

THE  
**Grand Alliance;**  
OR,  
**Love That Knew No Bounds.**

CHAPTER XVII.  
And the poor major, without so much as a cartridge left, could only brush, he said, the midgets off his face with his big Indian silk handkerchief, and argue—

"Still, my dear child, have you realized how this will leave you? Why, with fifty or sixty pounds, no more! And suppose your mother doesn't—doesn't smooth down. You'll be dependent on her, you know. She'll feel that unfair, I'm afraid."  
"I won't let her," Sydney cried. The truth was bitter, though, and made her falter. "Mamma shall not be burdened with me. I ought to be worth my salt somewhere to some one. If God helps those who help themselves, Major Villiers, then I won't be afraid. I think He will help me."

There was no urging argument past this. The major went presently down, getting rid of more midgets by the way, to his son, of whom he had not ventured to speak to Sydney. But now, joining the young man in a gloomy promenade up and down the fir walk, he said, with some of the enthusiasm stigmatized by Mrs. Alwyn as unbusiness-like.

"My boy, sooner than give up the girl I'd take her without a farthing if I were in your shoes. She's a woman of a thousand!"  
"But as she also happens to be a woman without a thousand, she is no the one for me, sir," returned Rupert sulkily. He had pitied himself into a perfect slough of exasperation against the head-strong young marplot. "I don't forget, 'When poverty comes in at the door love flies out of the window.'"

"Ah! but there need be nothing that young folks like you two ought to call poverty at your door, my boy. Not if the hundreds I've put by can save it off. If the love is only there I'd marry her now, sooner than ever I would, upon my honor, Rupert!"  
"Then I think it's well for the future of both of us that my head is cooler than yours, sir," was the ungracious response. With his hand crammed down in his coat-pockets the gentleman marched abruptly off by a side-path, and his father saw that further persuasion would be in vain.

Each man felt awkward at Th. Dale, and both left by evening. The younger, still steeped in self-commiseration, vouchsafed no message to Sydney. The elder sought her out and said good-bye full as paternally as if the darling scheme he had been cherishing were nigh fulfillment. However, matters turn out," he said "if ever you want anything that I can give, don't be above asking it. You know where to find me."

He was thinking that some o pussillanimous Mr. Rupert's wedding fund might be of service to the girl. Alas! before London was reached he had discovered that must go in another direction. For the son, wisely calculating that the fare of the day's confagration would cast his private peccadilloes into shadow, made a clean breast of debts, I O U's included, as they travelled up, and clumsily shouldering the farewell sins of bachelorhood on the design just brok-

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on off, secured a promise of clearing up that emptied the major's reserve fund to the last note.  
Before night closed around The Dale, Mrs. Alwyn had another interview with Sydney, and gave her the result of twelve hours' meditation on her conduct.  
"You are doing me, your sister, and yourself a gross injury. What course you will take I am too frightfully upset to contemplate. But this I warn you, Sydney. The fortune I had secured when I married your father, then old enough to be my father—pausing, that her daughter might recognize the unequal bargain—"I consider Leonora's. Don't deceive your self into expectation of sharing it."  
"I will not, mother."

"As for your home, if you consider you ought to diminish, by sharing it your sister's provision and mine for a month or six weeks, do so. But you ought by then to find means of maintaining yourself. I have one thing to insist on. I will not have all the business, which I have labored for your sake and Leonora's to keep concealed, bruted about the parish."  
"I will speak of it to no one."  
"It might ruin Leonora's prospects as you have contrived to let it ruin our own. And another thing: I will not have the bearer of my name publicly place-hunting. You, who can do so much for your father, must do this much for your mother. Wherever you earn your living, drop the name of Alwyn. Don't disgrace my open association with paid labor. Sydney bent her head, her heart for a moment too full for speech. But Mrs. Alwyn would have rustled off to her own room, she stayed her, a hand leadingly upon her shoulder.

"Mother, I am but trying to do the best I can with what I have while it is mine." (Robert Vaughan's lesson well learned—well learned!) "Some day you may take my willfulness less hardly. Do kiss me."  
Even in her white heat of anger Mrs. Alwyn could not refuse; but she went forth, her handkerchief to her eyes, and took refuge on sentimentality—wondrous to relate—snubbing Leonora!  
That young lady, however, less afflicted of the household, reflectively, as she put her sapphire ring beside her other jewels, that it was an ill wind that blew no one a good. She had got a present, after kind, and while people had been ranging about in consultation in floors, she had enjoyed, when strolling about the lawn, a brief meeting with Mr. Edward DuVesne. He had betrayed some nervousness—suggested a sign! Had wished to see Mrs. Alwyn particularly—hoped he should fortunately find her disengaged some day.

Which meant—  
Leonora smiled serenely, as, after gazing affectionately at her portrait she wrapped the flattering semblance carefully up, and laid it away. I was lucky, after all, she had not given it to poor, ridiculous Sydney. It would be ready now for some one else. "Oh, silly, silly Sydney!" she thought, with her last yawn. "she would soon have to be going somewhere, as mamma said, and where would that be?"

In the next room that question was in its first stage of solution.  
Sydney, sleepless, had turned out the few contents of her traveling-bag, among them a scrap of paper that came upon her as a message, she would faint hope, of good. And before she lay down to rest a note was written, signed with her first initials only, to one Miss Hurst, far off in the western country.

