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NO. 28.

## Aunt Diana

The Sunshine of the Family

CHAPTER V.—(Continued.)

"Papa, dear, you will not go into the study to-night," observed Mabel, in a coaxing tone, as Mr. Merle looked at the door, as though he intended to follow Poppie's example: "please come with us into the drawing room, and I will make you so comfortable."

"Very well," was his good-humored answer, as he got up a little wearily from his chair.

Allison waited a moment before she followed them.

"Are you not coming, too?" she asked, as Roger threw himself down on an easy chair.

Roger shook his head smilingly.

"Rudel has got to do his lesson. Missie never admits him into the drawing room of an evening. She says it is not the room for boys. I generally keep Rudel company or go out and amuse myself."

"But not to-night, dear," she returned, gently, and he got up at once.

"I have almost a mind to come, too," he muttered, but as Roger said, hastily, "Better not, Rue, we don't want any rows to-night, Alison is tired," he remained.

Allison threw a critical glance around the room as she entered it. No changes had been effected since she had last entered it.

Miss Leigh sat bolt upright by the big round table, with her work-basket and a pile of the boys' socks. Mr. Merle had a little table and a reading lamp to himself, and Missie sat on a stool at his feet with a novel on her lap. Alison guessed at once that this was their ordinary position.

"Oh, is that you, Roger? You don't often honor us with your company of an evening," observed Missie, with a toss of her pretty head. "This is a compliment to you, Alison, I suppose?"

"We ought to put our books away to-night," said Mr. Merle, rousing himself reluctantly, and making Alison feel as if he were treating her like a visitor.

"Mabel, my dear, suppose you give us one of your little songs?"

"No, indeed, papa," returned Alison, eagerly, "I hope you will not go on just the same as though I were not here. Of course I should like to hear Mabel sing, but not if it disturbs you."

"Oh, I always sing to papa of an evening," replied Missie, walking to the piano with much dignity. "Roger, I think you might offer to light those candles for me, but you boys have no idea of waiting upon ladies. You will find them dreadfully rough, Alison."

"On the contrary, I am rather fond of waiting upon ladies," was Roger's nonchalant answer, laying a peculiar stress on the last word that brought an angry flush to Missie's face. "I always wait on you, do I not, Miss Leigh?"

"Yes, indeed, Mr. Roger, I always say you are so kind and thoughtful."

Missie struck a chord sharply. "If you will be good enough to leave off talking I will commence my song," she said, crossly, and as Roger made a low bow and retired she began the prelude of a German song.

Allison listened with much pleasure. Among her other natural gifts, Missie certainly possessed a very good voice, and it had been evidently well trained. Her notes were clear and sweet, and if she could only have got rid of a certain affectation in her style, Alison could have praised her still more warmly.

As it was, her admiration was so sincere that Missie began to thaw for the first time. "I suppose you sing?" she said, a little blantly.

"Not much. I certainly can not compare my voice to yours," was the modest reply, "but I am fond of instrumental music, and play a good deal."

"Then you will be able to play my accompaniments," returned Mabel, brightening still more. "Will you take my place, Alison? Papa will like to hear you, I am sure."

"Not to-night," returned Alison, feeling as though she were not capable of any further effort. "I am rather tired, and if papa would excuse me I think I should like to go to bed."

"By all means, my love," observed Mr. Merle, looking up from his book. "Papa, dear, I hope everything is comfortable for your sister. Never mind stinging me to-night, if there is anything you can do to help Alison."

"I will come with you and see," returned Missie, a little ungraciously, and though Alison would rather have dispensed with her company, she thought it better policy to accept this faint offer of help. On the landing Missie stopped, and said, rather awkwardly, "I hope you don't mind about the change of rooms, Alison, but as you do not live at home, I thought I could please myself."

"I suppose I have come home to live now," returned her sister, wearily; "but if you do not want to give it up, Mabel, I will try to be content with my present one, and I do want things to be comfortable, and to do my best for you all."

