Aunt Diana

The Sunshine of the Family

CHAPTER XVIII.—(Continued.)

Missie had plenty of good sense, and she no longer stifled it; her conscience told her that she would never have sinned so grievously against her father if Eva had not undermined her principles by her flattery and playful words of advice to be independent and assert herself.

A veil had fallen from her eyes; she no longer saw Eva's conduct in the same light, and as she grew better, and Eva sought opportunities to be with her, the disillusion became more complete. Missie found herself wondering over her own infatuation. Had Eva always been so loud in her manners, so unfilial in her behavior to her mother, so unkind to Anna? Missie at first grew critical and then reproachful. Strange to say, Eva accepted her rebukes very meekly—evidently her affection for Missie was sincere in its way, for she took some pains to please her, and even tried to break herself of her faults. But for her unlucky engagement with Captain Harper there was every probability that Missie might have influenced her for good; but her approaching marriage soon drove all salutary reflection away.

As Missie's violent infatuation for her friend cooled, she turned more and more to Alison for sympathy; and here at least she did not find herself disappointed—Alison returned her affection warmly.

Missie was a little exacting as an invalid, for she was still separated from her father, and, alas! there was still cause to be anxious for him.

Dr. Greenwood never told Alison what he had feared; but after a few days, when he and another doctor had consulted together over the case, he told her and Roger that there was certainly some degree of mischief in connection with the spine; it would be many months—perhaps a year or two—before he could rise from his couch.

"We certainly hope for his complete recovery in the future," he continued, reassuringly, as Alison turned pale and Roger looked unhappy. "Another inch and he would never have moved his limbs again; but now things are not so bad. Mr. Merle will have his books, and they will go far to console him in his enforced inaction."

Dr. Greenwood was right in his conjecture; Mr. Merle took the tidings very quietly.

"I told you your broad shoulders were made for something," he said, looking at his son with a smile. He and Alison had come to bid him good-night.

The nurse had not been dismissed, though it was already arranged that Roger should take her place in his father's dressing room.

"I shall have to leave the mill in your hands. Greenwood gives me no hope of being fit for business for the next year or two."

"I will do everything I can, father," returned Roger, sorrowfully; "but I feel awfully cut up about it all."

"There is no need for that, my boy," returned Mr. Merle. "I should not wonder if you do better at business than I, Roger. Perhaps this will be less a trial to me than you suppose. I do not deny, of course, that it is a trial; but still, with my books and children I shall try to be content."

"We shall do everything in our power to ease your mind," returned Roger, bravely. But he said no more, and shortly afterward left the room, leaving his father and Alison together.

"Roger feels this dreadfully," she said, anxious that her father should not misunderstand his son's lack of words.

"Yes, my dear, I know he does," returned Mr. Merle, with a sigh. "I am fortunate to have such a son. To think," he added, with emotion, "that I could ever have been so blind as to believe that villain's insinuendos against him—and now the whole business is in his hands."

"You can trust him fully, papa."

"Yes, better than I can trust myself, Alison; that boy is true as steel, and will not fail me. I wish I had found it out before. I remember your aunt Diana once saying to me that 'if I studied my children as well as I did my books I should be rewarded for my pains.' By the bye, Alison, what does your aunt say to all this unlucky accident?"

"We have not heard from her," returned Alison, in a low voice. "Roger wrote the very next day after the accident, and I wrote the next day; but we have had no reply."

"That is very unlike Diana," observed Mr. Merle, in a surprised tone.

"Roger says that she can not have received our letters, papa; you see she is in Switzerland, and perhaps she has deviated from the proposed route—that is just her way; if she takes a fancy to a place she will stay there for a day or two, and then she does not get her letters for days. If we do not hear from her soon, Roger thinks I had better write to Mr. Moore. It does seem so strange"—her eyes filling with tears—"that Aunt Di should not know how unhappy we have been."

"I believe you are fretting after her, Alison—you are quite thin and fragile looking."

