

The Lost Inheritance.

DOLOROSA KLINE.

XXV.

"Miss Raymond, come and we will go up to the gallery a few minutes and you can read to me there. I shall not go out to-day; I am too tired," Mrs. Staunton said to her companion, the morning following Compeigne's ball. "Bring Tennyson with you; his poetry is what I want now."

Rosamond picked the desired book from the library shelf, and the two went up to a sequestered nook in the appointed place.

"What shall it be Mrs. Staunton?" the young girl asked, opening her book.

"Idyls of the King, please Miss Raymond. Just a few lines."

As the low sweet voice reading from the Idyls rose and fell, the lady, while her busy fingers wound up some silk skeins, found an interest akin to delight in studying the lovely face, little thinking how near was the time, when she would think differently of it. "That will be sufficient, Miss Raymond," she said, after a short while. "You read well; in what school were you educated?"

"In no school, Mrs. Staunton, everything I know, in every branch of what I do know, was taught me at home by my mother. I never went to school in my life."

"You astonish me; but you reflect great credit on your mother. Do you know, I should be pleased to meet your mother?"

Did she mean merely to pass the compliment, or was it a refined curiosity to know what sort of a being her mother really was.

A thought something like this crossed the girl's mind, as she replied quickly:

"Thanks, Mrs. Staunton, for being so interested in my mother, but I am afraid you will never know her. She has had great sorrows in her lifetime, and lives now in perfect seclusion, visiting nowhere—not even me, since I have come to your house."

"But she does not wish you to live in that way?"

"No, Mrs. Staunton; she likes to see me take simple pleasure and enjoy life moderately. She would not wish me to lead the same life she does, on any account, though I would be satisfied to do so."

"You would? How filial you are; you are deserving of praise. Let us walk now, or perhaps we might examine some pictures. You are fond of art, are you not, Miss Raymond? Here is Reni's Mater Dolorosa that Judge Staunton picked up in Rome some years ago. Is not some devotion in your Church given to the Madonna?"

"Yes, Mrs. Staunton, as the mother of Our Lord, we honor her devoutly. What a beautiful picture?"

"Now here is one of another kind, my latest portrait. I think you have seen it before," she said passing to the next.

"Yes," her companion replied. "How lovely it is."

"And this one," she continued passing to the end of the corridor, and lifting the veil of Liberty silk from the portrait of her husband's first wife, "represents Judge Staunton's first wife."

Rosamond bent and looked attentively at the beautiful, delicately-featured face, whose soft expressive eyes seemed to be smiling at her, and the stately lady standing with her. Then Mrs. Staunton took up the photograph that stood on it of the disinherited Millicent, and placed it in her companion's hand.

"You have not seen this before, and not likely heard the story of its representative."

"Mrs. Barret has said something to me of Judge Staunton having had a daughter once," Rosamond replied quite innocently, "and she displeased him in some way and consequently lost her inheritance, Mrs. Staunton."

"That is true then." There was a perceptible coolness in her tones, as there always was when the disowned Millicent was mentioned. "But my servants should not gossip, though I suppose it is natural they would. You see the Judge cannot bear to hear Milli-