"Oh, as to that, we have got along very well," returned Mabel, hastily; "you need not put yourself out on our account. As papa says, I am grown up now—nearly seventeen—and able to take care of myself and other people, too. I hope you are not going in to see Poppie; I think it is a pity waking up the child, and she is so acceptable."

"I shall not wake her, but I promised to go and see her," returned Alison, with

gentle firmness, as she bade Missie good-night. Missie need not have troubled herself about her little sister's wakefulness. Poppie was sitting bolt upright in the darkness, waiting for Alison.

"Now for a good cuddle and a talk," she said stretching out her arms to Alison; "you are a nice old thing to keep your promise." And as Alison sat down on the little bed she hugged her warmly, as Poppie laid her warm cheek against hers, and called her dear, nice Allison.

CHAPTER VI.

Allison was too tired to lie awake a moment after her head touched the pillow, and she woke so late the next morning that breakfast was already over, and Miss Leigh sent up a message by Poppie, begging her to lie still and rest herself, as her father and Roger had already gone to the mill, and she would send her up some breakfast.

"Aunt Diana would call this a bad beginning," thought Alison. Nevertheless, as her head still ached, she yielded to the temptation. The sun was shining into her room, making her feel hot and restless, and she begged Poppie to lower the blind, so that the huge crane might not fret her eyes by its hideous unsightliness. If she could only have shut out, too, its incessant whir and grind! But that was impossible. As she drank her tea, she looked round, the shabby room with a strange sinking of heart and spirits. "I must wake up every morning to this," she thought, "unless I make an enemy of Missie from the beginning by forcing her to resign my room. Will it not be better to endure any amount of discomfort than to do that? I will ask Aunt Diana what I shall do about it. No, no," she called herself, "I must act now on my own responsibility. Aunt Diana will think me a poor, helpless sort of a thing if I always wait for her as a moral crutch to support me."

And with this wise resolution, Alison dressed herself quickly and finished her unpacking after which she ensconced herself in the deserted dining room and wrote her first letter to Mabel.

A sweet, brave little letter it was. Allison touched very little on her own feelings; she did not even speak of her changed room. Somehow, she had a notion that it would vex Aunt Diana. She talked of Roger's warm welcome and Miss Leigh's kindness, and tried to make Aunt Diana interested in Rudel's and Poppie's droll ways. Missie she barely mentioned, except to say how pretty she had grown and how nicely she sang, and then went on to speak of her father's changed looks. A great many loving messages, a few longing expressions for Aunt Diana herself, completed the letter.

The early luncheon hour brought all the family together, but Alison's sense of orderliness and propriety was shocked by Rudel's rough appearance. He came in straight from school with unbrushed hair and unwashed hands, and sat down at the table, until Missie's loudly uttered injunctions, and at last his father's curt command to make himself presentable before he ate his dinner, obliged him to leave the room grumbling; and his return a few minutes later led to a most undignified scene of recrimination between him and Missie, carried on below their breaths with the utmost bitterness, with Poppie listening with both her ears, in spite of Miss Leigh's gentle reminders to go on with her dinner.

But this was not the only source of discomfort to Alison; her father was evidently in one of his gloomiest humors; something had evidently gone wrong at the mill, and, as usual, Roger was bearing the brunt of the annoyance. Alison's heart was full of pity as she heard the angry words that were launched at his unlucky head; in her own mind she was severely marveling at Roger's patience.

Allison—who was on the verge of tears with suppressed pity, and longing to speak a word in his defense—was moved almost to anger by the unconcern on Missie's face. Evidently she was too used to hear Roger found fault with on every occasion to take any notice of it. She had finished her contest with Rudel, and now sat with her usual self-satisfied look, playing with her rings and humming a little French air to herself.