But Alison denied this with a great deal of unnecessary energy. She was only a little tired; but now Mabel was getting better she would be able to have a walk sometimes.

"But you must not talk any more, papa," she finished; "you are looking rather exhausted. Nurse Meyrick will be here directly; may I read to you a little until she comes?"

Mr. Merle shook his head sadly.

"My dear, I should like it of all things, but you know Dr. Greenwood has forbidden any kind of study for the next few weeks, and I never cared much for works of fiction, except Sir Walter Scott."

"I meant a chapter or two out of the Bible before you went to sleep," returned Alison, blushing with timidity.

A sudden shadow passed over Mr. Merle's face.

"I did not understand you, my dear," he said, with a little effort. "Well, child, do as you like—that sort of reading can not hurt one."

Alison felt the permission was accorded rather ungraciously, but still she dared not refuse to avail herself of it. She brought the Bible—Aunt Diana's gift—and sat down quietly by her father's side.

The voice trembled a little as she read, but she did not know how sweet it sounded in her father's ear. Once when she looked up she found his eyes fixed on her face, and stopped involuntarily.

"Shall I leave off, papa?"

"Yes, that will do for to-night; you may read to me to-morrow. You are so like your mother, Alison; she was fond of her Bible, too. You are a good girl, and take after her."

"Poor dear mamma. How hard it must be for you, papa, to lie there missing her."

"Ah!" he said, averting his face, "it is a lifelong loss. I think I never knew any one so good—not even Diana could compare with her. Do you know you reminded me so much of her that day when you wanted me to go to church. Child, your reproachful eyes quite haunted me. Ah, well! if ever I get well—" He paused with a sigh.

"You will come with us then, papa," she said, softly.

"I hope so, Alison, but I fear it will be a long time before I have the chance. When a man has looked death in the face, as I have, who might have been hurried into eternity without a moment's preparation, he thinks a little more seriously about things. I hope I am grateful for being spared—I think I am. You shall come and read to me every night if you like, my dear; it is a grand book, the Bible."

Alison's heart was too full to answer him, but as Nurse Meyrick came into the room at that moment she leaned over and kissed his forehead.

"Good-night, dear papa; I hope you will sleep well."

"Good-night," he answered, cheerfully, "and give my love to Missie."

Alison felt strangely happy as she left her father's room; it seemed to her as though they were coming closer to each other. There had been a look in her father's eyes and a caressing tone in his voice that told her that she was becoming very dear to him. She said to herself in her young gladness that Providence had accepted her sacrifice—her father's heart was no longer closed to her, and Mabel was beginning to love her. "Ask and it shall be given to you," was abundantly realized in her case—so true it is that love begets love, that the Divine seed of charity sown broadcast, even over barren hearts, will still yield some thirty-fold, some sixty-fold, some hundred-fold.

Alison's tranquil rest that night was only a preparation for a most trying day. Missie had left her bed for the couch that afternoon. When Alison had placed her comfortably, she had gone downstairs for a few minutes to speak to Anna, leaving Miss Leigh in charge. Anna detained her longer than usual—she had so much to say on the subject of Eva's approaching marriage, and while Alison was still talking and listening, Miss Leigh hurried down stairs with a very pale face.

"I wish you would come," she said, in much agitation; "Mabel is so very hysterical I can do nothing with her. Perhaps I have been incautious, but she questioned me so closely as to what the physicians said about her father that I could not avoid telling her."

"Oh, dear, what a pity. I meant to have told her myself when she was better," observed Alison, somewhat reproachfully.

Miss Leigh's tact was often at fault, and she had chosen an unlucky moment for breaking the news to Missie—just when she was weary with the fatigue of dressing.

Alison found her in a sad state—sobbing bitterly, with her head hidden in the pillows—and for a long time she refused to allow Alison to raise her into a more comfortable position. To her relief, Roger entered the room and asked immediately, in his downright manner, what was the matter, and why Missie was making herself ill.

