

Aunt Diana

The Sunshine
of the Family

CHAPTER XI.

Maplewood owned a garden of very tolerable dimensions, but it was already crowded when the Merles made their appearance at the fête on Thursday afternoon. The lawn was covered by gayly dressed people; tennis had not yet begun, but the band was playing. As soon as Alison had greeted her hostess she looked round anxiously for Anna. She had no desire to linger beside Mrs. Hardwick; the handsome, talkative widow had already excited her aversion. As she turned away in search of her friend, Miss Hardwick came up to them in company with a tall, dark man.

"Mabel, dear," she said, almost ignoring Alison, "I must introduce Tony to you—my cousin, Captain Harper. Tony, this is my special friend, and I shall expect you to pay her a great deal of attention, on peril of my displeasure."

"I am too happy to perform such a pleasing duty, I am sure," lisped Anthony, but his bold black eyes passed over Missie's smirking pretty little face to Alison's.

"Is this another special friend of yours, Eva?" he observed, twisting his mustache and looking full at her as he spoke. Miss Hardwick made the introduction somewhat reluctantly; Alison bowed a little laughingly; she was not prepossessed with Captain Harper's appearance, and she determined to have as little as possible to do with him; she seemed about to speak to her, but she turned suddenly to Miss Hardwick.

"I do not see your sister," she said, in a low voice.

"Oh, I daresay not," she answered, carelessly. "I never knew Anna ever ready for anything; she is not half dressed, I suppose. Now, Tony, you must take Mabel for your partner in the first set, and Edgar Dawson and Miss Freeland will play against you."

"We had better take our places then," drawled Captain Harper; and, left to herself, Alison turned to Roger and asked him to walk with her to the house.

"I am going in search of Anna," she said as she left him, and she asked one of the servants who was just entering the tea room to take her to Anna's bedroom. The maid looked surprised, but she put down her tray at once and preceded Alison upstairs.

"That is Miss Anna's room," she said, pointing to the door; "she is dressing, I believe. A hamper of flowers came, and she has only just finished arranging them."

"I dare say I shall be able to help her," returned Alison, knocking at the door. "My dear child," exclaimed Alison, in a surprised voice, as she entered, "why, you have not begun to dress." For Anna was standing at the window in her gray linen gown, evidently watching the gray scene, but the tears were rolling down her cheeks.

"Oh, I can not dress now," she sobbed as Alison kissed her, "it is so late, and I am so tired; Eva said the flowers must be done, and I have only just finished them. I saw Mr. Roger and you and Mabel come in, and I did so long to come out, but now I am just tired out, and I can't stop crying."

"Oh, you will cheer up directly, and I am going to stop and help you," returned Alison, brightly. "Bathe your eyes with some eau-de-cologne and water; I will be back in a moment." And running downstairs Alison made her way into the tea room, and after a few words with the good-natured maid she had already accosted, she was soon provided with a cup of coffee and some delicious looking cake.

"Now you are to leave off crying and take these good things I have brought you," coaxed Alison, "and then I will help you to dress. You are tired and worried, but the coffee will refresh you." But Anna's answer was a fresh burst of tears, as she threw her arms round her neck.

"Oh, how kind you are to me. I do love you so; no one ever took such trouble for me before."

"Then you must thank me by enjoying the coffee," laughed Alison, but a sympathizing drop hung on her own lashes. Nevertheless, she talked on cheerfully until Anna had dried her eyes and drunk her coffee, and then she coaxed her to let her brush her hair and arrange it. Anna sat quite patient and docile under Alison's hands; she did not even look at herself till the pretty cream colored dress was fastened, and the flowers arranged, and then Alison led her to the glass.

"Why, I look quite different; what have you done to me?" observed Anna, in a bewildered tone. "I am not like myself at all."

"You have never taken enough pains with your appearance," she replied. "They were met in the hall by Roger and Captain Harper; the gentlemen were evidently in search of them."

