

Aunt Diana

The Sunshine of the Family

A QUIET, natural home story, this, but full of character and interest for those who delight in domestic details of life. A young girl takes charge of a large family in a motherly fashion that wins regard, and the incidents are all pleasing and consistent.

This serial will greatly please home readers, and its influence cannot help but benefit and ennoble the mind and the purer impulses of the heart.

CHAPTER I.

There are conflicts in most lives—real hand-to-hand combats, that have to be fought, not with any fleshly weapons, but with the inner forces of the being—battles wherein the victory is not always to the strong, where the young and the weak and the little ones may be found abiding nearest to the standards.

Such a conflict had come to Alison Merle, breaking up the surface of her smooth outer life, and revealing possible shoals and quicksands, in which many of her brightest hopes might be wrecked.

"It is hard, I do not know that even if Aunt Di think it right I shall ever have the heart to do it," murmured Alison, talking to herself in her agitation, after the manner of older folk. "I have just rooted myself in this dear place, and the soil suits me. I could not flourish anywhere else; and," finished Alison, with a quaint little smile, "sickly plants are worth nothing."

To any ordinary spectator the interior of that little room would have presented a picture of perfect serenity and absolute comfort. Even the young creature comfortably seated in a chair by the window, with an open letter and a cluster of deep red roses lying among the folds of her white gown, presented no disturbing image, though the cheek had lost its wonted fresh color, and the dark, dreamy eyes had a look of doubt that was almost pain in them.

Two years ago—she had been sixteen then, and, oh, how discontented and ill and unhappy she had been. It was not only the loss of her mother, it was her own incapacity for responsibility, her morbid dislike to her surroundings, that had fretted all her fine color away. Change of air would do her good, and then Aunt Diana had come down upon them with the freshness of a moorland breeze.

"You must give your eldest girl to me, Ainslie," she had said to Alison's father; "she wants care and cherishing more than Miss Leigh has time to give her." And, of course, Aunt Diana had her way.

Instead of the whirl of machinery—for her father's sawmills were just behind their house—Alison had now only to listen to the soft flow of the river that glided below the green lawns and shrubberies of Moss-side; instead of waking up in the morning to look across the dusty shrubs and trees to the vast wood piles and masses of unswan timber, that seemed endlessly between her and the blue sky, Alison's eyes had now the finest prospect; one shaded garden seemed to run into another, and when the willows were thinned or bare in winter time, what a view of the river and green meadows on the opposite side!

The moral surroundings were almost as much changed. Instead of Miss Leigh's dry method of instruction, Aunt Diana had placed within her reach many a pleasant short cut to knowledge, had suggested all sorts of enviable accomplishments; money was not stinted where Alison's talents could be turned to account.

In this pleasant but bracing atmosphere Alison had thrived and grown. She was still a tall, slim girl, somewhat youthful in look, but with plenty of warm life and energy about her; and though the dark eyes had still their old trick of dreaming, they seemed to dream more happily, and the shadow did not lie so deep in them—not, at least, until the June afternoon, when Alison sat sighing and visibly disturbed with her lap full of roses. It was evident at last that she found her thoughts too painful, for after another half hour's intense brooding she suddenly jumped up from her seat, scattering the flowers where they lay unheeded on the Indian matting, and walked abruptly to the door. She had dropped her letters, too; but she went back and picked them up, not replacing them in their envelopes, and then she went out into the passage.

A dark oak staircase led into a little square hall, fitted up with bookcases like a library, with a harmonium on one side; a glass door opened into a conservatory, through which one passed into the garden.

Alison turned the handle of a door just opposite the staircase, and stood for a moment hesitating on the threshold.

What a pleasant room that was, half studio and half drawing room, full of cross lights, and artistically littered with an odd jumble of medieval and modern furniture—oak chairs and cabinets, basket-work longes, tiny tea tables, fit for Lilliputian princesses, and hanging cupboards of quaint old china that gave warm coloring to the whole. Alison's eyes were still fixed on a lady who stood with her back toward her, painting at an easel.

"Well, child, what now?" The voice was nicely modulated, clear and musical, but the manner slightly abrupt.

Alison came forward at once and inspected the picture. "It is very pretty, Aunt Di," she said, forgetting her own worries in a moment. "It is one of your best. I think I see what you mean, but to me it is all beautiful; that odd man—a pensioner, is he not? and that poor, tired sheep, that seems to have dropped down by the way, left behind by the flock, is so suggestive of the title, 'Noon-tide Rest.'"

