

longer the friends we once were, but I cannot think her utterly heartless. She is bent upon becoming a great artist at any cost, and I sometimes think she would sacrifice herself as readily as any one else for this purpose. She looks to me as if she had suffered, and she has lost much of her old haughty, cold manner, save when something calls it out. Even in the drawing-room she was abstracted, as if her thoughts were far away. You are a man of honor, and it is due that you should know *the following facts*. Indeed I do not think that they are a secret any longer, and at any rate they will soon be known. If Mr. Ludolph were in Germany he would be a noble. It is his intention to go there this fall, and take his wealth and Christine with him, and assert his ancestral titles and position. Christine could not marry in this land without incurring her father's curse, and I think she has no disposition to do that, —her ambition is fully in accord with his."

"Yes," said Dennis bitterly, "and where other women have hearts, she has ambition only."

The Professor returned and the subject was dropped.

Dennis said, on leaving: "I did not expect to show any one my picture till it was placed on exhibition, with the others, but if you care to see it, you may to-morrow. Perhaps you can make some suggestions that will help me."

They eagerly accepted the invitation, and came the following morning. Dennis watched them with much solicitude.

When once they understood his thought, their delight and admiration knew no bounds.

The Professor turned and stared at him as if he were an intirely different person from the unpretending youth who was introduced on the preceding evening.

"If you do not get the prize," he said sententiously, "you have a great deal of artistic talent in Chicago."

"A Daniel come to judgment!" cried his wife.

CHAPTER XLII.

SUGGESTIVE PICTURES AND A PRIZE.

At last the day of the exhibition dawned. Dennis had sent his picture, directed to Mr. Consoor, with his name in an envelope nailed on its back. No one was to know who the artists were till after the decision was given. Christine had sent hers also, but no name whatever was in the envelope on the back of her picture.

Quite early in the day, the doors were thrown open for all who chose to come. The committee of critics had ample time given them for their decision, and at one p. m. this was to be announced.

Although Dennis went quite early, he found that Christine was there before him. She stood with Professor and Mrs. Learned, Mr. Consoor and her father, before his picture. He could only see her side face, and she was glancing from the printed explanation in the catalogue to the painting. Mrs. Learned was also at her side, seeing to it that no point was unnoted. Christine's manner betrayed intense interest and excitement, and with cause, for again Dennis had spoken to her deepest soul in the language she best loved and understood.

As before she saw two emblematic pictures within one frame merely separated by a plain band of gold.

The first presented a chateau of almost palatial proportions, heavy, ornate, but stiff and quite devoid of beauty.

It appeared the abode of wealth and ancestral greatness. Everything about the place indicated lavish expenditure. The walks and trees were straight and formal, the flowers that bloomed here and there, large and gaudy. A parrot hung in a gilded cage against a column of the piazza. No wild songsters fluttered in the trees, or were on the wing. Hills shut the place in and gave it a narrow, restricted impression, and the sky overhead was hard and brazen. On the lawn stood a graceful mountain ash, and beneath it were two figures. The first was that of a man, and evidently the master of the place. His appearance and manner chiefly indicated pride, haughtiness, and also sensuality. He had broken a spray from the ash tree, and with a condescending air was in the act of handing it to a lady, in the portraiture of whom Dennis had truly displayed great skill. She was very beautiful, and yet there was nothing good or noble in her face. Her proud features showed mingled shame and reluctance to receive the gift in the manner it was bestowed, and yet she was receiving it. The significance of the mountain ash is "Grandeur." The whole scene was the portrayal, in the beautiful language of art, of a worldly, ambitious marriage, where the man seeks mere beauty, and the woman wealth and position, love having no existence.

It possessed an eloquence that Christine could not resist, and she fairly loathed the alliance she knew her father would expect