"I thought you had lost yourself, Allie," observed Roger; and as he turned to her companion a low whistle of astonishment broke from his lips, and was at once promptly suppressed.

"I did not know you, Miss Anna," she all he ventured to say, but both Alison and Anna colored with pleasure under the approving look he bestowed on them.

"Miss Merle, I hope, now I have taken all this trouble to find you, that you will not refuse to be my partner in this set," asked Captain Harper, so eagerly that he had almost forgotten his usual drawl.

Alison assented rather coldly, but her reluctance vanished when she found Roger and Anna meant to oppose them. She almost forgot her dislike to her partner during the long, well contested game, which soon drew a crowd of spectators round them; her skill and animation delighted Captain Harper. Missie was watching them rather curiously.

"I did not know Alison was such a good player," she said at last, when Eva joined her. "Captain Harper did not exert himself quite so much when he played with me," with a displeased tone of her head.

"He knows we are watching him, dar-

ling, and that puts him on his mettle," returned her friend, soothingly. "Really, Eva," Mabel said presently, "I never saw Anna look so well."

Miss Hardwick turned her long neck superciliously, and regarded her sister with surprise.

"That must be Alison's doing," she said with evident pleasure. "Anna never did her own hair, I am sure of that." But her handsome face clouded still more when Missie proceeded to take her to task.

"You ought to look after her a little more, Eva," said Missie. "You have so much taste yourself you ought to help her choose her dresses. I should be ashamed if my sister looked as dowdy as Anna generally does."

The rest of the afternoon passed like a happy dream to Anna. She played another game with Roger, who seemed bent on having her for a partner; and afterward, when Alison had succeeded in shaking off Captain Harper by infusing into her manner a fine degree of girlish hauteur and coolness not easily to be mistaken, the three sat together, passing kindly remarks on the rest of the company.

But the crowning happiness of the afternoon to Anna was when Missie addressed her in the condescending manner of one who confers a benefit.

"You have not been to see us lately," she said, quite graciously. "I have told Eva that she must bring you sometimes to talk to Alison." And after this Anna's cup of joy seemed overflowing.

CHAPTER XII.

"Thank you, Mabel dear, for what you have said to Anna," said Alison, gratefully, as they left the grounds of Maplewood.

"Oh, of course, I gave Eva a piece of my mind. She is always so reasonable and sweet-tempered that I never have any difficulty. Anna may come to The Holmes as often as she likes." Then, with a perceptible effort to seem at her ease, she continued hurriedly: "Eva is going to bring her cousin to afternoon tea tomorrow. I hope it will be fine, and then we can set the table under the lime trees; our drawing room is such an ugly room."

"Do you mean Captain Harper is coming?" returned Alison. "Oh, Mabel! how could you ask him? I am sure papa will not be pleased. I do not like him at all; his manners are so artificial and disagreeable."

"It is a pity you did not stop at Riverston," she returned, in an injured voice. "For none of our Chesterton folk, with the exception of that stupid Anna, seem good enough for you. I think Captain Harper charming, and I am sure papa will be pleased with him unless you set him against the poor fellow." And here Missie looked decidedly cross.

"You may be sure that I shall say nothing to papa," replied Alison, with so much dignity that Missie was silenced. But she was terribly annoyed all the same, and took Roger into her confidence, exacting from him a promise that he would be present at all risks.

"Perhaps I am wrong," she remarked, candidly; "I am always so ready with my likes and dislikes. But I can not bear Captain Harper, and it is odious to me to pour out his tea for him."

Alison's anxiety was soon set at rest. The party from Maplewood, including Anna, had not long been gathered under the lime trees before Mr. Merle made his appearance, greatly to her delight and Missie's disappointment. Alison never found out if Roger had betrayed her trust and given his father warning of the expected guest. But there was no mistaking the coolness of his manner to Captain Harper. That unlucky individual was clearly not at his ease, and certainly no inducement was held out to him to repeat his visit.

