

Academy. After that I used to look for his name in the Academy catalogue, but it seemed gradually to disappear, and when I came to London, seven years later, I only saw him once. Then fortune seemed to have left him, and soon after that I heard he had gone abroad. What he has been doing since then I cannot tell; he looks much older, and very delicate."

We found our way up to Mr. Smith's lodging, where we were warmly welcomed. His large, low-roofed studio had a square balcony built on to the leads of the house, from where, on a clear day, one could have a glorious view across the lagoon to the outlying islands. There was no view this day, however, but a good fire was burning in the stove, and we sat down beside it to our coffee, and the two artists to their cigars.

"Now tell me about the folks at home," said Smith—"the artists, I mean. It is ten years since I was last in London—a flying visit; and since then I've had little news of what was going on in the Art world, except from an occasional newspaper, or meeting an old friend as now. I was half broken-hearted with disappointment when I came to settle here, for my picture had been rejected three consecutive years from the Academy, but Venice, with her quiet and her departed glory, is a very tender nurse to a disappointed man." He said this without any bitterness, and when, soon after, Ogilvie began to tell him about the London artists, and who were the rising men, and who were at the top of the tree, his face lit up with delight whenever he heard of the success of an old friend. So they sat talking, until Ogilvie suddenly asked Smith what he was working at. He rose quietly and brought forward a portfolio of water-color drawings, and looking over it we saw sketches of Venice—one of the fishermen's shrine near the railway station, another of the island of St. Elena, painted from a gondola, the sun setting behind it—and others—all delicate and full of feeling, but wanting entirely in that "something" which attracts the public. Ogilvie stood before them not knowing what to say, but quickly recovering himself spoke some words of praise and made a few suggestions. He then asked if any of these drawings were to be exhibited. "No," said Smith, "these drawings are part of a commission I received lately. It came most unexpectedly, and I was desperately in need of it. For two years I had sold nothing, and was quite at the end of my small savings. I had been in the habit of going to the pension, where we met for dinner every day; but when my funds ran so low, had been obliged to give it up. One day I had a letter from Fraulein

Mayer, to say that a friend of hers in Germany wanted some water-color drawings of Venetian subjects—would I undertake the commission? I was thankful to do so, and since then the payment has always been coming in, in instalments. The drawings are not completed yet."

"Surely," I said to my husband as we walked home, "that is a most unusual kind of commission Mr. Smith has got—the payment made in such a liberal way, and coming through the landlady of an insignificant German pension!" "Yes," he answered, "very unusual," but he evidently thought no more about it. I had my thoughts, however, and day after day, as we sat opposite this gentle-hearted Englishman—for we had been moved to the same table—and as I watched his kind ways and thoughtful consideration for every one—as I saw how the landlady looked for his coming—how her colour rose, and the light of her eyes deepened as he sat down beside her—these thoughts took shape. His health was very frail, though—there seemed to be an almost daily decrease of vigor, and he told us himself that he did not expect to see another spring.

Our time of willing exile, however, was soon at an end, and it was with sad hearts that we bade farewell to Venice. The sun was shining bright, and the ducal palace glittering with all its gems lit up, as we left, and Venice was the Venice of our dreams!

Mr. Smith came to the station to see us off and seemed sorry to part with us, for we had been much together. He was looking very white and delicate, and the tears came to my eyes as we bade him "good-bye," for his goodness had touched my heart, and I knew that we should meet no more.

It was about six months later, that in opening the newspaper one morning my eyes fell by chance on the announcement, "Died at Venice, on the 20th ult., Arthur Smith, artist."

All that day, and for many days after, my thoughts were back in Venice, living over again our happy days there with the gentle Englishman and the German landlady. How would she take his death? I wondered; and where were the pictures her friend had commissioned?

It was not until some years later that we visited Venice again—this time in winter, and we lived at the Hotel Bauer on the Grand Canal. One afternoon I took a stroll along the Riva Schiavoni, and in passing the "Pension Mayer" saw the landlady, who was just parting from some guests at the door. Turning from her friends she saw me, for I was waiting and watching for her. She recognized me immediately. "You were a friend of Mr. Smith," she said; "will you come up stairs?"