

The Lost Inheritance

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Chapter I.

"Oh, mother, such good luck! I've got the two new pupils I was hoping for, aren't you glad?"

The speaker was a fair haired, blue-eyed girl of perhaps seventeen summers, slenderly proportioned, and with a delicate spirituelle face, whose every varying expression bespoke the beautiful pure soul within.

Her words were addressed to a woman who might still be counted young, was it not that mental and bodily suffering had traced heavy lines across her brow, robbing it of its one time youth and beauty and turning the golden lustre of her hair to almost white.

A wonderful smile of love at sight of the fair lovely face in the doorway parted her thin lips, and she beckoned it's owner to a seat beside her on the old couch.

"Glad!" she echoed softly, and kissing the warm rosy lips. "For your own sake, I am more than glad, Rosamond; your hardworking efforts deserve to be rewarded. So Mrs. Quinn has been pleased to give you her other two children?"

"Yes, mother, she is so satisfied with Nellie's progress, under both you and I, she thinks I will do well by Annie and Emma. Surely these additions to my little class will enable us to have more comforts now, and perhaps later we will be able to move to a nicer place, though we are comfortable enough here, and it is so quiet." She opened her beautiful eyes widely, and took a quick glance around the attic room, which, with its unpainted walls, and uncovered floor, constituted their present home.

Everything in it, from the well scrubbed window sills to the bed curtained off at the end of the humble abode, was scrupulously clean and neat, but strangely out of place, indeed, both mother and daughter seemed, in its poor surroundings. Who this woman, calling herself and her daughter by the names of Raymond was, and from where she

had come ten years before, were questions that constantly harassed the curious minds of the comfortable neighbors on Bartley Square. In a vague undefined manner, it was felt amongst them that the two were vastly superior to themselves. Something there was about the proud and gentle dignity of the mother, that told she might have seen better days; something there was about the rare beauty of her child, that told of good blood being in their veins. Something there was about the persons of both which showed they did not belong to the ordinary class of people who surrounded them.

Mrs. Curran, most astute woman, had more than once hinted to her gossiping friends that she believed her upstairs tenant to belong to "quality folks" come down in the world, and was hiding with her child and her poverty, in their quiet neighborhood. The two kept entirely aloof from any one. They had no friends, nor appeared desirous of making any, and a visitor crossed their threshold never. Mrs. Curran was the only one they made any freedom with, but, slight as the intercourse was, it flattered the landlady, not a little.

For the past nine years that they had been on the Square, Mrs. Raymond taught music to children of parents in the ordinary walks of life, and sold needle work to a dealer in such, by name James Holland. But when an attack of acute rheumatism laid her low for many weeks, she was forced to transmit her work into her daughter's youthful hands, and depend solely on her for her daily maintenance. Of a gentle, retiring disposition and perfectly ignorant of the ways of the great seething world, it would seem that the young girl must shrink from coming in contact with it, but she did not. On the contrary, she entered it bravely and uncomplainingly, and took upon her willing shoulders the burden of earning a living. To her loving, dutiful heart, it was such an easy task, to work for the mother she idolized.