As soon as the unwelcome visitor had departed Mr. Merle expressed himself as much displeased to find Captain Harper there; indeed, his severity quite overwhelmed Missie, and she retired in floods of tears.

"Papa is never angry with me," she sobbed; "this must be your fault, Alison. You have come home to stir up strife and turn papa against me."

"Don't be absurd, Mabel," returned Alison, a little crossly; "you have brought it all on yourself. Papa seems angry with me, too, and yet you know I am not at all in fault. If you do wrong you must bear to be scolded. Papa says he is quite shocked at our forwardness. You see, he blames me, too. He says no one but himself or Roger ought to invite gentlemen to the house, and Miss Leigh says the same. He told me after you left the room that he would take care that Captain Harper should not repeat his visit, as he was not the sort of man whose acquaintance he could approve for his daughters."

Missie dissolved into fresh tears on hearing this. "I am sure it is not papa's real opinion," she persisted in saying. Roger had put him up to it to spite her and Eva. What would Eva say if she were forbidden to bring her cousin to The Holmes? She wished Alison would go back to Aunt Diana, and not stop here to make her so wretched. She did not see the use of having a sister who hated and thwarted her.

"Oh, you silly child!" exclaimed Alison, kissing the wet, ill-trempered little face that still looked so pretty. "What a storm in a teacup! I don't hate you a bit. I am very fond of you, though you will quarrel with me about every trifle; but it takes two to quarrel properly, and I do not mean to take up the cudgels to please you!" And here she gave her a playful shake, that so astonished Missie that she speedily grew more amiable, for her temper had never been so set aside before.

Roger had been looking very worried and careworn for some days, and Alison was afraid, from her father's grave face and silence with his son, that things had gone wrong again at the mill, and that, as usual, the blame had been laid on Roger. She was waiting for an opportunity to speak to him, for his engagements had taken him out several nights, when one evening she met him as she was returning from the town.

He was walking along rather moodily, with his eyes fixed on the ground, and did not see Alison until she called him by name; and then he looked up and his face brightened in a moment.

"Where have you been, Allie?" he asked, smiling at her; and Roger's smile was very pleasant. "The house felt dull without you, so I came out for a solitary stroll."

"Very well, you shall have your power; only it will not be solitary any longer, for I am not tired in the least, and mean to come, too."

"Very well, then," he said, leading the way toward a quiet, shady road, "I am just in the right mood for a talk, and you are the right sort of company."

"I am so glad I satisfy you, Roger," she said, looking at him affectionately. "I wish all brothers were like you, and cared as much for their sisters."

"So they would, if all sisters were your sort," was his flattering answer; only Roger meant what he said. "Allie, of course I know you will go back to Aunt Diana one day, but you must promise me not to leave us just yet."

"Oh, Roger, of course not. How could I go while you wanted me?"

"My dear, in that case you would never leave us at all. No, no, I am not quite so selfish as that. One day you shall go, Allie; but not just yet, not till things are more settled, and we are all happier. Do you know, dear, I wonder sometimes how I held on those two years without you; your absence made me miss mother more." And Roger's lip trembled a little. Alison pressed his arm without speaking; there was no need for other words between them; they were so sure of each other's sympathy.

"Roger, I wish you would tell me what has been troubling you for the last few days," she said. "Something has gone very wrong; you have been terribly grave all the week, and yesterday you were too worried to eat properly. I hope you mean to take me into your confidence, dear; perhaps I could find some way of helping you."

"I wish you could, Allie," he returned, sadly; "I wish I could see a way out of our terrible difficulties. Promise me you will be as secret as a statue, and I will tell you a little of what has happened."

"Oh, you may trust me," she replied, lifting her honest brown eyes to his face.

"I believe I may, and it will be a relief to speak, Allie, Ferguson is going too far; I am convinced in my own mind that he has tampered with the accounts; we shall come to a crash directly."

