

BARRIERS BURNED AWAY.

By Rev. E. P. Roe.

(Continued.)

At the entrance of the store Mr. Winthrop—feeling awkwardly in the presence of the disappointed girl—pleaded business, and bade adieu with a warm grasp of the hand, and many assurances that she had succeeded beyond his belief.

"I know you mean kindly in what you say," said Christine, while not the slightest gleam lighted up her pale, sad face. "Good-bye."

She, too, was relieved, and wished to be alone. Miss Winthrop sought to comfort her friend as they walked homeward.

"Christine, you look really ill. I don't see why you take this matter so to heart. You have achieved a success that would turn any head but yours. I could not believe it possible had I not seen it. Your ambition and ideal are so lofty that you will always make yourself miserable by aiming at the impossible. As Mr. Fleet said, I do not believe there is another in the city who could have done so well, and if you can do that now, what may you not accomplish by a few years more of work?"

"That's the terrible part of it," said Christine with a long sigh. "Susie, I have got my growth. I can never be a real artist, and no one living can ever know the bitterness of my disappointment. I do not believe in the immortality that you do, and this was my only chance to live beyond the brief hour of my life. If I could only have won for myself a place among the great names that the world will ever honor, I might with more content let the candle of my existence flicker out when it must. But I have learned to-day what I have often feared, that Christine Ludolph must soon end in a forgotten handful of dust."

"O Christine, if you could only believe!"

"I cannot. I tried in my last sickness, but vainly. I am more convinced than ever of the correctness of my father's views."

Miss Winthrop sighed deeply. "Why are you so despondent?" she at last asked.

As if half speaking to herself, Christine repeated the words, "'Paired by one having never felt, or unable to feel, the emotions presented, and therefore cannot portray them.' That is just the trouble. I tried to speak in

a language I do not know. Susie, I believe I am about half ice. Sometimes I think I am like Undine, and have no soul. I know I have no heart, in the sense that you have.

"I live a very cold sort of life," she continued with a slight shudder. "I seem surrounded by invisible barriers that I cannot pass. I can see beyond what I want, but cannot reach it. O Susie, if you knew what I suffered when sick! Everything seemed slipping from me. And yet why I should so wish to live, I hardly know, when my life is so narrowed down."

"You see the disease but not the remedy," sighed Susie.

"What is the remedy?"

"Love. Love to God, and I may add love for some good man."

Christine stopped a moment and almost stamped her foot impatiently.

"You discourage me more than any one else," she cried. "As to loving God, how can I love merely a name? and even if He existed, how could I love a Being who left His world so full of vile evils? As to human love, fugh, I have had enough of romantic attachments."

"Do you never intend to marry?"

"Susie, you are the friend of my soul, and I trust you and you only with our secret. Yes, I expect to marry, but not in this land. You know that in Germany my father will eventually be a noble, the representative of one of the most ancient and honorable families. We shall soon have sufficient wealth to resume our true position there. A husband will then be found for me. I only stipulate that he will be able to give me position among the first, and gratify my bent for art to the utmost."

"Well, Christine, you are a strange girl, and your dream of the future is stranger still."

"Sometimes I think that all is a dream, and may end like one. Nothing seems certain or real, or turns out as one expects. Think of it. A nobody who swept my father's store the other day has this morning made such havoc in my dream that I am sick at heart."

"But you cannot blame Mr. Fleet. He did it unconsciously; he was goaded on to it."