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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 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 unkind 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 alone.

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

"Yes, my dear, I know," she said, 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 innuendoes against him—and now the whole business is in his hands."

"You can trust him fully, papa," said "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 unlovely 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 disappointed 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 it does 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 Diana 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 getting a little tired; but now Mabel was writing better than she would be 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, and it shall be given to you," she said, 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 unlovely 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 her wet face into view. "I declare, child, you are a perfect Niobe. Alie, 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 is carried beyond due bounds—ask, 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 quietly, "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 medieval 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 kindest 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. Thirly 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 not," 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. Poppie 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 plining, too, for a word from her dear 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, Mabel," said Mr. Carrington, as he referred to his catalogue, "this is a statue 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. Strus 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.

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 governor of New Jersey denounces state infringement of treaty rights.

A new bunch of anti-Jap resolutions have appeared in the California legislature.

Germany has four battleships building which are said to be more powerful than the British Dreadnaught.

Montana robbers after securing the savings of a couple 85 years old, murdered them and set fire to the house.

Toronto officers arrested a clever schemer just in time to save \$108,500 about to be paid by banks and express companies.

Mrs. James Hamilton Lewis was robbed of jewels worth \$6,500 while crossing the Atlantic from New York to Liverpool.

Great Britain has launched her seventh battleship of the Dreadnaught type. The vessel will be ready for service by the end of 1909.

Judge Dickinson refuses to deny or affirm the report that he is to be Taft's secretary of war. He says he is still a Democrat and did not vote for Taft.

Honorary degrees of doctor of law was conferred upon President Roosevelt, Governor Hughes, of New York, and Bishop Alfred Harding by George Washington university, at Washington, D. C., on Washington's birthday.

Carroll D. Wright, the noted economist, is dead.

Mrs. Yerkes accuses her executor of paying her income with talk.

Harriman announces that he will spend millions on railroad extensions in the West.

English suffragettes are still busy in an effort to secure recognition before parliament.

J. M. Dickinson, of Tennessee, is said to have been selected as Taft's secretary of war.

The Utah senate has turned down a drastic anti-saloon bill for a more conservative measure.

A new branch railroad is to be built from Spokane to connect with the Crow's Nest Pass line of the Canadian Pacific.

Report says Ethel Roosevelt is on the verge of becoming engaged to William Phillips, third assistant secretary of state.

King Alfonso witnessed a flight by Wright in his aeroplane, but the ruler was forbidden to accompany the famous aeronaut.

Fire at Lovelock, Nev., destroyed property valued at \$40,000 and for a time threatened destruction of the entire town. The lives of 30 people were endangered.

The courts have decided that the Snell fortune shall go to a niece.

Castro has left Berlin on account of the large number of beggars bothering him.

The United States sent \$1,000,626 in cash to the Italian earthquake sufferers.

Prince Ferdinand has asked the powers to recognize the independence of Bulgaria.

Guardians have been appointed for a German prince of the royal family because of his extravagances.

A number of the Danish royal family were on the cruiser which was rammed by a freight steamer.

Fifty villages and 50,000 acres of land are under water in Prussia as a result of the Elbe river being out of its banks.

Trains cannot get across the Rocky mountains in Colorado on account of the heavy snow. All roads have large gangs of men at work.

Grand Duke Vladimir is said to have been involved in a conspiracy to appoint a regency for the czar and an investigation had just started when he died.

An immense irrigation scheme is planned in New Mexico which will water 500,000 acres. The largest dam in the world will be built to store the necessary water.

Hill has incorporated a company to build a railroad in Canada.

Governor Gillett will sign the bill closing all California racetracks.

Three San Francisco firemen were injured while rescuing Chinese from a burning building.

RIOT AND PILLAGE.

Scores Injured and Homes Burned or Wrecked at Omaha.

Omaha, Neb. Feb. 23.—Following a harrangue at a mass meeting in the city hall, South Omaha, yesterday, at which two members of the state legislature and an attorney were the principal speakers, a wild mob of 800 to 1,000 men started for the Greek quarter to avenge the death of Pat-olman Edward Lowery, who was shot and killed Friday night by a Greek whom he had placed under arrest.

Before their thirst for blood had been satisfied, more than 30 buildings were burned, wrecked or badly damaged and probably a score of persons injured, half that number seriously. By heroic work the police prevented actual loss of life. The rioting continued far into the night.

Governor Shallenberger was consulted and expressed a willingness to call out the troops if necessary. No such demand was made last night, however. Fifteen arrests had been made up to midnight.

The South Omaha police continued to arrest stragglers until late in the night, the station being filled to its capacity. About 50 Greeks received medical attention and were given quarters at the police station for the night.

About 400 Greeks were removed to a place of safety in South Omaha and are being guarded in a body. A similar squad is being cared for in Omaha.

QUAKES FRIGHTEN SPAIN.

Drive Out Worshippers, Who Trample Women Under Foot.

Alicante, Spain, Feb. 23.—Severe earth shocks were experienced this morning throughout the whole district of Elche. The first occurred about 4 a. m. The most serious, which came while the people were in the village church, caused a panic among the congregation, which rushed to the doors, trampling under foot a score or more of women and children. The furniture in the houses was overturned and crockery and windows broken.

On Oreveliente, a town of 10,000 inhabitants about 18 miles from Alicante, two severe shocks were felt between 8 and 8:30 a. m. Houses rocked and swayed at an alarming angle and people ran to the countryside in terror. They are now camping in the open fields.

CUPID IS LOSING HIS HOLD.

Divorces in Canada Show Rapid Increase in Recent Years.

