

"What shall we do?" they said, looking at each other with blank faces; but none could answer.

"I do hate such proud, stuck-up people. There is no managing or depending on them," said Miss Brown spitefully.

Miss Winthrop bit her lips to keep from saying to her hostess what would be more true than polite. There was a flash of anger in Christine's dark blue eyes, and she said coldly,

"I imagine that you have finished the business this time, Miss Brown. But I confess that I am greatly surprised, for he said I could depend upon him for to-night."

"So you can," said Dennis, coming in behind them. "I am sorry you have had this needless alarm. But the fact is, I am a plain, ordinary mortal, and live in a very material way."

"There was plenty of lunch in the dining-room," said Miss Brown tartly. "You need not have gone out and made all this trouble."

"Pardon me for slighting your *hospitality*," said Dennis with emphasis on the word, "but I am very fastidious as to the *seasoning* of my food."

Again significant glances were exchanged, and there was a suppressed titter at Miss Brown's expense. She darted a blank look at Dennis, and left the room.

"I can assure you, ladies," added he, "that all is ready. I can lay my hand on whatever is needed in a moment, you need give yourselves no further anxiety."

There was a general stampede for the dressing-rooms, but Miss Winthrop lingered. When Dennis was alone she went up to him and frankly gave her hand, saying,

"Mr. Fleet, I wish to thank you for your course to-day. Between Miss Ludolph's unwitting sermon, and your brave and unexpected vindication of our faith, I hope to become more deserving of the name of Christian. You *are* a gentleman, sir, in the truest and best sense of the word, and as such it will ever be a pleasure to welcome you at my father's house," and she gave him her card.

A flush of grateful surprise and pleasure mantled Dennis's face, but before he could speak she was gone.

The audience were now thronging in. By half-past eight the performers were all in the back parlor, and there was a brilliant array of actors and actresses in varied and fanciful costume, many coming to the house dressed for their part. There were gods and goddesses, shepherds, shepherdesses, and angels, crusaders who would take leave of languish-

ing ladies, living statuary, and tableaux of all sorts. Dennis was much shocked at the manner in which ladies exposed themselves in the name of art, and for the sake of effect. Christine seemed perfectly Greek and Pagan in this respect, yet there was that in her manner that forbade the wanton glance. But as he observed the carriage of the men around him, he was more than satisfied that no plea of art could justify the "style," and felt assured that every pure minded woman would take the same view if she realized the truth. Under the names of fashion and art much is done in society that would be simply monstrous on ordinary occasions.

The music, as far as possible, was in character with the scenes. The entertainment went forward with great applause. Every one was radiant, and the subtle exhilarating spirit of assured success glowed in every eye, and gave a richer tone and coloring to everything.

Christine appeared in several and varied characters, and Dennis had eyes only for her. The others he glanced over critically, as the artist in charge, and then dismissed them from his thoughts, but on Christine his eyes rested in a spell-bound admiration that both amused and pleased her. She loved power of every kind, and when she read approval in the cultured and critical eye of Dennis Fleet, she knew that all the audience were applauding.

But Dennis had little time for musing, so great was the strain upon him to prevent confusion. His voice excited great surprise and applause, many inquiring vainly who he was. When he and Christine sang together, the audience were perfectly carried away, and stormed and applauded without stint. Indeed it seemed that they could not be satisfied. The call was so urgent that several asked Christine to sing again, and she did so alone. For ten minutes she held the audience perfectly entranced, and none more so than Dennis. Usually she was too cold in all that she did, but now in her excitement she far surpassed herself, and he acknowledged that he never heard such music before.

The very soul of song seemed breathed into her, and every nook and corner of the house appeared to vibrate with melody. Even the servants in distant rooms said that it seemed that an angel was singing. After she ceased, the audience sat spell-bound for a moment, and then followed prolonged thunders of applause, the portly brewer, Mr. Brown himself, leading off again and again.

"Now let the tenor sing alone," he said,