"What do you mean?" turning a little pale. Roger spoke so vehemently. "It would take too long to tell you all, but something very unpleasant has happened this week. You know my father went to Lancaster the other day. Well, a check in payment for a consignment of timber was unexpectedly paid in during his absence. Of course I indorsed the check, wrote out a receipt, inclosed it in an envelope and put it in the usual rack for postage. I then made an entry in the ledger, and was just going to lock up the ledger and the check in the safe, as it was nearly time for closing, when the sudden cessation of the machinery told me some accident had happened, and of course I ran out of the office, and so did Ferguson, our manager."

"Oh, I know! when poor Mitchell was hurt," returned Alison, with a shudder. "I remember seeing both you and Mr. Ferguson standing bare headed among the men in the yard; you were sending Timothy for a doctor."

"Yes; I was detained for nearly half an hour. Ferguson must have gone back to the office—at least I missed him after the first few minutes. When they had taken Mitchell off to the hospital, I went back to look up things for the night. Ferguson was just coming out of the office and handed me the keys. Everything was locked up, he said, and the messenger had fetched the letters. I had put the check into my father's private drawer and had locked the drawer, but the ledger had been left open on the table, with my entry written on the top of a blank page. I had noticed the page was a little loose, as though the corresponding one had been cut out some time previously, but I was in a hurry, and I thought it did not matter. When Ferguson told me everything was locked up for the night and handed me the office keys, of course there was nothing for me but to take them. Allie, what do you suppose were my feelings when we opened the private drawer the next morning and there was no check there? Neither was my entry in the ledger; the loose page was gone, and, to add to my perplexity, the firm who had paid in the check wrote to complain that there had been no acknowledgment or receipt; and yet I had written both myself and placed the stamped envelope among the other letters for postage."

(To be continued.)

The Poor Milkman Again.

The milkman was boiling over with indignation.

"And you mean to say my milk don't look right?" he snapped. "Why, lady, this can of milk is a picture."

"Ah, yes," laughed the keen housewife, "a fine water color."

With the Summer Girls.

Pearl—Are there many young men down here, my dear?

Ruby—Very few. It is a game to catch them.

Pearl—And what are the rules of the game?

Ruby—Why, "catch-as-catch-can."

Ignorance of Youth.

"Now," said the very young man, "let us take the average woman, for example; she—"

"But," interrupted the gentleman with the missing hair, "there is no average woman. Every woman considers herself above the average."

Soft Nothings.

Airship Maid (in alarm)—Gracious! Air Pilot—What's the trouble, miss? Airship Maid—Why, something soft struck me on the cheek.

Air Pilot—Don't worry. That was only a wireless love message some chap was sending to his girl.

An Indignity.

"I tell you, sir, kissing the hand that smites you is nothing to what I saw in the hotel this morning."

"What was that?"

"The porter blacking the boots that had kicked him last night."

Colombia is 10 times as large as New York State, as long from north to south as from St. Paul to New Orleans. Its coastline is equal in distance from New York to Chicago. It has produced over \$800,000,000 worth of gold.

CHILDREN'S CORNER

Advantage of Having a Rubber Neck

Out in the land where the animals dwell the old giraffe is considered quite wise. He can tell when a storm is coming down by thrusting his head through the clouds in the skies.



And he often chats with the man in the moon. As he steals a bit from his planet of cheese; Then he blows his breath in the Marsman's face. Just to tickle his nose and make him sneeze.



And he nips a taste of snow from the poles. While scratching his ear on the gay rainbow; For his head he can twist from sea to sea. His neck being made of rubber, you know.

Queer Table.

Somebody has given us a table showing the age reached by certain animals, and it deserves notice, not only on account of its original nature, but because it gives some startling facts. Here is the way it is made up:

The life of a field-mouse is a year.
The life of a hedge-hog is three times that of a mouse.

The life of a dog is three times that of the hedge-hog.
The life of a horse is three times that of a dog.

The life of a man is three times that of a horse.
The life of a goose is three times that of a man.

