

Aunt Diana

The Sunshine
of the Family

CHAPTER XXII.—(Continued.)

"Oh, there is the river!" exclaimed Alison, in a tone of ecstasy. "Look, Roger; you can just catch a gleam through the trees—oh, the dear place! How I do love it!" her voice rising into a perfect crescendo, of which the top note was complete satisfaction.

"It is just a year since you have seen it," observed Greville. "Miss Alison, what made you steal a march on me in that fashion? I was quite hurt that you never gave me a hint of your intention of going home."

He spoke in a low tone that Roger could not hear.

The quick, sensitive color rushed into Alison's face; there was such implied reproach in Greville's voice. Had he really been hurt?

"Oh, you must not feel like that about it," she returned, with a sweet, candid look. "We had talked of the possibility. Aunt Diana and I, but nothing had been settled. I had put it out of my mind. I was so naughty, I could not bear the idea of going home and doing my duty. I should never have gone at all if Aunt Diana had not helped me."

"You did not think how I should feel when I came back and found you gone," retorted Greville, in a boyish, injured voice, that reached Roger and made him smile, only Alison grew a little grave.

"I left a message with your grandfather," she said, quietly. "What could I do? Aunt Diana said it was my duty to go, and that it was no good putting one's hand to the plow and looking backward. What is the use of loitering over a difficult task when it has to be done?"

"That is true, but—"

"Please don't talk of last summer," she interrupted him; "it makes me sad only to think about it." And he could see there were tears in her eyes as she spoke. "I made myself so miserable over it; I could not bear leaving Aunt Diana, and I missed every one so."

"Miss Alison, please do not look sad over it," said Greville, earnestly. "What a clumsy fellow I am! I have silenced the nestful of twittering young larks"—referring to Roger's speech. "Come, I know you will forgive me, and look chirpy again, when I tell you I have passed muster and come off with flying colors."

"Oh, I am so glad!" exclaimed Alison, her smiles returning again. "Then you must have worked hard. How pleased Mr. Moore must be!"

"To hear grandfather talk," returned Greville, calmly, "you would think I was the Admiral Crichton, at least. The dear old man makes no end of fuss, bless him! I tell him it is all your doing; you gave me such a terrible lecture that Wednesday."

"Oh, no," replied Alison, blushing; "it was your own good sense."

"I shall go in for 'Greats' next year, so I shall have to grind pretty hard. I am to have a coach down here this summer. Cheyne, of Balliol, is at The Crays with his people, and he is a rare fellow for that. I have to work all my mornings," he continued, rather dolorously, "but I shall have my afternoons and evenings free. Miss Alison, you are not listening to me."

"Oh, yes I am!" she cried, joyously, "but I can not bear any more just now, though I am very glad to hear it all. Roger, do look! There is Moss-side—you know you have forgotten it—and there is Aunt Di in the porch."

"Allie, you have eyes like a hawk. I see nothing but greenery and sunshine." Nevertheless, Roger did perceive, a moment afterward, a tall figure in myrtle-green standing under a trellis of roses.

Miss Carrington had evidently heard the wheels of the dog cart, and had come out to look. When they stopped she had the little gate open and was helping Alison to alight.

"How are you, my dear child?" she said, as Alison put her arms around her; "actually not tired, Allie! And you, Roger? Welcome to Moss-side, my boy!" "Aren't you going to welcome me, too, Miss Carrington?" asked Greville, half jokingly, but he looked a little wistfully at the group.

"No, not to-night," she returned, decidedly. "I must have my belongings to myself for this one evening; you may come in to breakfast, if you like."

And, knowing of old that Miss Carrington's decisions allowed of no appeal, Greville lifted his hat and wished them good evening, and turned his mare's head in the direction of the Fernleigh stables, not without a backward glance at the slim, dark-eyed girl looking affectionately in Miss Carrington's face.

"Now, Allie, go to your old room and get rid of the dust, while I show Roger upstairs," observed Aunt Diana, in a brisk voice. "You will find me in the studio when you are ready."

CHAPTER XXIII.

