

She sat down and threw her hat and cloak on a chair near. "I am ready, please begin."

"In one moment," said the artist. He went into an adjoining room and returned with a great mass of crimson roses.

"Oh! *magnifique!*" he exclaimed, as he placed them in her lap. "Now I shall paint them so, and call my picture 'American Beauties,' and when I return home it will hang in the Salon, and all Paris will say: 'If those are American Beauties let us go to America at once.'"

Her cheeks took on the color of the roses, and then, smiling at him as he commenced painting, She stared idly through the window across the green fields to the waving wheat beyond.

A moment later, Des Moulins threw down his brushes in despair.

"Don't look like that. If you do I cannot paint you. No artist could find such color as you have, and your eyes—" He paused abruptly.

But She only laughed merrily and leaned toward him, mischief in every curve and dimple of her tender face. "How shall I look?" she asked. "Shall I —"

Suddenly her smile faded, her eyes grew dark with feeling, and her sensitive lips quivered like rose leaves stirred by the wind.

"I must go," She murmured. "It is late; you can finish without me."

Des Moulins did not seek to detain Her, but rose as she put on her hat.

"Yes," he said, "I can paint without you — until tomorrow."

"But you could finish it alone, could you not?" She repeated earnestly, her eyes intent on his.

Des Moulins scarcely understanding, answered lightly: "*Mais oui, Mademoiselle.*" She turned, and picking up a rose, said with still that strange little smile: "'Here's a rose, and that's for remembrance.' You see I am misquoting." She laid her hand and the rose in his. "Do not forget me," She said. "Good-bye."

The next moment Des Moulins was alone, and the rose lay in his hand. He lit a cigarette and sat down before the picture. The perfect face was still lighted up by the last rays of the dying sun.

"To-morrow I will tell Her. She knows it, but to-morrow I will tell Her, and She will lay her little hands in mine and smile."

The painted eyes and lips smiled back at him. He could almost see the little dimple in her cheek.

There was a sudden noise in the stairway, and a friend stumbled in.

"Confound it, old fellow, why do you have your studio away off here? Nearly broke my neck on those stairs. I just dropped in to tell you that the train leaves to-morrow at 6:40. Be sure and come, the boys expect you, and the trap will be sent to the train for you; you have been buried in this hole long enough. Hello! Who's this? By Jove! a picture of Her! I suppose you did it for Anthony. You know he came down suddenly to-day from New York, and they are to be married to-morrow. Unexpected business — called to Europe — wants his bride with him. They sail the 27th. Just like his luck, falls in for a mint of money and gets the prettiest girl in the land. Well, old fellow, must leave you. Don't fail us to-morrow. *Au revoir.*"

Des Moulins sat staring at the picture. The rose lay fading in his hand. Its perfume stifled him. "Married to-morrow." Outside the window a bird sang merrily to its mate. A tiny black cricket chirped on the window ledge.

"And the reapers reaped,  
And the sun fell,  
And all the land was dark."

