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 OR,  
 Love That Knew No  
 Bounds.**

CHAPTER XXXIV.

"Oh, I would not, indeed," cried Sydney, shrinking from intrusion. "I you think this will not be wanted for ten days more, I will be gone before it is dismantled."

With that last word her voice quivered. It was difficult calmly to discuss these last relics of her father dear old Jacob's treasures, being dispersed.

"Ah, I'll answer now," said Miss Ambler. "You'd like a little some thing out of here as a keepsake like of poor Mr. Cheene, wouldn't you miss? Now, if you'd choose anything I'd see it was bought for you if things are sold."

She had no storing place for aught. Her very capital she would not count her own. "It must be something small, indeed," she said, looking round. "This, if I could have it," taking up a well-used writing-case, one from the office at Stuart's, Jacob had told her.

"Then that I'll get for you, miss," promised the landlady, shaking the dust off the cover. "Ah, deary me he always wrote upon it. I saw him that very day—"

Sydney turned the much-blotted pages over. A sheet with some three written lines slipped out. The words were to herself:

"My own dear Miss Sydney,—I told you once pleasure never killed; but when I think I shall see you here soon for your holiday, and then—"

That was all. Sydney folded the uncompleted message with reverent affection, thankfulness in her breast that no knowledge of her new troubles had dimmed the gladness of his last hours. "Yes, the old case I shall like best," she said, and Miss Ambler, delighted at securing her pale lodger's interest for anything, talked freely on of Jacob and his great kindness, "which nobody, Miss Grey, knew the value of better than myself, for many's the time hunger and me would have shook hands if it hadn't been for him. I've paid the last respects to more than one friend, ah, and relation too, in my black alpaca, but 'no,' said I, 'for Mr. Cheene I'll have merino, and new. I'm not going to walk behind him in a half-worn skirt at tenpence a yard, especially considering there's no one else to follow,—for I didn't know, miss, where you was, nor who—h'm—whether I ought to try and find you out.'"

"Who will attend to everything here, then?" Sydney asked. "Had Jacob no relative, no one who understood such business?"

"Relative, no miss. There were a many Cheenes once in Stillcote, but he has told me he was the last. As for business, I don't suppose he's left much to attend to; but a stranger, I think, will manage that little."

"No, miss. But there was one who came to him first last year—later on than this. He was in and out, and they did a deal of consulting like for a day or two, what about Mr. Cheene never said. Then he came again since this Easter. And Mr. Cheene must have expected him then, for he'd got a neighbor to step in, and by the by he called to me 'Miss Amelia,' and I stepped up, and he had that very letter-case open and a paper on, and he said, 'I'm lawyer enough to have made my own will, and I want you to witness it.' Which of course we both did; and Mr. Cheene locked it up in the cedar box that stands beside his bed, and said to me, 'There now, it's ready for you to find; and 'o the strange gentleman, 'and for you to act on,' he said. So of course that gentleman will be his executor."

"But should you not send this person word?" questioned Sydney, and was answered truly enough. "When things come so sudden, miss, we are never ready for them! I had never so much as heard his name! But I've a notion the letter that brought good news that morning came from him, for Mr. Cheene locked it up in 'the box with his will, and said to me, 'high spritly like, 'We're going to be say with company soon, Miss Ambler!' So I thought I'd wait the month out, and then if I'd seen nothing of any one I'd just go down with the box and ask our clergyman if he'd open it, and find the gentleman's—'Why, goodness gracious sakes alive!—'Miss Ambler broke off abruptly, starting Sydney, whose attention had been wandering—"Here he does come up the street, and no mistake, and some one along with him! And"—peering out of the window—"they are stopping at this door! Don't you mind, nor flurry yourself, miss. I'll tell him about you, and say Mr. Cheene wouldn't have had you disturbed for the world. Perhaps"—hastily setting chairs at right angles—"you'd like to go to the other room if they wish to come up here; I'll run and stop that stupid Nancy bringing them."

But Miss Ambler was not quick enough. As she opened the door, two people entered from the narrow landing. In an instant three were gazing at one another, all doubting the evidence of their own senses.

"Miss Alwyn!" exclaimed the male intruder. It was Richard Drayton.