Her old room! Alison gave a happy little sigh as she trod on the threshold. What a green little bower it looked, and, oh, the roses!—roses in the quaint old china bowls that Aunt Diana so much affected; roses in the slender Venetian glasses on the mantelpiece and toilet table; roses clambering into the window and pressing their pink faces against the swinging lattice; and on the window sill, dropped by some thoughtful hand, a glorious Gloire de Dijon, with a background of maidenhair fern, such as Alison loved to wear in her white gown. She stood for a moment looking out

thoughtfully. The long shady lawns of Moss-side and Fernleigh lay beneath her, and through the fresh foliage of the willows and acacias was the silvery gleam of the lovely river. Something in the Sabbathlike stillness, in the beauty of the scene, in the peaceful satisfaction of her heart, moved Alison to kneel down among the roses, and breathe a brief thanksgiving for the duties she had been strengthened to perform, for the fatherly goodness that brought her back to the home of her adoption, and for the human love that was but a dim reflection of the Divine.

She did not hurry to go down, though her luggage had not yet arrived, and there was no possibility of changing her traveling dress. But when she had brushed her brown hair, and put on her breast knot of roses, she looked trim as ever, and her bright, smiling face, as she opened the studio door, brought the name "Sunny" to Miss Carrington's mind, for she looked as all young faces should look—the very essence of a sunbeam.

"Oh, Aunt Di, the dear, lovely room! And, oh, that is the new picture," springing to the easel to gaze delightedly on golden cornfields, with scarlet poppies struggling among the wheat, like gaudy promises never to ripen into fruit, and under the hedge a little brown baby sleeping, with its dimpled hand full of weeds, and a sheep dog watching its slumbers.

"Do you like the picture, Allie? It is sold already. Lady Franklin fell in love with it, but I want it to hang in next year's Academy. The baby is painted from life; the original belongs to Barby, an old servant."

"Aunt Di, it is perfectly beautiful! Roger, come here and tell me if you do not think so."

"Nonsense, Allie; Roger is far too hungry for art criticism at present. Come away, you foolish child, and let me give you something more satisfying than painted canvas. The chickens came from Barby's farm, with the strawberries and this jug of delicious cream."

Alison looked round rather bewildered, for none of these tempting viands were in sight; but Miss Carrington, who knew her love for meals al fresco, had had the supper table laid in the wide veranda, and not only chickens and strawberries, but other delicacies were provided for the hungry travelers.

"This is better than your tea table under the limes at home, Allie," exclaimed Roger, as he carved for the ladies. "No wonder she was spoiled, Aunt Diana, and did not take kindly to the sooty ivy and the music of the crane."

"Roger, I shall impose a forfeit if either you or Allie mention the mill," observed Miss Carrington, as she handed him a cup of coffee enriched with Barby's yellow cream. "I want you two young things to forget everything but how you are to amuse yourselves. Allie, shall we have our breakfast here, as we did last year, while the blackbirds and thrushes take theirs? Roger looks as if he wanted to live in the open air. Do you know you have got thin, dear boy?"

"Never mind that, Aunt Diana; there is no fear of rusting, that is one blessing—work never hurt man or woman yet."

"No," she said, thoughtfully, "but 'moderation in all things' was an apostle's maxim; but you are right in principle, Roger. Now for the home news. What is really your father's condition? Letters are so unsatisfactory, and they never say half enough."

"Dr. Greenwood is delighted with the progress he has made, Aunt Diana; he gets across the room quite nicely on crutches, though he is not to do more at present. Of course, the long confinement has made him look pale and delicate, but his spirits are first rate. Dr. Greenwood told me the other day that in another year or so he might hope to be as well as ever. He says he is an excellent patient."

"And how does the book go on?" "Very well, I believe; he manages to write without difficulty with the help of a sloping board."

"That was Roger's clever contrivance," interrupted Alison.

"Aunt Diana does not want to know that; you have broken the thread of my discourse. Father does seem happier lying there with all his books round him than he did at the mill."

"And a very good idea, too," observed Miss Carrington, looking at her nephew with decided approbation. "How does Murdock fulfill his duties?"

"Admirably; he is a very steady fellow."

"Then Allie's plan will answer," she returned in her practical way. "There is no reason, Roger, why you should not carry on the business, and leave your father free for his literary pursuits. He was never fitted for a business man; he is too dreamy and impractical. Believe me, he will be far happier and less irritable if circumstances allow him to follow his own particular bent."