"That is what I intended. You are so intelligent child, Ailie; both the man and the sheep must be old; it is not for young creatures to rest at noon-tide; my old pensioner has already borne the burden and heat of the day."

"Of course, I see what you mean, Aunt Di."

"My parable is not hard to read," replied Miss Carrington, with a smile, but as Alison studied the picture with increased interest and admiration, a pair of shrewd, kindly eyes were studying the girl's face.

"Go and put yourself in that easy chair opposite, and tell me all about it," she said at last, rousing her by a good-humored little push. "I must finish this branch if I am to enjoy my night's rest, but I can listen to any amount of lettered woes," with a suggestive glance at Alison's hand.

"Oh, Aunt Di, how do you find out things so?" stammered Alison; then, as though used to obedience, she moved to the chair that was always reserved for Miss Carrington's visitors, whom she was wont to entertain after a fashion of her own.

"I wonder how long I am to have patience," observed Miss Carrington, painting on industriously, as Alison sat with drooping head, looking at her letters, without offering to read them. "I am quite sure those are Rudel's straggling characters; that boy's handwriting is a disgrace to the family; it has put him out of my will forever; fancy one's nephew being such a sorry scribe."

"Rudel does write badly," returned Alison, with a faint little smile, "but I like his letters better than Missie's; there is one from Miss Leigh, too; do you admire her handwriting, Aunt Di?"

"No; it is too thin and angular," returned Miss Carrington, severely; "it wants freedom and breadth; it reminds me too much of Miss Leigh herself."

"I do not think we are any of us very fond of her," interrupted Alison. "I know she fidgets father dreadfully, and Roger, too, though he is so good to her."

"Roger is good to everyone but himself," responded Miss Carrington; "but even he, with all his good nature, has owned to me that Miss Leigh has a very trying manner. You see, Alison, fussy people make poor companions. Miss Leigh has never leisure for anything but her own worries; she is too overweighted for cheerful conversation; if she could forget Poppie's misdemeanors, and Missie's pertness, and Rudel's roughness, and the servants' failures for about half an hour at a time, I could quite fancy Miss Leigh a pleasing companion; but now let me hear her letter."

"It is dreadfully long," sighed Alison, as she reluctantly obeyed. It was evident that she wished Miss Carrington to read the letters for herself, but Aunt Diana held a different opinion.

"My dear Alison," it began, "I am afraid that my weekly account will be little more cheering than the last; indeed, I am arriving slowly at the conviction that, unless some change be made in the household arrangements, I shall be compelled, however reluctantly, to resign my post."

"Humph! that looks bad," from Miss Carrington.

"I have done all I can in representing to your father the mischief that must result from his injudicious treatment of Mabel; she is becoming so thoroughly spoiled, so entirely her own mistress, that no amount of reasoning has any effect upon her. I do not wish to lay any undue stress on her behavior to myself; but her treatment of Mr. Roger, and the bad example that she sets to Poppie, not to mention the constant bickering that is always going on between her and Rudel, are quite destroying the harmony of the household. You may imagine, my dear Alison, how trying all this is to a person of my sensitive temperament."

"I always said it was a black day for us when Miss Carrington took you away from The Holms. With all due deference to your aunt's benevolence and good feelings, I can not help thinking that a daughter's place is with her widowed father. Of course, you will talk the matter over with your aunt, and perhaps you may be able to assist me to some solution of our difficulties."

"PATIENCE LEIGH," muttered Miss Carrington, grimly. "Sensitive people never own to being out of temper, but I should have said myself that there was a spice of ill-temper in that letter. Poor Miss Leigh is decidedly ruffled."

"She never could manage Missie; I always knew that," returned Alison, sorrowfully.

"And how old is Mabel, or Missie, as you call her?"

"Sixteen last birthday, Aunt Diana."

"Humph! there is not a more troublesome age."

"Aunt Di, I have something very serious to say. These letters came two or three days ago, and I have been thinking about them ever since. I do believe Miss Leigh is right in what she says, and that I am shirking my duty."

"Since when?" a little dryly.

"Since I got quite well and strong and happy, about a year ago," returned Alison, answering most literally. "I ought to have gone back then, and not have stopped on here quietly, taking the good of everything, and enjoying myself just as though I had no duties, and no place in life. It is all my fault if Missie is getting the upper hand, and making every one uncomfortable. I ought to go home to father and Roger."

There was no immediate answer to this, but in another moment Miss Carrington had walked to her slowly, and then, standing beside her, her hand stroked the girl's hair with a mute caressing gesture. "Do not cry about it, Ailie," she said presently; but her own voice was not quite so clear as usual. "It is not a thing to be decided in a hurry; we must look at it all around; impulse is never a sure guide. No one is quite their own mistress, even at eighteen, and I am afraid you will have to ask my leave, unless you prefer running away."

