

NOTHING TO DO.

A strip of snowless linen
Half-brothered and stained in blue,
And the gleam of a threadless needle
Piercing the pattern through;

A BEAUTIFUL ROMANCE.

LEAVES FROM THE LIFE OF AN ARTIST.

THE PAINTER OF ROTTERDAM.

BY MISS AMELIA B. EDWARDS, THE CELEBRATED ENGLISH NOVELIST, AUTHOR OFS "HALF A MILLION OF MORE," &c.

My father was a trader and diplomat at Schiedam, on the Maas. Without being wealthy, we enjoyed the means of procuring every social comfort.

But my father and mother, whose only child I was, cherished one dream of ambition in which they wanted me to become a painter.

Still he was not a cheerful man. It was whispered by the people that he had met with a disappointment early in life, and that his wife was rejected by the lady for a more wealthy suitor.

The number of his pupils was limited to six. He was constantly at work, and scarcely permitted us to exchange a word with each other during the day.

But, though I spoke so bravely, it was with a sinking heart I ventured in. I could not really hope for a good place among the magnates of the art; while in either of the other rooms there was a possibility that my picture might receive the prize.

The house had formerly been the mansion of a merchant of enormous wealth, who had left it with his valuable collection of paintings, to the State.

I was singularly fortunate. My master never praised me by word or look; but when my father came up one day from Schiedam to visit, he said to him, in a tone inaudible to the rest, that "Messer Franz would do credit to the profession."

As we took our leave at night the Burgomaster shook me warmly by the hand, and told me to come often. I fancied that Gertrude's blue eyes brightened when he said it, and I felt the color rush quickly to my brow as I bowed and thanked him.

"Just twenty-two, sir," I replied, rather surprised at the question. "You will not be dependent on your trust, my boy," Mr. Franz said, he leaned upon my arm and looked back at the lofty mansion we had just left.

"Burgomaster van Gael is one of my oldest friends," said my father. "I have often heard you speak of him, sir," I replied.

"Why not, sir?" repeated my father, very energetically. "What could you wish for better? You are young, lady, handsome, good-tempered, educated, and rich. Now, Franz, if I thought you had been such a fool as to form any other attachment without—"

"Oh, sir, you do me injustice!" I cried. "Do you think that—that she would have me?" "Try her, Franz," said my father, good-humoredly, as he resumed my arm.

It was a happy time. But there came at last a time still happier, when, one still evening, as we sat alone, conversing in infantine whispers about the beating of each other's hearts, I told Gertrude that I loved her; and she, in answer, laid her fair head upon my shoulder with a sweet confidence, as if content so to rest forever.

It was a long time to wait, but I should by this time, I thought, have heard from my betrothed. I intended soon to send a picture to the annual exhibition—and who could tell what I might not do in three years to show Gertrude how dearly I loved her?

"I have been very prosperous, Messer Van Roos," I replied, taking the proffered hand. "But I never forget that I owe my present proficiency to the hours spent in your atelier."

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"I drew back, giddy at the thought. "No man could survive such a fall," said the painter, still looking over. "The thickest skull might be dashed to atoms on the marble down there."

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"I dropped upon my face in mute horror. An eye of agony seemed to elapse, and the cold dew stood upon my brow. Presently I heard a dull sound far below. I crawled to the brink of the scaffolding and looked over. A shapeless mass was lying on the marble pavement, and all around it was red with blood."

"I thank an hour must have elapsed before I could summon courage to descend. When, at length, I reached the level ground, I turned my face from what was so near my feet, and looked to the door. With trembling hands and misty eyes, I unlocked it and rushed into the street. It was many months before I recovered from the brain fever brought on by that terrible day. My ravings, I have been told, were fearful, and had any doubt existed in the minds of men as to

which of us two had been the guilty one, those ravings were alone sufficient to establish my innocence. A man in a delirious fever is likely to speak the truth. By the time I was able to leave my chamber, Gertrude had also grown pale and spiritless, and all unlike her former self.