"O my dear master," said Benedict, seizing the old man's hand impulsively, "if I have kept it veiled, it is because I would fain see for myself the impression it produced upon you, and hear with my own lips the decree which will make me happy or miserable. I want to consult your heart and mind alike in the two-fold decision you are about to give."

"On my honor," laughed Antoine Pomereul, "the affair is more serious than I supposed."

"It concerns my whole life," cried the young man eagerly.

"You mean your future as an artist, I suppose," said Pomereul, "and as to that, my boy, many find themselves deceived who follow art. Yes, those who seek her most often go farthest astray. Unwilling to follow the beaten path, they take new and unknown ones; sometimes they lose the guiding thread; their mind gropes in darkness; they fail to realize the grandeur of their first conception. However, Benedict, it is better even to miss a lofty ideal, than to remain forever satisfied with what is mediocre and trivial."

"Judge for yourself," cried the artist, suddenly raising the veil which covered the statue.

It was about three feet in height, of the purest Carrara marble. It represented a young girl modestly clad in a flowing robe, such as is seen on fauns of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries. The eyes were raised to Hea-