"Papa, dear," she said, at last, placidly, "do let those stupid sawmills alone; you are only exciting yourself and making yourself ill. Come out into the garden with me and Poppie; it is so cool and shady there." And as Mr. Merle did not at once answer this appeal, she came round to him and touched his arm.

"Come, papa," she repeated still more placidly; "you have scolded Roger enough, and it only puts you out. Come with me; I want you." And actually Mr. Merle suffered himself to be coaxed out of the room; and in another minute Allison saw them sitting together under the lime trees, with Poppie playing on the lawn.

Allison turned round to seek Roger, but he had left the room, and Rudel had followed him; only Miss Leigh was looking up the cellarette, and jingling her key basket.

"What does this mean?" faltered Alison. "Why does papa speak to Roger in this way? It is not right, is it?"

"Come with me into the school room," was Miss Leigh's sensible answer to this; "as Sarah will be in directly to clear the luncheon, and we can not talk before her. I must speak to you, Alison; I must indeed." And leading the way to the old room Alison remembered so well, she closed the door in her quick, nervous fashion, and begged Alison to take the only easy chair that the room boasted. "No, indeed," returned Alison, quickly; "Poppie's little stool will do for me. What does it matter where I sit, or whether one is comfortable or not?" she continued, impatiently, as Miss Leigh stood hesitating.

"Please rest yourself in that big chair, for you look quite fagged and tired, and I have had a nice rest."

"I think I am nearly always tired," returned Miss Leigh, plaintively. "Is it not dreadful, Alison—about poor Mr.

Roger, I mean? If it were not for my poor blind mother, whom I pretty nearly support out of my savings, I do not think I could endure this much longer. My dear," with the tears starting to her glistening eyes, "when one gets to my age one values peace and kind words above everything, and that is just what one can not get at 'The Holms'."

"Do you mean that this sort of thing goes on daily?" exclaimed Alison, turning her flushed face to the governess. "Do you mean," bringing out her words with difficulty, "that papa often gives Roger all this to bear?"

"Well, my dear, one must not exaggerate. Things are not always going wrong at the mill, of course; and sometimes we can eat our meals in peace; but your poor dear father—one hardly likes to blame him to his own child—is very often hard on Mr. Roger. It seems to me as though nothing Mr. Roger can do pleases your father, and as if Mabel could do an wrong in his eyes. You can see for yourself, Alison, the influence she has over him."

"Yes, I see; but I can not understand it. When I was last at home Missie was only a child, and yet, though she is not seventeen, and ought to be in the school room and under your care, she seems completely mistress."

"She is never in the school room now," returned Miss Leigh, leaning back wearily in the armchair. "Sometimes she comes in to interfere with Poppie and find fault with some of my arrangements. But she has coaxed your father into giving her French and singing lessons with her friends, the Hardwicks, and for months she has refused to open even a history; and yet you have no idea how ignorant she is. Nothing but mischief has resulted from her intimacy with Eva Hardwick. I have spoken to your father over and over again about it, but he listens to Mabel's version of her friend's character, and only the other day he told me I must be mistaken, for Eva was a bright, high-spirited girl, and it was all nonsense what Mr. Roger and I said about her."

"Roger dislikes her, then?"

"Oh, yes; he never speaks to her if he can help it. She is a fine-looking girl; older than Mabel, but vain and empty headed, thinking of nothing but balls and flirtations; and you know how dangerous a friend of that sort is to a girl of Mabel's age. To do Mabel justice, she was not half so vain and fond of dress and finery until she went so much to the Hardwicks. They have completely turned her head, and, worst of all, Eva has taken a dislike to Roger because he refuses to pay her any attention and laughs at all their nonsense; and that sets Mabel against her brother. Mabel also has a temper of her own," went on Miss Leigh, feeling a sort of relief in pouring out her feelings into Alison's ear, "but she was never so aggravating as she is now. You see, my dear, if a girl does not hold her own home as sacred, if she chooses a giddy young companion for her confidante, and retails to her all that passes in her own household, finding fault with her own people, and listening to her friend's estimate of them, she may end as Mabel does, in thinking her brothers rough and unmanly, and Poppie a disagreeable little girl."

