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Grand Alliance; Love That Knew No Bounds.

CHAPTER XXXIV.

Only those who, strength and spirit spent after many a fight, have dragged themselves for a little respite, a little tender healing, to the one human source that never yet has failed them, and found that source cut off forever—only such can tell what Nancy's announcement signified to Sydney.

A great billow of despair seemed to close over her; an unconsciousness of everything save that another hard blow had come upon her when her forces were at their lowest ebb, and none of her once full fund of buoyancy left to meet it.

Nancy's frightened cry to her mistress; Miss Ambler's scared appearance downstairs; these were a blank, emerging from which she found herself upon a slippery chintz-covered sofa, the black-robed landlady copiously besprinkling her with cold water, while the excited domestic fanned the air about into a temporary gale with the "Stillcote-Upton Weekly Express."



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THE BRATLEY DRUG CO. Limited, ST. JOHN, N. B. Deschot's Warm Salt Candy for Children safe and sure. 5

"There, there," said Miss Ambler, soothingly, as Sydney's great sad eyes opened once more with sense and questioning. "You are coming to as nice as can be. Don't try to talk yet, miss. Nancy didn't ought to have told you all of a sudden. Shocks are bad; I have had them, and know. Here comes your luggage. You lay quiet, miss, while I take it in. We're ready for you, so to speak, for— with a sudden collapse into lachrymose condition—him that's gone, poor dear, had been counting of your coming, and the room at the back's been ready for you for weeks."

The injunction to lie quiet Sydney obeyed involuntarily; for every vestige of rallying power seemed to have left her. All the battles she had gone through from last year till now re-venge themselves on her vitality at once. As white as marble and as still she lay an hour and more without a word, till a glimpse of Miss Ambler creaking away tip-toe with a countenance of profound anxiety supplied a spur to exertion which rarely found Sydney irresponsive.

"I am better," she said, turning, with a most wistful attempt at a smile, to the mellow, late afternoon light. "Please don't be frightened for me. And—will you tell me—about it now?"

Miss Ambler, more exercised than Sydney divined, had to cough and sniff a great deal before she was equal to meet this request; but presently, perched bolt-upright on the edge of a chair, since the young lady made her sit, she managed to give account of as happy an exit from this troublous sphere as the best heart could desire its best friend.

"He talked many times this month past of when Miss Grey—he called you Miss Grey"—Sydney made a movement of confirmation, the slightest color rising, not unobserved—"of when you were coming for a holiday to him, and seemed as pleased about it as a prince. He'd not been well this winter, but he was always cheery the days he got your letters. He was looking for—one this very time last week, and spoke put-out-like, for him when I carried him up another instead. 'But,' said he to me when I fetched his breakfast-things down (for I waited on him myself, Miss—Grey, and marked his appetite, and got him many a spring broccolow or new-laid egg my own self since I

could afford it, for mean by nature I'm not, though close by habit I've had to be!—Miss Amelia," he says, "I'd no right to grumble at that letter. It's brought me great news. I shall tell you of it some day." And almost every time I came to his room he seemed to have been reading it, and I can't picture how he looked, miss, but more glad and young-like than I'd seen him these long whiles. He played a deal of music that day. Long pieces such as he learned forty years ago with his rich master, as was then. And at night when I went to put his sitting-room lamp out he'd just finished 'Auld Lang Syne,' he tune the clock at Stuart's used to play last thing before he left, he's often told me. He was so fond of it. He said 'Good-night,' and went off sort of singing it. And he might have

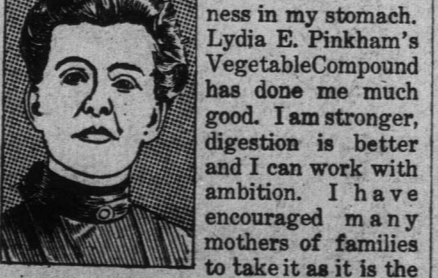
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In the Pinkham Laboratory at Lynn, Mass., are files containing hundreds of thousands of letters from women seeking health, in which many openly state over their own signatures that they have regained their health by taking Lydia E. Pinkham's Vegetable Compound, many of whom state that it has saved them from surgical operations.

been listening to it when he was— sent for—Miss Grey. For in the morning, when Nancy couldn't wake him, I went and found him with a tear on his cheek and a smile on his mouth, as easy-looking as a baby asleep. That was the morning your letter came, miss, which," said Miss Ambler, after a gallant struggle with an obstinate sob, "you'll find in poor Mr. Cheene's rack, upstairs, for, of course, you'll like his room to yourself while you stop here. Nothing would have pleased him more than for you to use it. And till the gentleman comes who knows what's to be done with the things, it's freely yours."