"Oh, will you let me go, Aunt Di?" with a sudden start of joy, as though the knots that her conscience had tied were suddenly cut through in a most unexpected way.

"My dear, if it be right I will help you to go," was the expressive but somewhat curt answer to this; but as she spoke, Miss Carrington's hands pressed the girl's head a little heavily.

"Now," she continued, with a visible

effort, "we must put all these troublesome things away for the present; there is the dressing bell, and we have only time to get ready for dinner, and you know it is our evening at Fernleigh, and we shall have to be cheerful for Mr. Moore's sake."

CHAPTER II.

An hour and a half later Miss Carrington and her niece were walking quickly down one of the garden paths until they came to a little gate set in the hedge; unlatching it, they passed into a neighboring garden, and then turned their faces in the direction of a low white house, with a veranda running all round it, and roses in profusion running over it. As they did so, the notes of a violin, evidently played by a practiced hand, reached them. Miss Carrington's face brightened, and, making a gesture to her companion to move softly, she stepped up to a window and looked through it. The room, if it were a drawing room, was almost as heterogeneously furnished as her own, but it bore the character of a library. Two of the walls were lined with bookcases; a grand piano and a harmonium occupied some of the space; there was a round table littered with books, and a superfluity of easy chairs in every stage of comfort, arranged more with a view to ease than appearance. A nearer inspection would have pointed out certain bachelor arrangements—some costly Turkish pipes; a pair of pistols, splendidly mounted; some silver cups and tankards, with various inscriptions on them, all engraved with the name of Greville Moore, and purporting to be certain prizes in the half-mile race, the high jump, throwing the cricket ball and other feats of prowess, performed by some youthful athlete.

An elderly man, with a long white beard and mustache, in a black velvet coat, sat with his back to the light, playing the violin. His face, seen in repose, was clear cut and handsome, in spite of the deep lines that time and perhaps many cares had traced upon it; but his eyes were cast down, as though in deep meditation, an habitual action, for Mr. Moore had been blind half his life.

He was playing from memory an exquisite furze from Bach. The thin, somewhat wrinkled hand handled the bow with a precision, a delicacy, a mastery knowledge, that seemed surprising in his situation. Apparently he was lost himself in enjoyment of the sweet sounds that he had conjured up in his darkness, for a smile played round his lips as the harmony widened and vibrated, and his foot softly moved as though in unison. In a moment the fugue was ended and the bow lowered.

"Is that you, Sunny? Little witch, why have you stolen a march on the blind man? Of course, you have flown through the window."

"Aunt Diana set me the example," returned Alison, demurely. "How do you do again, Mr. Moore?"

"Oh, nicely, nicely; time always passes quickly with me in my own special world. Have you given your aunt her favorite chair? How does the picture progress, Miss Diana? Sunny tells me it is one of your best."

"Would you have me praise my own work?" returned Miss Carrington, brightly. "I must leave you to Alison's criticism. I hope to do something good before I die, and if I do not succeed, well, my life will have been happier for the trying."

(To be continued.)

Saves the Pupils' Teeth.

The dental statistics gathered in many European cities have revealed such an alarming condition of affairs that Germany, at least, has decided to adopt combative measures.

In all large towns dental clinics have been founded, consisting, as a rule, of specially fitted up rooms in one of the central schools.

Fully qualified dentists are appointed, who devote their whole time to their duties, but in Stuttgart the work is done voluntarily by the local dentists. That such a movement is necessary can scarcely be doubted when one learns that of many thousands of boys and girls examined from the ages of 8 to 13 only 2 per cent had a perfectly healthy set of teeth. To give an idea of the amount of work done in a year at Darmstadt schools it is necessary to quote the figures of 1903. During the year 1,370 children were examined and 1,561 teeth were filled, while 1,871 were extracted. In Strassburg 2,660 children were examined, 639 teeth were filled and 2,912 were extracted.

Another interesting fact is that 40 per cent of all teeth examined were bad. The method of work is simple; the teacher takes his class to the dentist, who examines each mouth quickly and marks on the card which each child has brought with it whether treatment is necessary. If so the child must come again on a Saturday.

Russia is also joining in the movement and has already fitted up nine such institutions in St. Petersburg alone, while Moscow has also several.

Drugs and the Brain.

