

## Virgie's Inheritance.

## CHAPTER XLIV.

## A SUDDEN FLITTING.

"Why, mamma, it is the strangest romance in the world! I never heard anything like it!"

"Well, dear, get yourself ready as soon as possible, for we must leave town this afternoon, as there is no time to lose," her mother replied, as she arose to go to make her own preparations for the proposed journey.

"But, mamma, what shall I do about Rupert?" Virgie asked, looking troubled.

Mrs. Alexander's face fell at the mention of the young man's name.

She had scarcely slept during the night, for many things troubled her; and, among others, the thought that Virgie's engagement to Rupert Hamilton seemed likely to complicate matters very much when she should be ready to make her claim upon Sir William Heath.

"You can leave a note telling him that we are obliged to leave the city for a while, and we can explain further to him when we ascertain just how we are to be situated," her mother replied, after considering a moment.

So, when Rupert called that evening, he found only a note awaiting him instead of the bright face he had hoped to see, while it told him that his betrothed and her mother had been unexpectedly called away from London upon important business, which might detain them a week, perhaps longer.

"It is very strange that she does not mention where they are going," he said, as he read the note over for the second time, and remarked this omission. "Mrs. Alexander acted very strangely last evening. I wonder if this sudden departure can have anything to do with that?"

He retraced his steps, feeling unaccountably depressed over the absence of Virgie, and he resolved to seek an interview with Sir William and acquaint him with the fact of his engagement that very evening.

He did not, however, find his guardian upon his return; he had gone out upon a matter of business, his valet told the young man, and would not be back until late: so he retired, resolving to improve the first opportunity on the morrow.

The next morning, after breakfast, he said, in a quiet aside:

"Can I have a few moments conversation with you, Uncle Will?"

"Certainly, my boy. Come into the library in about ten minutes, and I will be there."

Lady Linton, always on the alert for everything of a mysterious nature, and doubly keen now to suspect mischief, heard this request, and at once resolved to become acquainted with the nature of the interview.

Sir William's chamber was just back of the library, although there was no door communicating with it.

The same furnace-pipe, however, conducted heat to the two rooms, and, by stationing herself close to this, her ladyship knew she could overhear whatever might pass between the two men. She therefore slipped quietly into her brother's bedroom, looked the door, and creeping close to the register, laid her eager ear against it.

Rupert was already with Sir William, for the housekeeper had detained Lady Linton for a few moments with questions regarding some domestic matter, but she was in season to hear him broach the subject so near his heart.

"I have come to make a confession to you, Uncle Will," he said, as he seated himself opposite his guardian.

"A confession! Nothing very serious, I hope," said Sir William, glancing keenly in the dusky face of his ward.

"Yes, I think it is of rather a serious nature," he returned, smiling slightly. "I wish to tell you that I have become deeply attached to Miss Alexander, to whom I introduced you last night, and to ask your sanction to our engagement."

"Ah! has it gone so far as that?" inquired Sir William. "I began to surmise last evening that see was taking your heart captive, but did not imagine matters had reached a crisis yet."

"Don't you think her lovely, Uncle Will?" Rupert asked, eagerly.

"Very lovely; but, my boy, the ocean rolls between England and America. I cannot bear the thought of a separation from you, Rupert."

"Nor I from you, my dear guardian; and, I assure you, you need not fear it, for the young lady does not object to a permanent residence in England. I trust you will not oppose my marriage with Miss Alexander."

"Rupert," said Sir William, gravely, "my only wish is for your happiness, and if Miss Alexander is the woman of your choice—if you are sure that she alone can make you happy—then I can only say heaven bless you and grant that your future may be all that you desire."

"Thank you, Uncle Will. I—hope you do not disapprove of my choice of a wife?" Rupert said, regarding his guardian's grave face anxiously.

"No, no," returned the baronet, hastily. "I admired the little lady very much during the few moments that I spent with her last evening. She seems a lovely girl. My first thought was that she might take you from us."

"No. Although she was born in America, she is herself of English descent on her father's side, and she and her mother are now in this country for the purpose of claiming some property inherited from him," Rupert explained.

"Ah! then she has no father?"

"No!—she—lost him when she was a child."

The young man began to fear he was trespassing somewhat upon Mrs. Alexander's confidence, and that she and her mother would betray no more at present.

"Are you sure that the family is one with which you will feel proud to ally yourself?" Sir William inquired.

"I know but very little concerning their family," Rupert admitted. "I doubt if they have any, but everything about them indicates that they are above reproach, while Mr. Knight, the gentleman whom I met in America, and of whom you have often heard me speak, introduced them, and he is of irreproachable character. He occupied a position in New York, and it is in compliance with his request that they are presented here, and chartered by the Huntingtons."

"The Huntingtons are all right, and would introduce no one regarding whom there was any question," Sir William said, in a satisfied tone. "Is Mrs. Alexander as much of a beauty as her daughter?" he concluded, smilingly.

"Hardly in my eyes," returned the young man, with brightening color; "yet she is a remarkably handsome woman. I hope I may be able to arrange for you to make her acquaintance very soon; but until then please regard as what I told you as strictly confidential."

"Ah! Then you do not intend to announce your engagement just yet," remarked Sir William, with some surprise.

"No, sir. As Mrs. Alexander's request, we shall delay it for the present, until she secures the property of which I have already spoken."

"How much of an heiress is your pretty fiancée going to be, Rupert?" his guardian asked.

"I cannot tell. I do not know of what this property consists," the young man answered, thoughtfully.

"I am afraid there is something a little mysterious about these ladies. Doesn't it strike you so?" inquired Sir William, gravely, yet without a suspicion of the wonderful truth.

Rupert knew there was, but he was not going to confess it, and he replied, evasively: "I do not imagine there is anything but what will soon be satisfactorily explained to us all."

