

Dennis was usually busy with customers at that time, and though conscious of her presence the moment she entered, found no excuse or encouragement to approach. The best he ever received from her was a slight smile and a cold bow of recognition, and in her haste and self-absorption she did not always give these. She evidently had something on her mind by which it was completely preoccupied.

"She does not even think of me," sighed Dennis; "she evidently imagines that there is an immeasurable distance between us yet."

He was right, she did not think of him or scarcely any one else, so absorbed was she with the thought of a great success that now was almost sure. She had sent her thanks for the berries by her father, which so frightened Dennis that he had ventured on no more such favors. She had interceded for his promotion, surely she had paid her debt, and was at quits. So she would have been if he had only given her a basket of strawberries, but having given his heart, and life-long love, he could scarcely be expected to be satisfied. But he vowed after each blank day all the more resolutely that he would win her attention, secure recognition of his equality, and so be in position for laying siege to her heart.

But a deadly blight suddenly came over all his hopes.

One bright morning the last of May, two large flat boxes were brought to the store. Dennis was busy with customers, and Mr. Schwartz said in his blunt decided way that he would see to the hanging of those pictures. They were carried to the show-room in the rear of the store, and Dennis at once concluded that they were something very fine, designed to fill the spaces he had left, and was most anxious to see them. Before he was disengaged they were lifted from their casing and were standing side by side on the floor opposite the entrance, the warm rich morning sun falling upon them with fine effect. Mr. Schwartz seemed unusually excited and perplexed for him, and stared first at one picture, then at the other, in a manner indicating that not their beauty, but some other cause disturbed him.

Dennis had scarcely had time to exclaim at the exquisite loveliness and finish of the two paintings, before Mr. Ludolph entered accompanied by Mr. Consoor, a well-known artist, and Mr. Frame, proprietor of another large picture-store, and several gentlemen of taste but of lesser note, whom Dennis had learned to know by sight as habitués of the

"Temple of Art." He also saw that Christine was advancing up the store with a lady and gentleman. Feeling that his presence might be regarded as obtrusive, he passed out, and was about to go away, when he heard his name called.

Looking up he saw Miss Winthrop holding out her hand, and in a moment more she presented him to her father, who greeted him cordially. Christine also gave him a brief smile, and said:

"You need not go away. Come and see the pictures."

Quick-eyed Dennis saw that she was filled with suppressed excitement. Her cheeks, usually but slightly tinged with pink, now by turns glowed and were pale. Miss Winthrop seemed to share her nervousness, though what could so excite them he could not divine. The paintings, beautiful as they were, could scarcely be the adequate cause; and yet every eye was fastened on them.

One seemed the exact counterpart of the other in frame and finish as well as subject. A little in the background, upon a crag overhanging the Rhine, was a castle massive, frowning, and built more for security and defence than comfort. The surrounding landscape was bold, wild, and even gloomy. But in contrast with these rugged and sterner features, was a scene of exquisite softness and tenderness. Beneath the shadow of some great trees not far from the castle gate, a young Crusader was taking leave of his fair-haired bride. Her pale, tearful face, wherein love and grief blent indescribably, would move the most callous heart, while the struggle between emotion and the manly pride that would not permit him to give way, in the young chieftain's features, was scarcely less touching. Beautiful as were the accessories of the pictures, their main point was to portray the natural, tender feeling induced by a parting that might be forever. At first they all gazed quietly and almost reverently at the vivid scene of human love and sorrow, save old Schwartz, who fidgeted about as Dennis had never seen him before. Clearly something was wrong.

"Mr. Schwartz," said Mr. Ludolph, "you may hang the original picture on the side as we enter, and the copy opposite. We would like to see them up, and in better light."

"Dat's it," snorted Mr. Schwartz, "I'd like to know vich is vich."

"You do not mean to say that you cannot tell them apart? The original hung here some time, and you saw it every day."

"I do mean to say him," said Mr. Schwartz,