

# Aunt Diana

## The Sunshine of the Family

### CHAPTER IV.

It was finally settled. Alison felt that duty called her home, and soon the day came when she had to part from Aunt Diana. It was a sad leaving-taking, and the tears were in Alison's eyes long after the train steamed slowly into the Charleston station. Alison gathered up her numerous articles of traveling gear, and looked out with some eagerness, but Roger's face was nowhere in sight, and, much disappointed and surprised, she gave a porter instructions about her traveling hours.

"Will you fetch me a cab, please?" faltered Alison, feeling ready to cry again at her loneliness, and wondering at Roger's unkind desertion, and then all at once she encountered a pair of round blue eyes, very wide open. She started; yes, there was the wide mouth, the droop, the freckled face that she remembered so well; of course it was Rudel, grown, but not otherwise altered, grinning affably at her.

"Why, Rudel," she exclaimed, reproachfully, "why did you not speak to me? I was looking for Roger, and nearly passed you."

"Oh, but I should have halloosed all in good time," he returned, with another grin, shaking hands with her, but refraining from any warmer fraternal greeting.

As soon as she was seated in the cab he got in after her, and proceeded to put down both windows. "You would not like me to go outside, I suppose," he said, in a good-humored, dawdling voice; "these cabs are so stuffy they make a fellow feel queer."

"Go outside if you like," returned Alison, willing to humor him, but rather disturbed at the boy's coolness.

"Oh, it does not matter," was the contradictory response; "we have not far to go, and cabs are so unusually stout there would not be room for Otter. Oh, by the way, Roger told me to tell you that father told him that somebody else must come to the station, as he could not be spared. Roger was awfully just about for he said I should be no help, and I have not been much, eh?" with another grin that threatened to become a laugh.

"I wish dear old Roger could have come, but I am glad to see you, too," was Alison's polite reply. "I thought you would have kissed me after two years of absence."

"Oh, I never kiss girls," retorted vaguely.

"Not your own sisters?" exclaimed Alison, in a pained voice. "Oh, Rudel, you need not be so stiff and unkind."

"I ain't one of the other," roasting up at this reproach. "I think it is first-rate—your coming, I mean—and you are no end of a brick to do it, and, as for a sudden burst of confidence, 'I shouldn't mind giving you a kiss now and then, when you wanted it particularly, if you would promise not to tell Missie, I would not give her one, not if she were to ask me on her braided knees—a stink-up little miss!"

"Oh, Rudel, for shame! Mabel is as much your sister as I am."

"No, she isn't, and never shall be," growled the lad. "I tell you what, Alison, you are an out-and-out, and a no mistake, and I will help you fight all your battles, that I will, as sure as my name is Rudel, and that is better than ever so much blarney."

"Dear Rudel, I am sure you mean kindly, though you have such a funny way of showing it; but I have no wish to fight any one."

"Oh, but you will be obliged to fight Missie, whether you wish for it or not," was the cool rejoinder; "but Alison was spared any further argument on this subject, as they had reached The Holmes, and in another moment were driving up the greenish sweep between rows of dusty greenhouses."

"I will see about it," returned Alison, quickly, anxious to stem the government's nervous flow of words. "Am I to sleep here to-night?" as Miss Leigh opened the door of a back room.

"I have made it as nice as I can," returned Miss Leigh, apologetically, "but I am afraid you will think it an ugly room; it wants repapering, and the carpet is dreadfully old."

"Oh, it will do very well," observed Alison, quietly; but she looked round her with a sinking heart nevertheless. It was Mabel's old room and very shabbily furnished, and looked over the kitchen garden and the sawmills.

She listened with well assumed patience as Miss Leigh pointed out the various little improvements she had effected. Though Alison did not know it, the easy chair and little round table were taken from Miss Leigh's own room; the fuchsia and geraniums in the blue vase were Roger's gift; and even Rudel had contributed the big green fern that stood on the window ledge.

"Now, I will send you up your tea," observed Miss Leigh at last, when she had finished, and Rudel had assisted to unstrap them; "there is no hurry, my dear; you will have nearly two hours to yourself to unpack and rest."

Alison tried to answer cheerfully, but her head was aching in earnest now; the tears were very near the surface again, but she battled with them bravely.

A cup of excellent tea was very restorative in its effect, and when Alison had refreshed her tired face with cold water, and brushed her disheveled locks, and exchanged her traveling dress for a light, cool-looking, airy cloth costume, she felt less reluctance to present herself to the critical eyes of her father and Mabel.

"May come in?" questioned a voice that she knew at once was Roger's, and in a moment she had sprung joyfully to the door.