The life of a swan is three times that of a goose.
The life of a swallow is three times that of a swan.

The life of an eagle is three times that of a swallow.
The life of a serpent is three times that of an eagle.
The life of a raven is three times that of a serpent.

The life of a hart is three times that of a raven.
Now let us make a calculation and see where this table will lead us: Mouse, 1 year; hedge-hog, 3; dog, 9; horse, 27; man, 81; goose, 243; swan, 729; swallow, 2,187; eagle, 6,561; serpent, 19,683; raven, 59,049; hart, 177,147.

Showing Her Tongue.

Foreigners sometimes have a hard time of it wrestling with the English language and, if they persist in thinking that they know it all, they usually "make a mess of it." For example, a young Frenchwoman went into a newspaper office the other day to have an advertisement printed. She presented the slip of paper to the clerk at the counter, who received it with his best smile; for the young woman was very pretty. After reading what she had written, the clerk with great deference suggested that it was a little bit obscure; that the phraseology had better be changed a trifle, and politely handed the slip to her. At this, however, she was quite indignant, remarking that she understood "ze English vell enough."

"All right, mademoiselle," answered the clerk, "it shall be printed exactly as you have written it."

And it was. Here is what appeared the next morning:

"Notice—M^{lle} Marcotte, a native of Paris, offers her services to young ladies and would be pleased to show them her tongue."

She wanted to teach young ladies how to speak the French language.

A Boy's Pluck.

Boys very early manifest the peculiar traits of character which determine the course of their whole lives. When John Roach came to America, a boy about fifteen, he was penniless, and found no friend on the continent who

could help him, his uncle, whom he expected to meet, having gone to the south. He applied to the foreman of a manufacturing establishment for permission to learn a trade. The foreman turned him away, saying: "We require whom we undertake to teach a deposit of \$50 as security that he will remain until his apprenticeship expires, and you have no money." The young man went away disappointed, but not discouraged. He went to a brickyard and carried bricks for 50 cents a day until he had saved \$50, and returning to the foreman said: "Now I have the money, and am ready to deposit it with you if you will allow me to learn a trade." Again the foreman repulsed him because he thought so ungainly a youth could never be a mechanic.

The young man was again disappointed and chagrined, but not cast down. He went to the proprietor and told his story. The proprietor of the establishment was sure that a boy who could make such sacrifices and persist so long in his purpose to learn a trade ought, at least, to have a chance, and going to the foreman he ordered him to take the young man and give him a trial. He did learn a trade, and by industry and perseverance rose until he became the leading shipbuilder in America, and one of the wealthy and honored citizens of the nation. The pluck which he displayed in boyhood, rising superior to obstacles and refusing to yield to discouragement, was one of the important qualities which carried him to success and made him a great and useful man. Those who have no noble qualities in youth are not likely to become noble men.

He Knew His Limitations.

When any one asked Mr. Hobart about the New York painter who spent one summer at the Hill Crest Farm, Mr. Hobart's reply always held a mixture of liking and contempt.

"I prophesied he'd make a living," Mr. Hobart would say, "because he knew what he could do, little as 'twas, and didn't try to fly too high."

"Yes," Mr. Hobart would continue, with a thoughtful smile, "you couldn't get him to attempt any foolish flights. All that summer he set out in the henyard, painting hens, or else out back of the barn, painting pigs. And when I said to him, 'Look a-here, when Abe Fowler comes to paint the house, I'll get him to show you how, and let you take a look at the side end, where 'twon't show so much, and allow it on your board,' he just shook his head and smiled that kind o' gentle, sorrowful smile o' his, and says he, 'I couldn't think of it, Mr. Hobart. I should just ruin the looks o' the house,' he said, 'I'll keep to the pigs and the hens, for I know my limitations!'"

"Well, 'twas a real relief to me, for I suppose likely he would have botched the job considerable; and I said to him then, real hearty, 'Young man, you'll earn your living yet, for you ain't all set up with pride and ambition; and my words have come true, by what I hear.'"