"Do you mean Missie is so dishonorable as to repeat to Miss Hardwick all that passes at 'The Holms'?" asked Alison, indignantly.

"They do not think it dishonorable," returned Miss Leigh, with a quiet good sense which Alison had never credited her. "You see, Mabel calls Eva her bosom friend, and refuses to say a secret from her. If Eva comes this afternoon, all that passed at the luncheon table between your father and Mr. Roger will be retailed as a matter of course."

"Even if Mabel were disposed to be reticent for once, Eva, who is of an inquisitive nature, and who completely dominates her, would soon worm the whole thing from her. She has a grudge against Mr. Roger, and nothing would please her more than to hear of his humiliating to Alison; I have reason to know, Alison, that it is by Eva's advice that Mabel intends to keep her room. I have heard her say myself that, of course, as your home is with Miss Carrington, you have resigned your privilege here as the eldest daughter, and that there is no need for Mabel to knock under completely. Those were her very words."

Allison looked grave. "Is Miss Hardwick often here?" she asked at last.

"They are together every day, either here or at Broadlands—the Hardwicks' house. But as your father objects to strangers, or, indeed, to visitors of any kind, Eva very rarely spends the evenings here. They were practicing in the drawing room this morning, and afterward they went out together. There is another sister, Anna, a nice little thing, rather pale and delicate looking, but they both snub her. I suppose that makes Mr. Roger kind to her when she comes, for her sister certainly snubs her, and Mr. Roger always stands up for every one but himself."

"It seems odd, my saying all this to you, Alison," observed Miss Leigh, after a pause; "for you are young yourself; but you were never flighty and easily led, as Mabel is. I believe she has her good points; she is really very much attached to your father, and will leave Eva sometimes, if he wants her; and in her own way she is fond of Poppie, though she tyrannizes over her. There's Poppie is crying as usual; that is generally the end when she is long with Mabel. I suppose, by that, your father has gone back to the mill. I had better go to her, Alison, if you will excuse me."

Allison had plenty of food for meditation when she was left alone; a very difficult problem was before her to solve. How was she to gain an influence over her faulty young governess?

(To be continued.)

The deepening and lengthening of the Antiquarian River have made as island out of Cape Cod.

## EVENTS OF THE DAY

### Newsy Items Gathered from All Parts of the World.

### PREPARED FOR THE BUSY READER

### Less Important but Not Less Interesting Happenings from Points Outside the State.

The trial of the Pittsburg grafters is to be hastened.

Miss Ethel Roosevelt has made her debut in Washington society.

Germany will be the first to ask the benefit of a minimum tariff.

Robbers secured \$30,000 worth of jewelry and \$3,000 cash from a New York jewelry store.

Veterans of the civil war will become extinct in 1950, according to Past Commander G. F. Bassett.

The Indian congress has approved Lord Morley's reforms in government and condemned the present agitation.

Dr. Wiley, head of the pure food department, is said to have angered the president to such an extent that he will be removed.

St. Petersburg still continues to suffer from Asiatic cholera. New cases and deaths are reported daily, though not in large numbers.

Two men were seriously injured and the lives of a score of men, women and children endangered by a fire in a New York tenement.

The torpedo boat destroyer Fox is on the way to Mare Island navy yard to go out of commission. The crew will be transferred to the Rowan, another destroyer.

Many political exiles of Venezuela are returning to their homes.

Roosevelt says the only thing about his African trip he fears is the fever.

It is believed American Ambassador Griseom will resign his post at Rome.

Henry W. Poor, a leading Wall street broker, has assigned. His liabilities will reach \$5,000,000.

Castro has witnessed what to him is a unique spectacle—a snowstorm and skating on natural ice.

Governor Hughes has appointed a commission to investigate the New York produce and cotton exchanges.