This brought on a fresh burst.

"Oh, Roger! what shall I do? Poor papa!"

"It is poor Mabel, I think," observed Roger, kindly, and he raised the sobbing little figure in his arms and brought the wet face into view. "I declare, child, you are a perfect Niobe. Allie, what are we to do with her?"

"He will not get up for months—perhaps for years—and it is all my fault!" cried Missie, passionately.

"Perhaps so, my dear, but do you suppose all these showers of tears will do father any good?"

"I must cry—I ought to cry when I am so unhappy," returned Missie, impatiently, and trying to free herself.

"No, my dear, no," was Roger's quiet answer; "you have given us all so much trouble that you ought to spare us any noisy repentance; the best thing you can do for us all is to get as well and happy as you can, and help to nurse father."

CHAPTER XIX.

Missie left off crying and stared at Roger. He told Alison afterward that those half-drowned blue eyes made him feel quite bad—but then Roger was such a soft-hearted fellow.

"You do not understand," she said at last, very slowly.

"My dear little sister," he said, taking her hand, "I do understand, and so does Alison, and we are both agreed on this point. Repentance is apt to be troublesome if it be carried beyond due bounds—and, in fact, it can degenerate into selfishness—and you are really very selfish about this."

"Oh, Roger!" exclaimed Alison, a little shocked at this plain speaking. But Roger knew what he was about; he was determined, as he said quaintly, "to seal up the fountain of Missie's tears."

"Is he not unkind?" returned poor Missie, piteously. "He calls me selfish, just because I am so sorry about papa."

"We are all sorry, Mabel," returned her brother, seriously, "though we do not go about the house wetting the floors with our tears, like mollaval sinners. I declare it makes one quite damp to come near you—it is really bad for your health, my dear."

"Now you are laughing at me," she replied, pettishly.

"True, and that is the unkindest cut of all, is it not? But I am not laughing when I talk about your selfishness; you see you are just going against the wise old proverb, 'Never cry over spilled milk.' The mischief is done, my dear, but every one in the house has forgiven you for being the cause of it, and now you must forgive yourself."

"Oh, I can not," she said. "I shall be miserable until papa is well."

"There speaks selfishness," he returned, quickly. "My dear Mabel, why think about yourself at all? why not think how tired Alison looks, and how you may spare her? I am sure a cheerful word from you would do her no end of good."

Missie seemed struck by his words. She looked at her sister rather scrutinizingly. Certainly Alison did look pale, and there were dark rings round her eyes. Roger saw his advantage, and went on.

"You have no idea how people in a house act and react on each other—a depressing person is like a perpetual fog. I think I shall coin that speech as a proverb. You know I am a bit of a philosopher—Roger the sage—that sounds well."

Missie's lips curved into a smile; a little dimple came into view.

"Come, that's about the real article—a little more, and we shall have a rainbow effect," observed Roger in a delighted tone. "Now, we have the whole thing in working order. You have done wrong and been sorry for it—good!"—with an impressive pause; "now you are going to do better, and not think about yourself at all, but how you are to make us all happier. Good again. Thirdly and lastly, you are to turn over a new leaf and cultivate cheerfulness and that sort of thing."

"I will try," sighed Missie, raising her face to be kissed, "but it will be dreadfully hard."

"Most things are hard," was the philosophical reply; "but we shall never do much good in the world by sitting in the dust and casting ashes on ourselves—that sort of thing doesn't seem to belong to the present dispensation."

"No, it is 'Let the dead bury their dead,' now," observed Alison, in a moved voice. "Now, Roger, you may leave Missie to me; she is tired out, and I am going to read her to sleep."

"But I am not sleepy," replied Missie, reluctant to let Roger go, but it showed her new submission to Alison that she made no further protest—only as Alison read, Missie lay quiet, with a softened look in her eyes. Yes, she would try and bear it; they should not be any longer troubled.