BY WIRELESS.

Speaking about gratitude, remarked the wireless telegraph operator of the steamship Comanche, reminds me of the time I tried to rescue a United States battleship. We were running down off Hatteras one rough night when, about midnight, I heard some one trying to send a wireless message in the government code to the naval station at Beaufort, South Carolina. I happened to know the naval code—Continental Morse, they call it—and I copied the message as follows:

"From U. S. S. Johnston,
"To Commandant, Beaufort, S. C.
"Find it impossible to land in boats. Sea growing fast. Can you send tug alongside to take us off?
"(Signed) Captain X."

The Johnston operator repeated it several times. Finally I heard Beaufort give his O. K. Then came the reply:

"From Beaufort, S. C.,
"To Captain X., U. S. S. Johnston,
"Must try to land at Fort Point. Cannot send help until daybreak. Will show red light at best point on beach.
"(Signed) Commandant Z."

I read the message twice to see if I were awake. Only one conclusion seemed possible—a United States man-of-war wrecked somewhere along the Hatteras shoals—a rising sea—no help for hours.

With visions of a personal letter from the Secretary of War, not to mention the gratitude of a nation—a house and lot, probably—I tuned up my spark, yanked over the switch and called the Johnston. Getting his "G. A."—go ahead—I shot this to him:

"From S. S. Comanche, off Hatteras,
"To U. S. S. Johnston,
"Where are you and what is the trouble? Do you need assistance?
"(Signed) Operator."

The answer came:
"From U. S. S. Johnston,
"To S. S. Comanche,
"But out! But out! We are landing reserves in transport manœuvres.
"(Signed) Operator."

It hurt our feelings some.

A Rising Fall.

A certain member of the British government, who was admittedly a great failure, was being discussed by two of his colleagues.

"And now," concluded one, "they want to make him a peer!"

"No," said the other, with greater acumen; "they want to make him disappear."

FUTURE RULER OF ITALY IS PROUD OF HIS MANY UNIFORMS



THE PRINCE OF PIEDMONT

This little boy will be king of Italy some day. The picture is a very recent one and shows the youngster in the uniform of a colonel of the guard. The prince, who is the only son of King Humbert and Queen Helena, is a robust, merry child, who delights in donning his various uniforms and "playing soldier" with his little friends. He was born Sept. 15, 1904 and rejoices in the name of Humbert Nicholas Thomas—the first after his paternal grandfather, the second after his maternal grandfather, the ruler of Montenegro, and Thomas after the Duke of Genoa, his father's cousin.

TALKS ON ADVERTISING

When the dimpled baby's hungry, what does the baby do? It doesn't lie serenely and merely coo; the hungry baby bellows with all its little might. Till someone gives it something to catch its appetite. The infant with the bottle which stills its fretful cries. A lesson plainly teaches: It pays to advertise.

The lamb lost in the hillside when darkness closes round. Stands not in silence trembling and waiting to be found; Its plaintive bleating echoes across the vales and meads. Until the shepherd hears it, and, hearing kindly heeds, And when its fears are ended, as on its breast it lies, The lamb has made this patent: It pays to advertise.

The fair and gentle maiden who lives the beautiful boy. Assumes when in his presence a manner that is coy; She blushes and she trembles till he perceives at last. And clasps her closely to him and gladly holds her fast, And as he bends to kiss her and she serenely sighs, This fact is demonstrated: It pays to advertise.—Chicago Record-Herald.

Self-Conscious Englishman.

The ordinary Englishman hates to be suspected of anything but the matter of fact. The more deeply he feels the more intense he is on starting his over with a joke or a bit of useful "laug.—Truth.

Embarrassment.

Maud—What made you blush when you were talking to Jack just now? Belle—Why, how could I help it? I was telling him the naked truth.—Toledo Blade.

Carelessness is the great sin of Americans. Nearly all the trouble we have in the result of carelessness. If you can make your scheme good, you are a very unusual man.