Chicago contractors who have been in the habit of giving presents to city officials at Christmas time this year had their gifts returned.

Gomez' power as ruler of Venezuela is finally established. Many suits have been commenced against Castro and he will lose \$2,000,000 by the turn of affairs.

Plans are all complete for the arrest of about 40 more Pittsburg grafters. The railroads are aiding the movement, as it is cheaper to rust them than to pay their price.

The bank at Monrovia, Cal., has lost \$29,000, which mysteriously disappeared.

One man was killed and three persons injured in an automobile wreck in California.

Christmas was celebrated all over the United States by lavish gifts and feasts to poor.

The bribery of Pittsburg councilmen by bankers has been taken up by the government.

A crazy French Royalist tried to pull President Fallieres' beard, and was promptly arrested.

An appeal may be made to Taft to pardon Gompers, Mitchell and Morrison in case their appeal fails.

Claus Spreckels, the sugar king, is critically ill at his home in San Francisco, and it is feared he cannot survive.

The Chicago saloon question may be put to a referendum vote next April. The anti-saloon element is gaining in strength.

Oklahoma prisoners, who are confined in the Kansas penitentiary, complain of cruel treatment and an investigation is to be made.

A boy of 15 is under arrest at Mount Clemens, Mich., charged with stealing at least \$30,000 from postoffice boxes. He was caught while cashing a check.

Express companies were swamped with Christmas business.

Cosgrove has so far recovered that he is able to walk a little.

Count Boni de Castellane lost his suit for possession of his children.

Harriman has been reported ill, but his physician says it was only a slight bilious attack.

The monitor Wyoming, now at Mare Island navy yard, will be changed to the Cheyenne.

Fire in Brooklyn drove hundreds into the streets, destroying an entire block of property, valued at \$1,000,000.

The steamer Stork sank in Hudson bay, taking down a cargo of fur valued at \$1,500,000. The crew all escaped.

## CUBANS IN CONTROL.

### Evacuation by American Army Begins New Year's Day.

Havana, Dec. 29.—New Year's day will witness the beginning of the evacuation of Cuba by the army of pacification, which has been in possession of the island since the beginning of the provisional government, in October, 1906. The first provisional regiment of Marines, numbering 900, which will be among the first troops to leave, are now concentrating from various posts at Camp Columbia.

About half this regiment will sail in January on the cruiser Prairie, which arrived here Christmas eve, bound for Newport News. The Prairie will return about the middle of the month and embark the remainder. The final embarkation will not occur until April 1.

The embarkation will be effected with as little ceremony as possible and it is probable that their departure will be made with as little notice as marked their landing. The purpose in deferring the departure of a portion of the 17th Infantry until April 1 has been the subject of considerable speculation, but it is believed this was agreed upon at a conference between Governor Magoon and President-elect Gomez. It is not thought to be a measure of precaution, for which not the slightest necessity is apparent, but it probably is for the purpose of keeping the barracks and quarters in good order until it is possible to turn over to the Cuban authorities a model camp for occupation by the new permanent army under command of General Pina Guerra, the nucleus of which will be formed, it is intended, with the present corps of Cuban artillery and 1,000 members of the Rural Guard.

### CASTRO THE LOOTER.

### Unknown Ten Years Ago, Now Prominent World Figure.

Washington, Dec. 29.—Since Cipriano Castro, president of Venezuela, has left his country but slight regret over his departure and subsequent vicissitudes have been expressed on the part of the people over whom he has tyrannized and whom he has impoverished. Since 1899, when, at the head of a revolutionary army, he drove his predecessor, President Andrade, from the capital and made himself absolute ruler of Venezuela, Castro seems to have had but one object in view, namely, to enrich himself. And in this he has succeeded to an amazing extent.