"Oh, Roger, you dear old fellow, I am so glad to see you again!" she exclaimed, forgetting all her troubles in the pleasure of his familiar face. Evidently her sigh was reciprocated; a pair of strong arms almost lifted her off her feet, and she was borne to the room toward the window, and, after a hasty kiss or two, Roger put his hand under her chin and gravely inspected her.

"I suppose you are glad to see me," he observed at length, "as you have been crying evidently at the pleasurable anticipation. So you are sorry to come home, Alison, eh?—rather reproachfully—you are wanted very badly here."

Alison's only answer was to lay her face down on his arm; this was a little too much for her jaded spirits, a few more tears would come. Roger had found her out, as she knew he would.

"Come now, this won't do, Allice," he said, with a sort of soothing roughness; "we shall pack you back again to Aunt Diana, if you are going to fret. I looked for rather a different greeting after two years' absence."

"I can't help it," she said, trying to drown her tears; "I am tired, and everything seems strange to-night, and I do miss Aunt Diana."

"Yes, she has spoiled you for us; you have grown a dainty little lady, Allice."

"Oh, no; I am not spoiled in that way," she interrupted, indignantly. "You are not quite understanding, Roger; but there is such a mixed feeling; I have wanted you all these two years; you have never been out of my mind a single day."

"Well, I am glad to have you back to see me properly. What color are your eyes generally, Alison? They are as pink as an Allice's ought to be."

"It is my turn to look at you," she returned, trying to pluck up a little spirit. "Why, you have grown a sun-baked, Roger. How well it suits you!"

"Did you ever see such a handsome fellow? Really, Rudel and I are marvellous specimens of manly beauty. He beats me in freckles, though, ha, ha!"

Roger quite raked himself in merriment.

"I think she will be very good friends directly," returned Alison, sorry for the poor child's awkwardness. "Come with us, Poppie dear; Roger is in my room, and I will show you the pretty new game I have brought for you."

The child's face brightened in a moment, and she moved instantly to take Alison's hand; again Missie interposed.

"She must change her frock, Alison; tea is just ready, and I hear papa's step in the garden. He will be very angry if Poppie looks rough or untidy; and I can not allow him to be vexed," purred up her lips with a virtuous expression.

Alison controlled a quick return with some difficulty. She had fully expected to find Missie a most aggravating little cousin, or why should Miss Leigh complain of her so bitterly? But the reality was worse than she anticipated.

"Never mind," she said, calmly; "we must not vex papa, must we, Poppie? I will help you change your frock, and perhaps after all we may have time to look at the fish ponds." And without another glance at Missie, Alison made Poppie cheerfully lead the way, as she did not know her room.

As Alison, after dressing Poppie, came down the stairs with the child still clinging to her, Mr. Merle suddenly made his appearance from the study. He almost started at the sight of his daughter, and an expression of pain crossed his handsome, careworn face. In the dim light Alison recalled her mother too plainly to his eyes.

"Oh, papa," she said, hurrying to him, and putting up her fair young face to his. He kissed her kindly, patted it, told her that she had grown into a woman since he had seen her, and questioned her with some interest about her journey.

The dining room, a large, handsomely furnished room, looked sufficiently cozy as they entered it. Missie was in the seat of honor; she gave a little simpering laugh as Alison entered with her father. "I suppose this will be your place to-morrow," she said, for, as Alison replied simply, "I suppose so, but I need not disturb you to-night," a red hot look crossed Missie's face, but as Rudel was already grinning in hopes of a row she prudently disengaged him.

When they rose from the table, Missie's first words were a peremptory order for Poppie to put away her toys and go to bed. This led to a feeble protest on Miss Leigh's part.

"It is not so very late, Mabel, and Poppie has not seen her sister for two years. I think she might wait a little longer."

"I am not going; there now!" observed the child, defiantly, quite oblivious of her father's presence.

"Go it, Poppie. I'll back you," whispered Rudel, rubbing his hands; "she sha'n't touch you as long as I am here."

Mabel's eyes flashed. "You horrid, rude boy, Papa!" had she Alison greatly interested.

"You will go to bed now, dear, will you not?" she whispered in the child's ear, and I will come and tuck you up, and wish you good-night." And thus propitiated, Poppie's sultriness vanished, and she trotted on to her.

(To be continued.)

### LITTLE HELPS IN MEN'S DRESS.

Inventors Get Out New Devices to Save Time and Trouble.