Lady Linton, hearing all this, and knowing so much more than either Rupert or her brother, grew deadly faint as she listened and realized how near she stood on the verge of a terrible exposure. Just then there came a brisk tap on the library door, and the next moment Lillian put her bright face into the room, and looking as lovely as the morning itself in her white flannel wrapper, fastened at the waist with cherry ribbons, and with her hands full of Jacquemont roses.

Her face assumed a look of surprise as she saw Rupert there, and she regarded him with searching curiosity.

"Pardon me, Uncle Will," she said, blushing; "I did not know that you were engaged with anyone; I have just received a box of flowers, and came to arrange some for your table. May I come in? I won't be long."

"Yes, indeed, come in; you are doubly welcome with so much beauty and fragrance," said her uncle, smiling.

Rupert arose as she entered, and asked with an arch smile:

"What enamored swain has been guilty of the extravagance of lavishing such costly flowers upon you, Lillian?"

"Lord Ernest Rathburn is the donor; he has exquisite taste. I wish you could have seen the box when it came," the girl replied, with a conscious drooping of her brilliant eyes.

"Lord Ernest was a young nobleman with a large revenue, but possessing far less brains than mustache, and who was regarded with contempt by all many young men, on account of his effeminacy and excesses."

"I wish," he added, "that you could meet a friend of mine, Lillian; you will like him, before very long. Lord Ernest would sink into insignificance by comparison."

"And who may this paragon of manly excellence be, Mr. Hamilton; if I may inquire?" Lillian asked, with a toss of her head.

"Harry Webster, the young man with whom I traveled, last winter, in America."

"I despise Americans," retorted Miss Linton, with considerable asperity.

"That is rather a sweeping assertion; isn't it, my dear?" asked Sir William, looking a trifle amused.

"It is the truth, Uncle Will, whatever else it may be," she retorted, as she began to arrange her flowers in a vase on the table.

"I am English to the backbone. I am thoroughly imbued with a love for my own people, and I shall never permit myself to draw disloyal comparisons."

Rupert laughed outright, as, in his mind, he placed the stooping figure and imbecile face of the half-witted lord beside the grandly developed form and frank, handsome countenance of his American friend.

(To be continued.)

## YOUNG METHODISTS.

## Closing Meeting of the Young People's Association of Ontario.

TORONTO, March 2.—The annual convention of the Ontario Young People's Association of Ontario closed yesterday. In the morning Thos. Morris, jun., of Hamilton, president of the Ontario Christian Endeavor Union, delivered an address on "The pledge, its needs and uses."

This five minute papers were read by Miss B. Christie, of Fleetwood, on "Preparing and inviting," by Miss Churchill, of Toronto, on "Attending and listening," and by Miss E. Yates, of London, on "Praying and testifying." President Phillips conducted a conference on Bible study and personal work and the morning sitting closed with a number of reports of committees regarding the internal workings of the association.

At the afternoon session the result of the election of officers was then announced as follows: President, Mr. F. W. Daly, B.A., London Conference; first vice-president, Rev. R. N. Burns, Toronto; second vice-president, Miss Sandercock, Peterborough; third vice-president, Dr. Tilley, Bowmanville; secretary, Mr. R. W. Dillon, Toronto; assistant secretary, Mr. S. H. Moore, Toronto; treasurer, Miss Yates, London; superintendent junior work, Rev. T. A. Moore, Niagara Falls; assistant superintendent junior work, Miss Marion Kelly, Hamilton; executive committee, Rev. A. Phillips and Miss McGuffin, Toronto.

Conference; H. P. Moore and Rev. G. H. Cobblecluck, Guelph Conference; Rev. R. J. Elliott and W. J. Waugh, Niagara Conference; Rev. C. W. Watts and C. P. Holton, Bay of Quinte Conference; Rev. G. S. Condenning and T. W. Rolph, Montreal Conference; W. Rigby and Rev. J. F. Elliott, Leam Conference.

Five-minute papers were read on the relation of young people's societies to the class meeting, by F. W. Matthews, of London; to the mid-week prayer meeting, by Miss Maynard, of Toronto; to the Sunday school, by J. E. Kerr, of Orangeville.

Lodgings were fixed on as the place for the holding of the next annual convention. The new president, Mr. Daly, was then introduced to the meeting, and took the chair. His address was brief and to the point, and he closed by calling on Rev. W. J. Smith, of Toronto, to give the invocation, "Baptism of Holy Spirit." A number of votes of thanks were passed, and the convention closed with consecration service and Mizpah benediction.

Dr. Froiland, formerly of Kingston, Drink Poison Instead of Distilled Water.

KINGSTON, March 2.—The body of Dr. Froiland reached here to-day from Chicago for burial. Deceased graduated from Queen's College with high honors. He settled in Chicago and secured a fine practice.

Dr. Froiland died in his office, Masonic Temple building, Chicago, at 9 o'clock last night from a dose of bromide of chloral taken by mistake for a bottle of distilled water. The doctor drank the poison in the presence of his wife, who was in the office. About half an ounce of the poison was drunk before the doctor perceived the mistake from its taste.

As soon as he noticed the peculiar flavor he exclaimed: "I have swallowed a dose of poison!" His wife rushed from the room and called in Dr. Beckwith, Young and Williams, all of whom have offices in Kingston, and who administered antidotes without effect, and Dr. Froiland expired about 9 o'clock.

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NEW YORK, March 2.—A special from Jamaica says President Hippolyte is determined to put an end to the prevalent revolutions which have broken out in various sections of the Black Republic.

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A recent advertisement in an English country paper reads thus: "For sale—A bull terrier dog, 2 years old. Will eat anything; very fond of children. Apply at this office."

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