"Sydney! Oh, my poor Sydney!" cried the lady beside him, running to catch the wonder-struck girl in her embrace. And the rest of that minute was chaos to them all.

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from then till now, and if the prayer of a retired haberdashery old maid like me can fetch you prosperity, you'll surely get it! While"—ended the grateful old soul, suddenly clapping three golden coins on the table—"as for that money there! I'm proud to have found you with the bird's beakful you've taken, and if I touch a penny-piece for payment my name's not Amelia Ambler!"

With which she seized her neglected dinner-tray and whipped out of the room, leaving the long-separated friends to an afternoon of strange, far-reaching explanations, starting with Mary's marriage, ending with something still more wonderful. For Sydney finding this fortnight-wed pair possessed the secret of her leaving St. Clair, was now forced to tell where and with whom her past twelve months had been spent, and what had cast her loose from Wynstone, sending her to meet at Stillcote-Upton a loss she was so ill-prepared for.

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"He had taken care it should be quite yours," put in Mr. Drayton. "While he lived I was bound to give no hint of it to any one—not even Mary; but now, as you will hear when I read you his will, he has left you everything he had in the world."

"All my father's things?" cried Sydney. "Oh, dear old Jacob! If you could hear me thank you!"

"Yes, Miss Alwyn; these, and other things that were your father's too."

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"Ah, so they might then, but not now," returned Richard Drayton, dryly. "You have never asked me yet, Miss Alwyn, how I came to be acquainted with your old clerk, nor what first brought me to Stillcote-Upton."

"I have heard so much: I am so glad to have you here," answered Sydney, laying her hand with a long-drawn sigh on Mary's knee, "I think I scarcely want to know any more yet."

"Just five minutes," pressed Mr. Drayton, his wife giving him leave by a nod. "Best clear all up at once, and get it over. So, to go to first facts, I had a glimmering when I first met you of having heard your name, 'Alwyn.' After a bit I remembered when. It was on some visit of mine to a relative at Stillcote-Upton, who spent a night each week violin playing, with some one so called—"

"My father!"

"As it turns out, yes. You and I never seemed strangers, did we, Miss Alwyn? That old network of intimacy must have had something to do with it. Well, now for the next thing. You remember when I came to England it was to take up a little estate in the south. On that bit of property was a mine. The lease of it had been purchased of my uncle for fifty years. It had been closed sixteen. Was worthless, most folks said. I'd had some training in other mines, examined all I could of this, and thought differently. To see if I was right, I worked with all my money and all my time for fourteen months, for on the mine's value depended my chance of getting through with a scheme I think you understood." Sydney smiled up at Mary. "I found out that mine had been wrecked partly by rascally management. Not the first time that sort of thing has happened. I saw my way clear as daylight to reconstructing a paying concern. I laid my plans accordingly. Went to St. Clair to find you."

"Me!"

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"Yes, for it was the same Grand-fide mine your father had got ruined in. His name headed the old list of shareholders. If you, as his representative, had held the original shares your leave as largest proprietor was required to reforming the business. Well, you were gone; no one knew where, nor could tell why. I was on my way to hunt up Mrs. Alwyn abroad, when I fell in with Major Villiers in town, and told him what I was after. He saved me a fruitless journey, by telling me those same shares had been offered at your father's sale, and amid shouts of laughter had been purchased by a clerk named Cheene. Him I foraged up forthwith. Showed him every single detail I had worked out, and to cut short a long business, which would only puzzle you at present, got his consent and that of the other remaining shareholders, to start the company afresh on a safe footing, myself holding a certain amount of stock, and acting as manager. Success has followed so fast that the shares have gone up without one check, and are still rising. I was able to tell Mr. Cheene, when I saw his last May, that his few shillings' worth of scrip, which he almost saved from the flames, represented now a very respectable fortune. It would bring in, if realized, five-and-twenty thousand pounds to-morrow, Miss Alwyn."

"So, no more companions' places for you, foolish, reckless child that you were," said Mary, stooping fondly over Sydney's dark head, and to his wife's gentle care and caresses Mr. Drayton wisely left this new-made heiress awhile, almost mute in her astonishment.

(To be Continued.)

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