

'LENA RIVERS.

CHAPTER XII.

MRS. GRAHAM AT HOME.

As the summer advanced, extensive preparations were commenced for repainting Woodlawn, which was to be fitted up in a style suited to the luxurious taste of its rightful owner, which, as report said, was in reality Mrs. Graham's. He had conceived a fancy for the place five years before when visiting in the neighborhood, and on learning that it was for sale, he had purchased it in the suggestion of his mother, proposing to his sister-in-law...

to the ridicule which her appearance at a fashionable party would excite. Glancing reprovingly at her cousin, she said, "I wouldn't think of going, grandma, for you are lame and old, and there'll be so many people there, all strangers, too, that you won't enjoy it at all. Besides, I'll have a nice time at home to gether—I'll repeat to you all the evening." "Pray, are you not going?" "Not without an invitation," said Lena smilingly. "True, true," returned her cousin, "I'll stop to look at this. I'll go and get yours now."

"With 'Lena! How funny!" exclaimed Carrie. "Are you sure it was 'Lena'?" "Yes, sure—she done ask for Miss Rivers?" "Ask him in, why don't you?" Carrie, suspecting his errand, and thinking to keep herself from all suspicion by appearing "wonderfully" surprised, said, "Lena was not intentionally neglected. Before Coranda could reply, 'Lena had slipped into the hall, and was standing face to face with Mrs. Livingston. She heard Nellie's voice, and stationing herself as the head of the stairs, was waiting for her appearance."

felt it rather a relief than otherwise to be rid of her. So it was decided that she should stay at Maple Grove, and then Mrs. Livingston, passing her arm around her waist, whispered, "Go down with me, at the same time starting for the parlor, followed by her daughters, Nellie and Lena. In the hall they met with John J. He had heard Nellie's voice, and stationing himself as the head of the stairs, was waiting for her appearance."

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And, indeed, few of his age were more generally beloved than the young man, who, in fact, there was a resemblance usually common between them, for nearly all of Durward's sterling qualities were either inherited from his own father, or the result of many years' companionship with his step-father.

"Mrs. Graham went to grass," muttered John J., leaving the room and slamming the door after him with great violence. "Was a pity he did not look in one of the drawers of his mother's work-box, for there, and I should think, in the missing note! But he did not think of that. He only knew that 'Lena was slighted, and for the next two hours he raved and fretted, sometimes declaring he would not go, and again wishing Mrs. Graham in a temper but little suited to her round, fat proportions."

"What has he gone there for?" No one knew until the next evening, when he returned home, bringing with him 'Lena's dress, which Anna pronounced "the sweetest thing she ever saw," at the same time running with her to her room, which for a time kept down the gathering storm in Mrs. Livingston's eyes. But it could not last, and when she demanded "what he meant by spending her money in that way, and without her consent," Mrs. Livingston stepped to her work-box, and opening the lid, drew forth the missing note. Then, turning to her, she said, "This morning I made a discovery which exonerates Nera from all blame. I understand the note fully, and while I am not satisfied, I do not think you would be guilty of quite so mean an act. 'Stay,' he continued, as he turned to go, "I am not your wife, and 'Lena is a last name, but your wife is safe, but remember, it must not be repeated. You understand me, do you?"

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