"Thank you, dear," she said presently, as she noticed how Alison's voice flagged; "the book is very pretty, but I want you to leave off now and take a turn in the garden. Do please, Alison, it is such a lovely evening, and it will do you so much good. Popple can come to me, she is a good girl and does not tire me."

"Are you sure, Mabel dear, that you can spare me?" asked Alison, anxiously.

"Quite sure," was Missie's answer, and then Alison consented to leave her. She was conscious that her strength was failing her a little; the close confinement and anxiety for the last fortnight were trying to her constitution; broken rest at night often followed the long day's work. She was pining, too, for a word from her dearest friend. She had written two days ago to Mr. Moore, questioning him about Miss Carrington's movements, but had received no answer from the confidential servant who acted as the blind man's amanuensis, and, in spite of her efforts to be cheerful, she was feeling dull and deserted.

(To be continued.)

Sympathy.

It was in the art museum.

"Yes, Mandy," said Mr. Hardapple, as he referred to his catalogue, "this be a stature of Venus. You see, she hasn't any arms."

"Poor thing!" sighed Mrs. Hardapple. "I was just wondering."

"Wondering what, my dear?"

"Why, how in the world she ever carried her shopping bag."

A Sympathetic Strain.

"Do you think you are benefited by your sojourn at the seashore?"

"No," answered Mr. Sirius Barker. "Our hotel was at one of those sandy stretches where people tired themselves out in week-end holidays. When you looked at the place you felt sorry for the people and when you looked at the people you felt sorry for the place."—Washington Star.

A boy or girl may legally wed in Australia at 14.

FARMERS CORNER

Profit from Poultry.

Poultrymen estimate that it costs 1 cent apiece to produce an egg. The estimate is based on the fact that the hen lays 120 eggs in the year. In other words, where the fowls are confined to runs, and the feed must be purchased, it costs 10 cents a month or $1.20 a year to maintain a hen. If the hen is an indifferent layer and gives but sixty eggs in a year, her eggs cost the poultryman 2 cents each.

An experiment conducted by the Cornell experiment station in 1902 showed that the average cost of feed for a dozen eggs was 9.2 cents, or about ¾ of a cent an egg. The cost for each hen for the year was 99.6 cents. At that time wheat was sold at $1.45 a hundred pounds, while at the present time it is $2; bran sold at $1.35 a hundred pounds and it is now $1.80; and meat scraps cost $2.15 a hundred pounds and now we pay $2.40. So at the present increased price of feed, the cost of feeding the hen is easily 20 cents a year more than it was in 1902.

To make poultry profitable on the farm it is necessary to breed for better laying. This is done by installing trap nests in the henhouses, and each year picking out the best layers and breeding only from such. The farmer must grade up his stock. He must get rid of the mongrel birds; he must drive out the drones, and must encourage the workers. The farm must produce better poultry and more of it.

There are advantages on the farm for poultry raising that the poultryman does not have, and if the latter, in many ways handicapped, can make poultry keeping a successful business, the farmer should at least make the work a valuable adjunct to his income. Properly managed poultry can be made the most profitable crop on the farm—investment, expense and labor considered.

It is argued by some farmers that their hens cost them practically nothing, as they have free range and can gather all the food they need. There is some truth in that, and there also is some truth in the fact that farmers' flocks seldom yield a profit compared with stock in the hands of a regular poultryman.

Feeding Meal, Wet or Dry.

Many of our farmers seem to hold the opinion that feeding meal wet to their cows will bring better results than when fed dry. One old farmer makes the remark, "how can the cow get any goodness out of a pan of dry meal?" yet notwithstanding the fact that so many dairymen hold to the practice of feeding the meal wet, the experiments to date indicate that better results are obtained by feeding it dry. Professor Jordan, of the Maine Experiment Station, fed a bunch of calves corn and cob meal with long hay in dry form, as against hay which was run through a feed cutter, moistened and sprinkled with corn and cob meal. The results were in favor of the dry feeding. The gain was greater, and less feed was required for 100 pounds of gain. Professor Jordan also conducted an experiment with two herds of dairy cows, one herd was fed dry feed, while the feed of the other was moistened. The greater yield of milk was obtained from the herd that received the dry feed.

