

is but the beautiful corpse of that one. While line for line, and feature for feature, and even leaf for leaf on the trees is faithfully exact, yet the soul, the feeling, the deep sorrowful tenderness that you feel in that picture rather than see, is wanting in this. In that picture you forget to blame or praise, to criticise at all, so deeply are your sympathies touched. It seems as if in reality two human hearts were being torn asunder before you. This you know to be an exquisite picture only, and can coolly criticise and dwell on every part, and say how admirably it is done."

And Dennis bowed and retired.

"By Jove, he is right," exclaimed Mr. Consoor; and approving faces and nodding heads confirmed his judgment. But Dennis enjoyed not his triumph, for as he turned he met Christine's look of agony and hate, and like lightning it flashed through his mind—
She painted the picture."

CHAPTER XXX.

LIFE WITHOUT LOVE.

As Dennis realized the truth, and remembered what he had said, his face was scarcely less full of pain than Christine's. He saw that her whole soul was bent on an imitation that none could detect, and that he had spoiled it all. But Christine's wound was deeper than that. She had been told again clearly and correctly, that the sphere of high, true art was beyond her reach. She felt that the verdict was true, and her own judgment confirmed every word Dennis uttered. But she had done her best; therefore her suffering was truly agony—the pain and despair at failure in the most cherished hope of life. There seemed a barrier which, from the very limitations of her being, she could not pass. She did not fail from the lack of taste, culture, or skill, but in that which was like a sixth sense—something she did not possess. Lacking the power to touch and move the heart, she knew she could never be a great artist.

Abruptly and without a word she left the room and store, accompanied by the Winthrops. Dennis felt as if he could bite his tongue out, and Christine's face haunted him like a dreadful apparition. Wherever he turned he saw it so distorted by pain, and almost hate, that it scarcely seemed the same that had smiled on him as he entered at her invitation. "Truly God is against all this,"

groaned he to himself; "and what I in my weakness could not do, He has accomplished by this unlooked for scene. She will now ever regard me with aversion."

Dennis, like many another, thought he saw God's plan clearly from a mere glimpse at a part of it. He at once reached this miserable conclusion, and suffered as greatly as if it had been God's will instead of his own imagination. To wait and trust, is often the latest lesson we learn in life.

Mr. Ludolph's guests, absorbed in the pictures, at first scarcely noticed the departures.

Christine, with consummate skill and care, kept her relationship to the picture unknown to all save the Winthrops, meaning not to acknowledge it unless she succeeded. But in Dennis' startled and pained face she saw that he had read her secret, and this fact also annoyed her much.

"I should like to know the artist who copied this painting," said Mr. Consoor.

"The artist is an amateur, and not willing to come before the public at present," said Mr. Ludolph so decidedly that no further questions were asked.

"I am much interested in that young clerk of yours," said Mr. Frame. "He seems to understand himself. It is so hard to find a good discriminating judge of pictures. Do you expect to keep him?"

"Yes, I do," said Mr. Ludolph with such emphasis that his rival in trade also pressed that point no farther.

"Well, really, Mr. Ludolph," said one of the gentlemen "you deal in wonders, mysteries, and all sorts of astonishing things here. We have an unknown artist in Chicago deserving an ovation; you have in your employ a prince of critics, and if I mistake not he is the same who sang at Brown's some little time ago. Miss Brown told me that he was your porter."

"Yes, I took him as a stranger and out of work, and knew nothing of him. But he proved an educated and accomplished man, who will doubtless be of great use to me in time. Of course I promoted him when I found him out." These last remarks were made more for Mr. Frame's benefit than any one else. He intended that his rival should knowingly violate all courtesy if he sought to lure Dennis away. After admiring the paintings and other new things recently received, the gentlemen bowed themselves out.

(To be continued.)