Naturally no person knows, nor can estimate be made of the wealth which Castro has garnered at the expense of the poor and rich alike among the Venezuelans. It is pretty definitely known that for years he has been sending vast sums of money to England, and this fact lends color to the belief that his departure for Europe, ostensibly to consult a noted physician concerning a serious malady, was only another of his tricks, perpetrated in order safely to escape from the country which expects to see him no more.

Ten years ago Castro was practically unknown. Born of obscure parents in the province of San Antonio in 1860, he grew up practically without education.

### JOHN BULL NOT SO MERRY.

### Christmas in England is Marred by Poverty.

London, Dec. 28.—The dark side of the English Christmas is the great number of unemployed, and the distressing prevalence of destitute and suffering. This is seen principally in London and at Glasgow, and at other shipbuilding centers, where shipbuilders are out of work.

A small band of shabbily dressed, miserable looking unemployed persons have paraded fashionable streets during the past week, threading their way among the crowds of Christmas shoppers. The police accompanied the band as it marched, in order to prevent disturbances. Its motto showed, "We want work."

More than 1000 homeless men assembled on the James embankment at midnight to get Salvation Army tickets for beds. The newspapers daily record cases of men being sentenced to imprisonment for stealing food who have families suffering from want.

### RAILROADS FOR OREGON.

### Competition Forces Harriman to Consider New Lines.

Chicago, Dec. 26.—Oregon bids fair soon to come into its own with respect to transportation facilities. Alarmed over the activity of other railroad corporations in surveying and constructing lines of road through various portions of the Pacific Northwest, Edward H. Harriman and his aids have decided actively to occupy all of the territory in the Northwest which bids fair to become of value from a traffic standpoint.

Plans have been perfected by Mr. Harriman for the construction of a great deal of territory which is now without means of transportation.

Julius Kruttschnitt, director of maintenance and operation for the Harriman lines, and J. D. Isaacs, consulting engineer for Mr. Harriman, have recently returned from New York, where these plans were perfected. It is admitted by the Chicago officials that there are such plans.

### New Canadian Coal Fields.

Vancouver, B. C., Dec. 25.—Henry Hewitt, the Tacoma smelting man, has acquired coal mining rights in Graham Island, one of the Queen Charlotte group. Immensely valuable coal deposits have been discovered there and an application for a charter for building railroads and steamship wharves and for the general carrying on of business is advertised to be made at the next meeting of the British Columbia legislature. Indications are that the mines will far exceed in value the famous Dunsmuir properties.

### Oklahoma Town Burns.

Oklahoma City, Okla., Dec. 26.—Virtually the entire business section of Ravia, Okla., a town of 1200 inhabitants in Johnston county was wiped out yesterday by fire, the loss aggregating about \$55,000.

## LOOK UP PACKERS

### Grand Jury at Chicago Proposes to Propose.

### PRICE AGREEMENT IS SUSPECTED

### District Attorney Sims Declares Aim of Present Inquiry—Great Secrecy is Maintained.

Chicago, Dec. 26.—Nothing less than a complete exposure of the methods of the beef trust is contemplated by District Attorney Sims in the present grand jury investigation, which is being carried out with the aid of special agents of the interstate commerce commission.

It developed today that, in addition to the inquiry in regard to shipping rates and possible rebates, to which the work of the interstate commerce commission and its agents is confined, a number of secret service operatives, who work directly under the department of justice, have been looking into another phase of the packing industry.

The officials have been trying to determine whether tacit agreements between packers as to the fixing of prices and the division of territory for distribution have been in systematized operation. The sweeping nature of the inquiry was indicated today in the first grand jury statement made by Mr. Sims since the investigation started.

"This is no mere fishing expedition, as has been said by some critics of the department," declared the district attorney. "We know what we are going after, if we are not permitted by the nature of the inquiry to state what it is. We are now merely starting a little case, in which packers or railroads are concerned in the hope that we can unearth some information which would be of value or be useful as a basis for a new and more extensive investigation. There is nothing vague or indefinite about this inquiry, and it has a purpose which I am not permitted to disclose."

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