Temporary Sheep Fence.

One of the best portable fences for use in soiling sheep is made in panels with supports, as shown in the sketch.

MOVABLE FENCE FOR SHEEP AND HOGS.

Panels are 10 feet long, made of 4-inch board solidly nailed together. After this fence is once put up, sheep are not likely to overturn it. A fence 3½ feet high will turn most flocks.—Farm and Home.

Salting Down Meat.

Curing meat for future consumption is one of the annual jobs on the farm. In some sections of the country, says the Journal of Agriculture, the problem of salting down meat is a serious one because of the heat. In sections of the South there are winters when there is very little cold weather and it is not until late that hogs may be slaughtered. Here is a recipe which is said to be a good one: For 1,000 pounds of meat take ten quarts of salt peter, 1 pound of pepper and 2 pounds of yellow sugar. Mix well, put in a tub or some suitable vessel, and then apply the mixture well to the meat. This is said to be the most successful method of salting meat there is, both from a standpoint of purity and flavor.

Nitrogen.

While visiting a practical farmer a few weeks ago he said that where everything was fed out on the farm and the manure returned to the soil it should grow richer instead of poorer and that furthermore there was less connected with the farm when it was conducted on these principles than when the system was varied from year to year.

One thing is certain, the growing and feeding of live stock on the farms compels the growth of crops to feed that are best adapted for the production of flesh and animal products. Prominent among these crops are clover, alfalfa and the other nitrogen gathering plants that possess a high feeding value and are relished by animals on account of their palatability.

We cannot too often repeat the fact that the farmers who follow a short crop rotation, in which a legume is grown every third year, need not worry about maintaining an adequate supply of nitrogen, providing he feeds these crops to live stock and saves the manure, both liquid and solid, and returns it to the soil. When nitrogenous grain foods are purchased and fed to the animals in connection with the home grown foods the increase in nitrogen is still greater.—Agricultural Epitomist.

Feeding Milk Cows.

Milk contains water, fat, protein (casein and curd), sugar and ash, and these are all made from the constituents of the food. If sufficient protein, fat and carbohydrates are not contained in the food given her, the cow supplies this deficiency for a time by drawing on her own body, and gradually begins to shrink in quantity and quality of milk, or both. The stingy feeder cheats himself as well as the cow. She may suffer from hunger, although she is full of swale and hay, but she also becomes poor and does not yield the milk and butter she should. Her milk glands are a wonderful machine, but they cannot make milk casein (curd) out of the constituents in coarse, unappetizing, indigestible swale hay or sawdust any more than the farmer himself can make butter from skim milk. She must not only have a generous supply of good food, but it must contain sufficient amounts of the nutrients needed for making milk. Until this fact is understood and appreciated, successful, profitable dairying is out of the question. Many forcible illustrations of its truthfulness have been furnished by the agricultural experiment stations.—H. B. Speed.

Helping the Farmer.

In an important interview with Gifford Pinchot, the government forester, and a member of the Country Life Commission, recently appointed by Mr. Roosevelt, given to Edward I. Farrington, the following points are elaborated:

The things which the Country Life Commission desires to do, above all else, is to make the fact plain that there is a tremendous problem before the American farmer to-day.

The things which must be secured for the farmer are better farming materials, better business and a better living. The commission is concerned with the two latter.

Everything which has to do with making farm life efficient and pleasant will receive particular attention, for this is one of the most important of all agricultural problems.

The commission will make no attempt to impose anything on the farmer, to dictate to him, or to carry paternalism to an objectionable degree. The facts are to be assembled in as complete a form as possible and placed before the farmer in logical order.