Most people believe that drugs affect the brain. Yet this apparently is not so, according to physicians. Drugs do no more affect the brain than does insanity—that is, not at all!—except alcohol, which does injure the brain, though not at all on account of its mental effects, but for the very different reason that alcohol has a chemical affinity for the albumen and fats of the tissues. By this chemical action it slowly alters and damages brain tissue, but this result in no wise differs from similar alterations produced by alcohol in the tissues of the liver and of the kidneys. Tobacco is a powerful poison, and yet no autopsies can show the yeast difference between the brain of a lifelong smoker and that of one who never lit a cigar. Likewise, the brain of an opium fiend is indistinguishable from any other brain, and so on for the rest. Drugs do affect the mind and will power, but not the brain substance itself.



Experiments with Stable Manure.

At the Maryland agricultural station two sets of experiments with stable manure—one covering three years and the other seven years—have been conducted.

The results as a rule favored the use of fresh manure applied directly from the stable as against rotten manure. The best results were obtained by applying the manure as long in advance of the time the crop was to use it as possible. As between applying fresh and rotted manure before and after plowing, the results favored applying fresh manure as a top dressing after plowing. In a comparison of plowing under manure in the fall and spring, the differences were slight, but uniformly in favor of allowing the manure to remain on the land during the winter and plowing it down in the spring. Subsoiling in addition to deep plowing did not show sufficient advantage to warrant the extra expense involved. The use of kalmat with the manure seemed to exert a beneficial influence every year, and it was more marked in dry than wet seasons. The growth of crimson clover was better on soils receiving fresh manure than on those treated with rotted manure.

Grain for Seed.

The threshing machine is the greatest cause of mixing grain unless care is taken in this respect. If a crop of good Defiance wheat is grown, be careful that the machine is so clean the grain will not become mixed with other wheat. When the machine comes direct

Water for Fowls in Winter.

Many who supply their fowls with water regularly during the summer fail to recognize that it is just as necessary during the cold months. Do you not

Pumpkins for Cows.

Dairymen hold different opinions as to the value of pumpkins for cows and as a rule the great field fruit of the East is not very much grown in the irrigated regions. Some claim that they are a positive injury. It is certain, however, that if fed to cows at all they should be given in conjunction with concentrated feed and necessarily in limited quantities. When fed thus the pumpkin is valuable as a fall feed for cows. It has one distinguishing feature as a stock food, which nothing else possesses and this is that it is a splendid vermifuge. Stock of all kinds like pumpkins and will leave a good bite of alfalfa.—Field and Farm.

HORSES GIVE WAY TO TRACTION ENGINES

It is now no uncommon sight to see heavy loads of grain being drawn along country roads by traction engines instead of horses. The machine in the picture has a capacity of eighteen horse power and will get over any sort of a decent road at from ten to twelve miles per hour. The tires are sixteen inches wide and are so constructed that they will pass over rough or soft ground with comparative ease. This engine cost \$1,000, and there are many others on the market ranging from \$1,000 to \$16,000. These machines are also rapidly coming into service on the large grain fields in the West and are used for plowing, harrowing and reaping. They will pull a gang of from six to ten plows with harrows attached and do the work of one-half dozen teams. These machines will make short turns, or can be backed or started easily, and their speed can be absolutely controlled.

often want to drink more in cold weather than in warm? Just fill the fountain and feed trough at the same time, and note where the crowd is at once gathered. The food is as a rule dry and tends in no way to satiate the thirst. In summer dew, fruit and other substitutes satisfy in a measure, but now the fowls are entirely dependent upon their human friends at this point. Always remove the chill from the water and let it be pure. Do not allow it to remain in the dishes over night and freeze. Freezing water does not mean pure water, even though some germs are killed by freezing. Exercise the same care regarding cleanliness, which was the rule during the summer, and the fowls will not only drink with greater relish but you will likewise eat their products with similar appreciation.

A Good Cow Defined.

Professor Denn, of the Ontario Department of Agriculture, in answering the question, "What is a good cow?" says it is one that will produce at least 6,000 pounds of milk, or make not less, at a cost of not more than \$30 for feed. Such a cow as that is a profitable animal. The production of the cows of the Provinces of Ontario and Quebec, which comprise the best dairying districts in Canada, is only 3,000 pounds of milk in one year. Is there any wonder that in some dairying districts there is not enough milk to drink? There is no money in keeping cows like this, and it is no wonder that people are not satisfied. We have in our stable a Holstein which has produced 2,522 pounds of milk in thirty days, within 500 pounds of the average annual production of cows of Ontario and Quebec. In seven days she gave us 643 pounds, and in one day 96 pounds of milk. If we had cows like that there would be no trouble about having plenty of milk to drink. A man cannot afford to keep cows that produce only 3,000 pounds of milk in a year.