Miss Ambler ended with a good hearty cry behind her handkerchief Sydney had not yet reached that merciful easement. But stupefied as she still felt, the instinct born with her name did not desert her. This good landlady of Jacob's must not be encroached upon.

From her purse she took out three sovereigns.

"If I may stay here while these last," she said, "I can not tell you how thankful I shall be. For," moving her tired face into shadow again, "I did so want this for a home a little while."

With a curious look Miss Ambler pocketed the gold; but if dissatisfied at the loose bargain, showed no signs of being so; for when the new lodger was fairly ensconced among the old edger's household goods she was sedulous in her care, and made no trouble of anything except Sydney's poor straggle of the provision she offered.

But for days the oppression of mingled pains kept Sydney in the bondage of an inertia which to her bright, ready activity was as the thralldom of some heavy illness.

Jacob gone: no one to speak to; her every mental effort introspective; not a line from her mother, to whom she had written some ten days before leaving Wynstone; sharply assailed by mistrustful dread of her own doings—had her willfulness been wickedness all through, and so had she thrust herself into her present punishment? And above, beneath all emotions else, like the dirge of sea-waves dominating every other sound upon the shore, one passion beat, beat, beating at her heart, restless as hopeless; small wonder was it that unuttered mourning darkened the dreary length of that fair midsummer, threatening the very foundations of her much-taxed courage.

Not until July's first week had glided by did the tense strain of morbid suffering show signs of giving way. Then said Miss Ambler one morning, "Miss Grey, if you go on getting paler and thinner, and eating no more than my tortoise-shell cat downstairs, it won't be long before you are laid upon my hands, and then I should like to know what's to be done!"

This sent a wholesome thrill of alarm through the girl. In such case, what indeed would be done? She was growing strangely selfish. Taking Miss Ambler's zealous services by far too easily. Unless she meant to throw her burden most unfairly on a stranger, she must rouse now at once.

The day was delicious. Martins chirped busily about the roof. The fresh air seemed to say, "Come out and taste me," and Sydney's sense accepted the pure medicine. She must have a beginning of whatever her new course was to be. It should date from her old friend's grave. In the quiet little churchyard, which he had taken greatly to when he had "Taffy's" tombstone placed there, Jacob Cheene was laid. "How can I get to Lutterthorpe?" Sydney now asked.

"For I will try not to be ill, Miss Ambler. I ought to go out, I know; and I would rather go there than anywhere."

It was not exactly the excursion Miss Ambler would have selected for her invalid; but seeing it was almost the first wish Miss Grey had expressed, she wisely furthered it. Brief journeys by rail took Sydney to and fro between now and evening. Between the lettered record of her earliest friend, the late turfed covering of her last, she was granted the great relief of not altogether regretful tears. Here rested, after many cares, two faithful uncomplaining natures. Wherein was she more privileged than they, that she should waste her



gift of life in vain repining? Nay, rather should she be up and doing, holding closer to that Presence of which the solemn age-worn walls uprising near seemed fitting sanctuary. Tired completely, but more healthily, she spent that day's twilight among memory's less dangerous depths. Sitting in her father's chair, turning poor Jacob's cherished music pages over; registering those marked by her father's hand; and about her sleep that night hovered notes and chords of some long strain, unknown, but strangely sweet, such as aforesaid had sounded often enough at Stuart's, unfinished when next morning she awoke.

Waking, work lay before her. She kept that fact written as it were in space, spurred to it by a new ambition. What she might earn need not be all her own. Though parted from Gilbert Hurst, her debt to him was not paid yet. However distant, she might gather together and send him herself, unsuspected, the means to preserve him from entire dependence on Mr. Montague Carl, or any other paymaster. That hope stirred animation once again. She would wait only a little longer, till the effort to breathe, to eat and drink were something less, then she would go straight to the trading-wharf of all nations,

London, and backed by such credentials as Major Villiers could give her, would hunt for the hardest labor she could take at the highest pay.

One more week she would allow herself at Stillcote-Upton, if Miss Ambler would have her, and when her landlady was retiring with her early dinner tray, she asked if she might be harbored so long.

"And welcome," was the emphatic answer. "And I'd say for a month, miss, if I could make sure this furniture would stand as it is so long. But an empty room you couldn't dwell in; and as for asking you to take share of mine—"

(To be Continued.)

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