CHAPTER XVIII.  
That The Dale during the next few days was anything but the abode of cheerfulness, is a fact requiring little imagination to paint.  
To Sydney, Mr. Villiers's prompt desertion was a realistic comment on

the course she had taken, such as might have purchased some women's repentance and possible recantation. But having put her hand to the plow, the last thing on earth to turn the girl back would have been personal suffering. Sharp and cruel as this was, tempting her to disbelief that love could ever re-enter her life, the keenest venom of the sting lay in the fact that she had been too willing to grasp at the semblance of affection too ready to read the ways of the wooer by the light of her own wishes! Or thus she thought, and every spark of dignity within her flew ablaze at the affront she conceived herself to have courted by taking for pure gold what was but poorest dross. In the despair of mortification she planted her foot on every tender remembrance or emotion, and strove with all her might to count her love well lost. Chill was her outlook now the sole ray of light among her many clouds the firm belief that, even as her father would have had her, she was doing well, come what might.

Beyond the house for days she would not stir. Mary Dacie would soon trace trouble in her bearing and would scarcely be satisfied with but searching into that whereon she had promised silence. A line to the Gate House (shown before sent to her mother's jealous eyes) bade them no wonder at her absence; and the long hours Sydney passed in setting her possessions in order, ready for what might come next.  
Leonora, meanwhile, regarded her with pitying amazement and slight supercilious kindness that was far from soothing.

"To think," said this young lady to her step-sister, whom she watched working, herself in a rocking-chair enjoying the *dolce far niente* of a hot afternoon—"to think you should go Sydney, and give up a respectable income, that would have kept you decently, and dressed you—oh, really remarkably well! I wouldn't have done it!"

This fetched a smile to Sydney's grave face.  
"In my stead, Leonora, you might have acted the same!"

"Never!" emphatically. "Of course it's done, and can't be undone, but I'm sorry for you, Sydney. I wish you had not been so frightfully foolish. You will find it very disagreeable, after living here so nicely, to go down and be a sort of common person. I don't expect you have half thought of that."  
"I don't expect I have."  
"People who have money, you know, are treated very differently from those who have not, Sydney. You will find that out."

"I have found it out already."  
"A—h!" prolonging the interjection. "Yes, so you have. And, do you know, you'll most assuredly be sorry some day you drove Rupert from your poor fellow!"

"We will not talk of that, Norah, please," said Sydney, terse only because a rebellious weakness threatened self-command; and gathering her work together, she silently went away.

"Angry with me for interfering, as usual," deplored Leonora to her mother; "though I spoke only for her good. But Sydney will never leave off being headstrong."  
This ultimatum Mrs. Alwyn fully endorsed, and resigned herself to illness as its result. Appearing down stairs only at dinner, she spent the time dejectedly in the boudoir, word going forth to callers that neuralgia necessitated seclusion. To Sydney she accorded a mournful civility that implied, "You shall have nothing to complain of, however you have made me suffer!" And with scrupulous politeness when they met at table she would offer her peccant daughter a share of each viand, though the tone in which she would ask, "Do you wish for butter, Sydney?" would seem to say that on the insane course she had chosen it was her duty to discard all luxuries, butter included!  
Mr. Russell's opinion of his niece

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arrived in due course. Mrs. Alwyn handed her brother's letter in its uncompromising frankness to Sydney. The writer made no attempt to mince matters: "For you see," he said to Major Villiers, who went down to Hampshire to talk the position over with his co-trustee, "you can afford to side with her if you like. She's no relation of yours. But she is of mine. And I don't hesitate to call her a fool!"

Which sentiment he had expressed in his epistle, "though," as he wound up, "there is little use in my saying this, for we are well aware, and Sydney equally, no one can stop her if she persists in this insane folly. I only beg you to explain that she is not to count on legacies from me. Maria's relatives will have what I have got. Please to inform her that the sum to which she is entitled will be placed to her credit in the London and County by the 18th prox. The transfer from stock I can manage myself. The usual percentage I shall, of course, deduct."

Thus delivered himself Mr. Russell, the man-of-all-trades, though gentleman of no profession, who, in his alacrity to turn an honest penny, did not disdain the picking from his young relative's misfortunes. And as if to prove herself true to the strain Mrs. Alwyn observed, querulously, as the letter was returned.  
"You are not forgetting that you are indebted to me, Sydney? It would be curious honor which would lead you to repay strangers' debts you never incurred, and let your mother lose what she unguardedly lent you? Of course, those twenty pounds are gone?"

"Not quite, mamma," came the answer, very low, bitterness and sadness having about an even tussle in the speaker's breast just then; "I have a little left, enough to—take me away; I will soon hand back the rest I—owe you."

She went that same Wednesday, as the sun's heat was moderating, by field-paths to Hedyngham, there found a letter addressed merely to the post-office of the little town, and read it as she went back to St. Clair's by the same unfrequented way.  
The rector, strolling beyond his garden, saw her coming, preoccupied enough to have passed him in the gloaming, had he not greeted her with.  
"Well, met again! We are perplexed, Miss Sydney, as to what you have been doing with yourself of late. Halt now. I am wanting to hear your latest news."  
(To be Continued.)

**Notice!**

Information has been received from the General Post Office, London, England, to the effect that many Newspaper packets are being received in the mails from Newfoundland for England prepaid at the rate of 2 cents per pound. This is contrary to the proper rate of postage on Newspapers sent from Newfoundland to Great Britain, which is the same as that payable on ordinary printed matter, viz.: One Cent per every two ounces or fraction thereof.  
The public will please take notice that in future all such insufficiently prepaid Newspaper packets will be marked for taxation before despatch in accordance with Article 11 of the detailed Regulation for the Execution of the Postal Union Convention of Rome.

H. J. B. WOODS,  
Postmaster General.  
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