A Sanitary Milk Pail.

It is much easier to keep the dirt out of the milk than it is to get it out after it is once in.

The picture shows a convenient milk pail with an adjustable strainer. A piece of cheesecloth is put over the strainer and this keeps all dirt from entering the pail.

Since this pail was invented many manufacturers cover the top, which is a great improvement.

Remedy for Field Mice.

The Pasteur Institute of Paris has again done a valuable service to the community in devising a remedy for the field mice, which in the Charentes have multiplied at a terrific rate and done enormous harm. The Danyz virus, as it is called, if properly distributed, kills 98 per cent of the mice in two weeks. It causes a contagious disease resembling typhoid, which is innocuous to all living beings except mice and rats.

A Bone and Muscle Maker.

While alfalfa is too rich a food for mature horses unless used in combination with some other roughness, it is an excellent feed for young horses, as it seems to contain just the elements necessary to develop bone, muscle and consequent size.

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1502—Columbus entered the harbor which he called Porto Bello.

1580—Sir Francis Drake returned from his voyage round the world.

1618—Sir Walter Raleigh beheaded in London.

1620—The Plymouth company was organized.

1701—The first constitution of Pennsylvania was adopted.

1735—Gen. Oglethorpe re-embarked for America, accompanied by John Wesley and other missionaries.

1739—England declared war against Spain.

1765—The "Pennsylvania Gazette" appeared in mourning for the passage of the Stamp Act.

1774—The first American Congress, having finished its deliberations, adjourned.

1777—John Hancock resigned as President of the American Congress.

1783—Continental army disbanded and returned to their homes. Treaty of peace between Great Britain and the United States proclaimed.

1793—Execution of the Girondists during the French revolution.

1803—John Penn, one of the signers of the Declaration of Independence from North Carolina, died.

1807—Russia declared war against Great Britain.

1810—Mexican revolutionists defeated the Spanish at battle of Los Cerros.

1813—Moravian Town, on the River Thames, destroyed by the Americans under Gen. Harrison.

1818—Convention signed at London regulating the privileges of the United States in the British North American fisheries.

1825—Final completion of the Erie canal celebrated at Albany. First boat on the Erie canal arrived at Buffalo from Albany.

1841—Santa Anna entered the City of Mexico.

1845—The United States naval academy was formally opened.

1847—Jerome Bonaparte returned to France after an exile of thirty-two years.

1849—A remarkable meteoric stone fell near Charlotte, N. C.

1850—The Northwest Passage discovered by Capt. McClure of the Investigator.

1851—Southern cotton planters met at Macon to devise a plan to prevent fluctuation in the price of the staple.

1852—Fire destroyed a large section of the city of Sacramento, Cal.

1861—Gen. Hunter superseded John C. Fremont in command of the western department of the army.

1862—Confederate cavalry under Gen. Stuart entered Chambersburg, Pa.

1864—Maryland proclaimed a free State by Gov. Bradford.

1868—Gen. Ulysses S. Grant elected President of the United States.

1874—Episcopal conference in session in New York adopted a resolution opposing ritualism in the church service.

1880—James A. Garfield of Ohio elected President of the United States.

1883—Henry Irving made his American debut in New York City.

1886—Bartholdi's Statue of Liberty in New York harbor, dedicated by President Cleveland.

1888—The first Legislature of the North West Territories opened at Regina.

1891—The Provincial act abolishing separate schools in Manitoba declared unconstitutional by the Supreme Court of Canada.

1893—An electric car went through a draw at Portland, Ore., and twenty persons were killed. Steamer City of Alexandria, from Havana for New York, burned at sea; thirty lives lost.

1894—David B. Hill, for the third time, accepted the Democratic nomination for Governor of New York.

1895—The trial of H. H. Holmes for murder began in Philadelphia.

1899—First contingent of Canadian troops for South Africa sailed from Quebec.

1900—The statue of Queen Victoria was unveiled at Montreal. Census here announced the population of the United States to be 76,293,230, an increase of over 13,000,000 in ten years.

1901—The ship *Porpoise*, with fourteen men, lost in the Arctic region.

1902—Canadian-Australian cable completed from Vancouver to Paganis island, a distance of 3,455 miles.

1903—New Irish land act went into operation.

1905—President Roosevelt sent Secretary McCall to San Francisco to investigate the anti-Japanese sentiment on the Pacific coast.

No spender. Binges—How have you spent the summer, Jings? Jings—Haven't spent it; my wife and the girls have looked after all the spending this season.—Toledo Blade.