"I am quite sure of it, Aunt Diana," returned Roger, quietly; "and now I have worked alone all these months, I feel more competent to carry on the business single handed. It has been a hard pull—Fergusson had done so much mischief, but things are righting themselves now, and with Murdock's help we shall get on capitally."

"That is well," replied Miss Carrington, heartily, "and now, how does Missie go on?"

This time Alison answered. "Her arm is quite right, but she still looks rather thin and delicate. Mrs. Hardwick—Mrs. Forbes, I mean—wants to take her to Torquay, in October, for two months; she says she will be such a nice companion for Anna. Papa insists that she is to go."

"And how does my little friend Anna get on with her stepfather?"

"He is very kind to her, Aunt Di. Roger is rather pleased with him on the whole."

"Dr. Forbes is one of those men whose bark is worse than their bite," observed Roger; "he rather prides himself on being a bear, but I think Miss Anna has proved there is a soft spot in his heart."

"I am glad to hear this. Then the poor little girl is happy on the whole?" "I don't think Anna is to be pitied," Aunt Di returned Alison, in rather a peculiar tone; "she looks extremely happy." And something in Alison's manner made Miss Carrington change the subject; it certainly did not appear to interest Roger, for he seemed absorbed in his strawberries all at once, and his criticism on Dr. Forbes was given in rather a constrained voice.

"Miss Leigh tells me that Missie is wonderfully improved since her illness," observed Aunt Diana, after a pause, which no one seemed anxious to break.

"Indeed she is," returned Alison, with quick enthusiasm. "I have never seen any one so changed; she is so much quieter in dress and manners, and so much more tolerant of Rudel. Poppie likes to be with her now, and Miss Leigh can not say enough in her praise. It is easy to see how she tries to break herself of her faults, and it is so much harder for her than for us, as she has not naturally a good temper."

"Neither had I, Allie. Many a girl has a sore fight to go through life as well as Missie; it is so easy to contract bad habits, and so difficult to subdue them. I believe nothing but grace can enable one to overcome a really bad temper."

And so saying, Miss Carrington rose from the table, and proposed that Roger should go down to the river while she and Alison disposed of the unpacking.

CHAPTER XXIV.

There was a merry breakfast on the veranda next morning, and Alison, in her white dress, with some dewy roses as a breast knot, looked the picture of happiness as she poured out the coffee.

Directly it was over, Greville took her and Roger to see his grandfather.

Mr. Moore was eagerly expecting them; even before Alison's foot had passed over the threshold his sightless eyes were turned to the window, and his "Welcome, Sunny," reached her ears.

In another moment Alison was occupying her old footstool at his feet, and his fine wrinkled hand, a little more trembling than of old, was placed on her hair, with a half audible blessing.

"Dear Mr. Moore, I am so glad to see you again—"

"Have you missed us, little one? Not half as much as we have missed Sunny." And as she pressed her lips to his hand in mute contradiction of this, he said, half sadly: "Child, I never thought to have heard your sweet voice again, but the good God would have it otherwise. Before the message reached me it was recalled; the gates were almost closed in my face."

"Thank God for that," she whispered; "but they never told me that you were ill until you were well again."

"Ah, Miss Carrington is a wise woman; she thinks it wrong to burden young spirits with sorrows that do not belong to them. My boy there nearly broke his heart about the old man; can you believe it, Sunny?"

"You are like his own father," she returned, softly. "He is outside on the veranda with Roger. Are you well enough to speak to Roger?"

"Ay, ready and willing; he has grown a fine lad, I hear." And as Alison beckoned to them the two young men came in through the window, and Roger sat down by the old man's side.

(To be continued.)

A Lawyer's Somersault.

Speaking of somersaults, the anecdote which Lord Eldon related of the eminent English lawyer, John Dunning, afterward Lord Ashburton, will bear repeating. "I had," says Lord Eldon, "very early after I was called to the bar a brief as junior to Mr. Dunning. He began the argument and appeared to me to be reasoning very powerfully against our client. Waiting till I was quite convinced that he had mistaken for what party he was retained, I then touched his arm, and upon his turning his head toward me I whispered to him that he must have misunderstood by whom he was employed, as he was reasoning against our client.