Ottawa, Ont., Feb. 23.—One of the most noticeable features of the legislative program at the present session of the Dominion parliament is a long list, for Canada, at least, of divorce applications awaiting hearing before the senate. They are as many in number as were granted during the 20 years after the confederation.

The average divorce application presented to the senate costs upward of \$1,000, and this is a good deal more than the aggrieved husband or wife can ordinarily afford. Between 1888 and 1900, a period of 12 years, the number of divorces granted was 35, and at this session of parliament, if all applications are successful, the number will be 24.

Kato Denies All War Talk.

London, Feb. 23.—The newly appointed Japanese ambassador to Great Britain, Count Takahira Kato, today said that he saw no reason why Japanese relations with the United States should not remain excellent in the future. Count Kato declared that there could be no dominant power in the vast waters of the Pacific.

"We have no interests there," he said, "that can clash with the United States. We mean to have our own sphere of influence in our own part of the Pacific, but not to the detriment of a single power."

Doctors Desert Patients.

New York, Feb. 23.—The steamship Prinz William IV brought reports of great distress at the hospitals at Caracas. A short time ago the physicians and nurses in the hospitals went on strike because the authorities had failed to furnish sufficient supplies of food and medicine. Three hundred patients in the hospitals were starving. The passengers of the Prinz Wilhelm IV include U. Paulus Sannon, Haytian minister to Washington.

Town Plans Greeting.

Oyster Bay, Feb. 23.—A reception will be tendered to Theodore Roosevelt when the ex-president returns to his home. Fireworks and illuminated decorations on houses and stores will, it is expected, form part of the celebration. Mr. Roosevelt and his son Kermit are expected to leave here on March 13 for Africa.

Ex-Vice President is Ill.

Chicago, Feb. 22.—Adlai E. Stevenson, ex-vice president of the United States, is ill at his home in Bloomington, Ill., according to reports received here today. His activities in the recent campaign are said to have proved a severe strain on his 74 years.

CASH FOR COLUMBIA

Total Appropriations of \$950,000 Reported to House.

COAST STATES WELL CARED FOR

Beside Columbia, Bills Provide for Federal Buildings and Surveys of Yakima and Willamette.

Washington, Feb. 20.—Two bills reported to the house of representatives today carry an aggregate appropriation of \$950,000 for the mouth of the Columbia river. The sundry civil bill contains \$250,000 to complete outstanding contracts, and the river and harbor bill carries \$500,000 for new contracts, and \$200,000 for repairing and operating the dredge. The sundry civil bill also carries \$164,700 for completing the existing contract on the Celilo canal.

The sundry civil bill also carries appropriations of \$114,400 for two double barracks and \$42,000 for a field artillery barracks at Vancouver, and \$2,000 for new barracks at Fort Stevens; and also items to complete public buildings at Eugene, \$20,000; La Grande, \$45,000; Spokane, \$75,000; and Walla Walla, \$40,000. Crater Lake park gets but \$3,000.

In the rivers and harbors bill no single channel or improvement is to be allotted more than \$50,000 out of the appropriation for emergencies.

Six hundred thousand dollars is appropriated for investigations, surveys, contingencies and incidental repairs for river and harbors for which there is no special appropriation. The most important waterways for which preliminary surveys and examinations are provided aside from the Intercoastal Waterway across the Atlantic and Gulf coasts are:

Oakland harbor, Monterey bay, Wilmington harbor, Humboldt bay and the Sacramento and Feather rivers, California; Kahului harbor, on the island of Maui, and Kanapapa bay, on Kani island, Hawaii; the Chicago and Rock rivers, Illinois; the harbors and rivers at or near Chicago, including Chicago harbor.

Preliminary surveys of the Columbia, Yakima and lower Willamette rivers, in Oregon and Washington; Aracabo harbor, Porto Rico; Aransas Pass harbor and Sabin Pass and the Port Arthur ship canal are also provided for. Others are the Grand river, Utah; Tacoma harbor and the Columbia river, Washington.

MAKE VIOLENT THREATS.

Heney Warns Defense He Will Not Take Insults in Future.

San Francisco, Feb. 20.—Recalling the attempted assassination of last November, Francis J. Heney today charged that Henry Ach, attorney for Abraham Ruef, knew of the intention of Morris Haas to shoot the prosecutor. The accusation was flung at the attorney for the defense during one of the most heated exchanges that have occurred during the trial of Patrick Calhoun, and before the session assumed its usual calm complexion Judge William P. Lawlor had threatened two of the belligerent attorneys with imprisonment in the county jail. There were references to armed gun men, to the use of dynamite and to the prospects of imprisonment before the court succeeded in inducing both sides to lay aside the immediate bias of disagreement and cease their objectionable references.

WAR THREATENS TURKEY.

Hostile Races Ready to Fly at Each Other's Throats.

Constantinople, Feb. 20.—The old troubles in Macedonia threaten to break out again as badly as ever and strong measures are needed to restore tranquility in Asia minor, especially in Diarbekir, Kaisariyeh and Bassoor, where the Mussulmans and Armenians are about to fly at each other's throats. One of the strange symptoms developing here is the fact that naval officers are holding meetings on all warships "to consider the attitude of the new minister of marine." Army officers are also holding meetings.

Turkey before long may be convulsed with massacres and civil war, although the pressure exerted by the menacing external situation tends to prevent an outbreak for internal strife.

Grove Made National Park.

Washington, Feb. 20.—The president today signed the bill making the Calaveras big tree grove a national park. The pen which the president used was handed to Representative Smith, of California, to be presented to Mrs. Lovell White, president of the California Outdoor Art league.