



126 LÉONIE READING

Oil on canvas board 45 x 37.5 cm
(18" x 15") Private collection

This Parisian portrait of Léonie reading a book must be one of the most delightful that Fred Elwell accomplished. It conveys his deep affection. Having chanced upon her in this simple pose, silently in a moment of magic, he feels impelled to paint her quickly.

Seemingly intertwined are the chair, figure and the standard lamp by which she reads. It is a unity of composition, a central focus. Nothing else is there, nor needs to be.

The picture is painted at speed, using fluid strokes with a heavily loaded brush, especially in the representation of her arm caught in a band of light. The glorious orange-golden yellow emanating from the shade diffuses the whole picture with tranquillity, softness and warmth.

A connoisseur of the French Impressionists, on first sight of this picture, saw it as an example of French Impressionism to perfection, "I should recognise it. Enlighten me", he insisted.