"He gave me a very rough and rude reprimand for not having sooner set him right and then proceeded to state that what he had addressed to the court was all that could be stated against his client, and that he had put the case as unfavorably as it were possible in order that the court might see how very satisfactorily the case against him could be answered, and accordingly very powerfully answered what he had before stated."

Paradoxical.

"You seem overheated, my lad," said the gentleman behind the scenes in the melodrama theater.

"Yes, boss," responded the youngster, as he mopped the perspiration from his brow, "I have de hottest part in de show."

"Indeed! And what is the part?"

"Why, I have to get 'way up in de files an' tear up paper for de snow-storm in de blizzard scene."

Jealous of Jack.

Dick—Did you enjoy yourself down at the masque ball last night?

Edna—Indeed, I did. And coming home through the chilly night Jack Frost kissed my cheeks.

Dick—Lucky Jack! The next time I am going disguised as Jack Frost myself!



Fire Will Not Scorch.

The most careful of cooks with the many different viands in the course of preparation under her eyes will slip up occasionally and relax her vigilance for a second, when some one of the articles on the stove is touched by the finger of fire. Scorched food is one of the most inexcusable offenses of the cook.



A simple piece of apparatus to prevent this mishap has been devised. It consists of a metal affair resembling an inverted plate, generously perforated with small holes. This rests on the bottom of the kettle and effectually prevents the contents from coming into contact with the overheated bottom.

Saratoga Potatoes.

Pare and slice some raw potatoes very thin, lay them in cold water for half an hour, wipe dry in two cloths, spreading them upon one and pressing the other upon them. Have ready in a frying pan some boiling lard; fry a light brown, sprinkle with salt and serve in a napkin laid in a deep dish and folded over the potatoes. To dry them of the fat, take from the frying pan as soon as brown with a perforated skimmer, put into a colander and shake for an instant. They should be crisp and free from grease.

Oyster Fritters.

Select plump, good-sized oysters, drain off the juice, and to a cup of this juice add a cup of milk, a little salt, four well-beaten eggs and flour enough to make batter like griddle cakes. Envelop an oyster in a spoonful of this batter (some cut them in halves or chop them fine), then fry in butter and lard, mixed in a frying pan the same as we fry eggs, turning to fry brown on both sides. Send to the table very hot.

To Make Cold Meat Like New.

Put left-over roast or steak, with its gravy, into a round pudding dish. Place the dish in the center of a steamer and steam for twenty minutes in an ordinary frying pan half filled with water. The meat and gravy will be just as good as fresh cooked, being quite juicy, and not at all dried up, as would be the case if done in the oven.

Escalloped Sweet Potatoes.

I find many housekeepers who have never escalloped sweet potatoes, and they are delicious. Cold baked sweet potatoes, or fresh ones, are sliced into a buttered bake dish, covered with cream or rich cream gravy, the top sprinkled with bread crumbs and baked.

Porcupine Apples.

Blanch almonds and cut them into thirds lengthwise. Pare, core and bake the apples with a little butter, sugar and nutmeg, and when they are done stick the almond quills all over them. Arrange them in a mould and serve with a custard sauce.

Escalloped Potatoes.

Slice layer of raw potato in baking dish, add few slices of onion, little salt, pepper, and butter. Have last layer of potato, placing a few slices of salt pork across the top. Fill the dish about one-half full of milk or water and bake one and one-half hours.

Nut Macaroons.

Two eggs, one cupful of brown sugar, one-half teaspoonful of baking powder, in seven heaping tablespoonfuls of flour, one cupful of nuts chopped. Bake in fairly hot oven, having dropped them on buttered tins.

Cream Toast.

Two tablespoonfuls butter, two tablespoonfuls flour heated and blended; add two cups cold milk, stirring until smooth; add one teaspoon of sugar if wished sweet.

Short Suggestions.

A tablespoonful of caramel added to the pot of black coffee served after dinner will add much to its flavor.

Mix pastry several hours before it is to be rolled out, and much labor is saved and a better result obtained.

