

The Lost Inheritance

DOLOROSA KLINE.

"My dear Judge," it ran, "I have traversed the most of the State, and learned nothing of your daughter's whereabouts or that she is living here; but this much I have learned, and I regret my painful duty of informing you. I have gone so far as to visit a cemetery here, and this is what I have found: A plain white tombstone above four graves, and the inscription is simply this,—'To the memory of George Edwin Kingsley and his three sons, George, Oswald C. Staunton and Edwin, aged twelve, ten and three years.' So that leaves me to trust your daughter is still living, a widow, somewhere. I am going on to South Virginia, and will probably be home around the eighteenth, and, I trust, with a more definite knowledge of events."

"My poor Millicent," the Judge exclaimed, placing the letter away in his desk, "deprived of husband and children, and perhaps she herself is no longer in the flesh." Then he wrote a grateful reply to the lawyer, and carried what he had just heard to his wife and daughter and his wife's companion.

Beatrice was very interested, her mother only mildly so, and Rosamond's sweet face, though she did not catch the full import of the Judge's words, showed by its sympathetic expression, that she knew he was in some trouble, and she was sorry for him.

Mrs. Staunton was just then concerned about her approaching ball, and her regrets at parting with such valued friends, in whose honor it was being given. "I am glad Cyrus is going to remain with us," she said to her daughter, while she took a sly look at her companion's face, "we will be sure of one of the family, anyhow."

"What is the matter with Cyrus, mamma; he has clearly been keeping away from us lately. Have we offended him in any way?"

The entrance of Bella Compeign, who had called to take Miss Staunton for a drive, saved Mrs. Staunton from making a reply, and saved also any further confusion for her companion.

Cyrus Dorane had, following the lady's

advice, been keeping himself well out of Miss Raymond's way for the present, and waiting with nervous fortaste of bliss the night of her coming ball, when he would be near the object of his affections, and could again approach her, as he was determined with doing, and make another offer of his love. And another thing, his enemy was not likely to be there, as his business would not probably be finished down in the South by that time. So he would not be under those cynical eyes, but he could spend a perfectly comfortable night.

Few young girls there are who do not look forward to their first ball with unmixed delight, but Rosamond Raymond dreaded her's. Had it been that one certain one was not to be included among the guests, she would have enjoyed thinking on it, but the knowledge that Cyrus Dorane was to be there spoiled it all. She was inclined to believe that it was a plot of her mistress to bring Dorane to her again. She did not say so to her mother when she told her parent of the great ball to which she was hidden, and learned some little lessons which the one-time queen of beauty, in the city's social whirl, was well qualified to give her daughter, as to how she should act and carry herself in the gay assemblage, the like of which was only to be found gathered together beneath the roof of Staunton House.

XXVII.

The eventful night at last arrived, and such a galaxy of wealth, fashion and beauty had responded to the proud hostess' invitations that her eyes shone with delight, as carriage after carriage rolled up to her door, and each gay belle and beau stopped at their entrance to pay their respects to her, and the guests of the night. Very stately she looked in her long-trained dress of black velvet, relieved by silver spangles thrown carelessly over it, and bows of silver passenterie catching up a scarf of the same that covered her otherwise bare neck and shoulders. Her daughter, who assisted with admirable grace in receiving their guests, was attired in a decol-