Preserving Milk.

A German patent specification describes a process for preserving milk by removing all dissolved oxygen by means of the addition of a small quantity of ferrous carbonate. The process is based on the fact that freshly-precipitated ferrous carbonate in the presence of oxygen immediately assimilates oxygen and evolves an equivalent quantity of carbon dioxide. One part of ferrous carbonate is sufficient for 50,000 parts milk, and the properties of the milk are not altered in any way by the addition, which should be made before the milk is boiled.

Work Hours of Farmers.

Professor Boss, of the Minnesota Agricultural College, says that statistics of the actual hours of labor on the farms investigated show that farmers work nine hours a day in summer and between four and five in winter. Professor Bailey, of the Farm Life Commission, tells the story of the schoolma'am working from 9 to 4 until she married a farmer, and had to work from 4 to 9. Moral, schoolma'ams make good wives for farmers.

WE WANT Farms

We want stock, wheat, dairy and fruit farms. Having a large Eastern correspondence we are in a position to make quick sales. Drop us a card if you have anything or know of any farms for sale.

ATLAS LAND CO.,
420 Lumber Exchange
PORTLAND, OREGON

MERCHANTS

I WILL TRADE
Wall Paper, Mouldings, Pictures and other similar goods, for timber land, farm land or cash. Lowest wholesale prices. Write me.

E. H. MOOREHOUSE
144 Seventh St., Portland, Oregon

Extremes of Advertising.

"We want to do something big to advertise that new play," said the New York manager.

"Well," answered the press agent, "which kind of a play is it? One to which you invite the attention of the clergy or the attention of the police?"—Washington Star.

Mothers will find Mrs. Winslow's Soothing Syrup the best remedy to use for their children during the teething period.

Endurance.

Rankin—Do you think you could ride ninety-eight miles on horseback in seventeen hours straight?

Fyle—No, but I walked the floor nine hours straight with a squalling baby last night, and I'm willing to bet that no President of the United States can do that.—Chicago Tribune.

FITS St. Vitus' Dance and nervous diseases permanently cured by Dr. Kline's Great Nerve Restorer. Send for FREE $2.00 trial bottle and treatise. Dr. R. H. Kline, Ld., 931 Arch St., Philadelphia, Pa.

Almost as Good.

Little Ikey came up to his father with a very solemn face.

"Is it true, father," he asked, "that marriage is a failure?"

His father surveyed him thoughtfully for a moment.

"Well, Ikey," he finally replied, "if you get a rich wife it's almost as good as a failure."—Lippincott's.

One of the Signs.

"Col. Gunnsome is getting to be a pretty big man in politics, isn't he?"

"Yes; whenever he calls on the President he has to be careful to explain to the reporters that his visit has no political significance."

You Can Get Allen's Foot-Ease FREE.
Write Allen S. Olmsted, Le Roy, N. Y., for a free sample of Allen's Foot-Ease. It cures sweating, hot swollen, aching feet. It makes new or tight shoes easy. A certain cure for corns, ingrowing nails and bunions. All druggists sell it, 25c. Don't accept any substitute.

Hope Deferred.

When first I sought the writers' ranks
My verse was taken in with thanks.
'Tis years since that initial splash—
They've never sent the promised cash.
To wait and get no pay, I find,
Is worse than having things declined.
—Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Mix for Colds.

To one-half pint good whiskey, add one ounce syrup sarsaparilla and one ounce Toris compound, which can be procured of any druggist. Take in teaspoonful doses before each meal and before retiring. This relieves in 24 hours, and cures any cold that is curable.

Risky.

"I think from the utensils about him that this mummy must have been an Egyptian plumber."

"It would be interesting to bring him back to life."

"But too risky. Who's going to pay him for his time?"—Louisville Courier-Journal.

The 2
"FLYERS"
are the
O. R. & N.
fast through trains between
PORTLAND and SPOKANE

WM. McMURRAY, G. P. A.
Portland