

# The Lost Inheritance

DOLOROSA KLINE.

She fell on her knees and clasped her hands imploringly. "Forgive me, father, but I only await your consent; your consent and your blessing on my marriage with George Kingsley."

"Never, never!" he hissed, "will I consent to such disgrace. You are the first to bring on the name of Staunton. I know now, why you have refused of late to accompany Mrs. Reeves and myself to church on Sundays. I now know why you have refused so many eligible suitors for your hand. You have been studying the tenets of a false creed and been bestowing your smiles on one whom I despise. Throw him off or you will regret it."

She stood up and faced unshrinkingly that grim determined countenance, in which she saw she might expect no mercy nor forgiveness.

"I cannot, father. He is mine and I am his. Mrs. Reeves has known him and of our courtship for the last six months, but she has kept it from you, because I wished it so until now. George Kingsley's career is an honorable one, and has always been. He is worthy of your daughter!"

"Not of my daughter, for henceforth I have no daughter," he cried in a hoarse voice. "Girl, I hate you now, as once I loved you. You have chosen your path. I shall see that you will walk in it. You have led this—this Kingsley to believe that you are wealthy, and he is fool enough to marry you, but you have made a mistake. You are as poor as he. You have taken him instead of me or my wishes; so be it. Your inheritance, and my love are lost to you forever, unless you return back under the conditions I have laid out to you."

A father's love was trying hard to conquer his prejudice and pride. He extended to her as long as possible a means of returning to his heart, before placing on her the final ban of punishment. But she was not to be brought over by his inducements, his persuasion nor his threats, even though she loved him with all a daughter's true affection,

as looking straight at him she replied firmly:

"And which I tell you I cannot, father."

His self control all but deserted him, at the low decisive answer. In his blind rage he was almost ready to smite her down, but who knows but that it was the spirit hand of his dead wife who warded him off from cruel violence to the child she had given him, and made his arm fall nerveless at his side?

As it was, his reply was cruel enough to have crushed her without a bodily blow, had she been weak and given in to it.

"Very well," he said, in his hard, hoarse voice, and raising his hand like a maledictor above her bowed head, "you go hence, Millicent Staunton, never to return. You have lost your home and your inheritance, and your ingratitude and disobedience have broken my heart. Go, I say, and may your cup be one of sorrow, full to the brim. That is my consent and my blessing on a marriage I will never witness, never recognize, if I live to the age of Methuselah."

How often in time to come were his words to recur to him? How often were they not to show him how strong how unjust the denunciation of his daughter had been?

A long shuddering sob shook her slight frame, and without uttering a word she arose to do his bidding. On the threshold he stopped her, as going to his desk he opened it, and took from a secret drawer, a long official envelope and held it towards her.

"Here," he said, coldly, and without deigning to bestow a look at her white face, "is the sum that long ago I set aside as your wedding dowry, when you would marry to please me, but as you have taken an opposite course, I did not now intend to give you a cent, but being a just man, I cannot keep what belongs even to you. Take it; go and leave your old father in peace." She looked at him for a moment in silence. Then the proud Staunton spirit was