Turnips, carrots, onions and cabbage should be boiled in a great deal of water, taken off immediately and drained. Too little water will turn them dark, and overcooking destroys the taste.

The cheaper grade of almonds with hard shells are quite as good as the Jordan almonds for salting. They are no more trouble to prepare if a hammer or nut cracker is used to break them.

SOMETHING FOR EVERYBODY

There are 3,000 islands in Lake Huron.

The telephone business is picking up in China. Peking has now 1,700 subscribers.

The average life of a piece of plate glass is ten years, as shown by plate-glass insurance records.

Roumania is the most illiterate country of Europe. Two-thirds of its inhabitants can not read nor write.

Glass is among the cheapest products, but made into microscopic objectives its value approaches that of gold.

An English ornithologist has successfully bred the black swan, one of the rarest of birds except in Australia.

Eddie Loving, who has recently obtained an appointment as messenger in the service of President-elect Taft, is a noted golfer, though only nineteen.

Members of the barbers' union of Chicago are denouncing the tipping system, but not out of consideration for their customers. They wish gratuities abolished because of their effect on wages, which, in some shops, are now near the vanishing point.

Selpio Africanus was one of the greatest soldiers, save Julius Caesar, in Roman history. He defeated Hannibal and his Carthaginians at Zama, a city of Carthage, on October 19, in the year 202 B. C., and gave to Rome the ascendancy over the then known world.

Smoking has been under discussion in the Anglican Church synod at Bendigo. One member wanted the temperance pledge extended so as to ban tobacco as well as alcohol. Canon Brydges warned the proposer that he would have the whole female population up in arms against him. Every wife knew that the pipe was her husband's best.

Catching a fox alive with an overcoat is a feat performed by David Clinard, a member of the Fox Hunt Club of Winston Salem, N. C. After a long and exciting chase Mr. Clinard with six hounds had tired Reynard out, and in doubling the fox came so near Mr. Clinard that he threw his long overcoat over the animal and succeeded in capturing it just before the dogs arrived.

At a recent shipbuilding exposition held in Germany, the greater part of the exhibits related to the use of electricity on shipboard, and a large number of new and interesting devices were shown for the first time. One of the features of the electrical building was a chandelier which is thought to be the greatest thing of the kind ever constructed. It comprised a large octagonal arrangement of angle iron, with some decorative material interwoven, and from it were suspended sixteen flaming arc lamps. The light from this great cluster was almost blinding.

It is proposed to connect the chief groups of the Pacific Islands by means of wireless telegraphy. The plan is proposed by capitalists interested in some of the islands of the Gilbert group, but government aid is expected from all nations having possessions in the South Pacific, including Great Britain, France, Germany and the United States. The French island of Tahiti is particularly interested, the nearest available ocean cable station being at present at Auckland, New Zealand, 2,250 miles distant. It is proposed to install ten or twelve central stations, each controlling a circular region, the largest of which will have a radius of about 1,250 miles.

The "mock snail" is a new specimen which will have to be added to the collection of strange things served by restaurant keepers. The edible snail is disappearing from the vineyards and gardens of Burgundy, where formerly it existed in countless thousands. The scarcity and consequent dearthness of the escargot has caused some unscrupulous proprietors of restaurants in Paris to invent the mock snail. It is made out of veal. All that is required is a quantity of empty snail shells and veal fat. The fat is cleverly cut into spirals and worked into the shell. The disappearance of the real snail is taken so seriously in France that the County Council of the Cote d'Or has suggested that a law should be passed giving the escargot a closed season, from April 15 to July 15 in each year.

Persia's ancient city of Tabriz, one of the scenes of recent violence in the Shah's dominions, can hardly be said to have ever enjoyed a quiet life. When Turk and Turcoman and Persian were not shaking the old walls with battering rams the earthquake was having its inning. The public buildings bear traces of this sort of violence, notably the Kabud Masjid—blue mosque—constructed of wonderfully arabesque blue tiles; while the etad-el gapes with its earthquake-riven sides. Although the Anglo-Indian telegraph runs through the city, it is not as in the ancient days when it was known as the "glorious Tauris." The new Russian railway has deprived it of much of its importance and the leather merchants and silversmiths eke out a precarious livelihood by engaging in a little smuggling.