Arlo Haters made one of his heroes commit suicide after he had seen his collar button go rolling over the floor out of his reach, says the New York Sun. That was the straw that broke the camel's back. The innate depravity of inanimate things had gone a point further than his discouraged soul could stand.

The collar button has always been noted for its perversity since man was first compelled to wear it. There is reason from its tyranny for the men who have their collars attached to their shirts, but they are a small number. Many find the plan too expensive, comfortable as it is, while others prefer the close fit that is possible only when a collar is put on the shirt and then pulled tight by the tie through or over it.

It is consequently the collar button that chiefly attracts the attention of inventors, who are trying to ameliorate the lot of man. The newest result of their labors put on the market is a collar button that will not only fit into the buttonhole of the collar easily, but once there will stick firmly.

After the collar button there is nothing that so much occupies the thoughts of the inventors as keeping the necktie in place. There are not so many men seen in the streets with their neckties out of place that some apparatus to hold them there seems a burning necessity just now, but all kinds of devices have been patented to accomplish the happy result.

The essence of the newest invention of this kind is that it saves time besides holding the necktie in place.

When it first became the fashion for men to turn up their trousers tails began to manufacture them with the bottoms already turned up—or made to look as if they were. Of course this trick was not expensive for the tailors and it appealed to those who want to be relieved of all possible trouble in dressing. A similar attempt to save trouble for their wearers is the new trick of making summer trousers with a belt applied to them.

Sometimes these fake belts are of imitation leather, but more frequently are of the same material as the goods. Another new eccentricity in the belt line has the end cut down to a point, that slips into a pocket and is supposed to stay there.

The advantage of this novelty is said to lie in the fact that it saves time for the wearer. He is not compelled at frequent intervals during the day to put back into place the end of the belt which has slipped out of the last holder. Once he sticks the end of the new-fashioned belt into the pocket intended for it, the end lies flat for the rest of the day.

Even the formality of evening dress has not appeared to be free from the necessity of saving time and trouble. There is an invention which helps its wearers to fasten their neckties quickly and keeps them in their proper place.

Changed His Views.

She—Do you believe the good die young?

He—I did when I was a boy—but not now.

Cancer of the stomach causes about 9,000 deaths a year in the United States and nearly 5,000 in England and Wales.



### For Boys and Girls

#### One Day's Journey and Back Again

In a bathtub boat I set out to sea. (Oh, it was very warm!) I sailed away to Arctic shores, Through many an icy storm. I was cold when I struck the frigid zone. (A zone, you know is a belt, And this was Mother's silver one), Though Nurse thought she would melt.

I anchored my boat to an iceberg tall. (A bolster, if you must know, Spread over with Grandma's worsted shawl.) And its base was white with snow. I built a house of blocks of ice Just like an Esquimau. (T'was really the baby's canopied crib.) And I lived there a month or so.

I captured a seal, (my furry dog). And a wonderful polar bear! (It was really the baby's china cat.) With the coldest kind of hair. I really discovered the great North Pole! Now what do you think of that? (T'was Father's fishpole, I borrowed it.) And on it I hung my hat.

Grown folks are stupid I truly think. I was cool as cool as play. But they said, "How heated Bobby looks!" And then they took away My iceberg cold and the great North Pole. And the glittering frigid zone, And brought me back to the dreadful heat. I wish they had let me alone.—Joe Willett, American Home Monthly.

#### GOLDENROD'S VISIT TO THE POOR.

Once upon a time, a little girl named Goldenrod was dissatisfied because her mother would not send her to the seashore for the summer season. She did not consider that her parents could not afford the expense. She was not grateful for all that they did do for her in providing a nice home, plenty of food, sufficient clothing, books and money for some picnics and excursions.

"Everybody is going except us," she whined, making her mother unhappy. And she sat down in a rocking chair in the cool parlor and closed her eyes. She had hardly got her eyes shut, when a fairy giant stood before her. Without saying a word he picked her up in his long, strong arms and sailed out of the open window with her.

They went up into the air just over the houses until they came to a row of tall, dimly lighted towers, swarming with people. Into one of these buildings they entered by a window on the top story. There, in a narrow, hot room, just under the tin roof, lay a sick girl burning up with fever. There was hardly any furniture there, little food, no ice.

"My darling," wailed the sick girl's mother, "I cannot even get an orange for you."

The giant and the child were unnoticed. Goldenrod thought to herself that perhaps they had been made invisible by fairy power.

Out went the giant and Goldenrod and into another hive of humanity. A babe was lying on a pallet on the floor. It was wasting away with marasmus.

"If I could only take you into the country for a day, oh, my baby, my baby!" cried the mother, "your life might be saved."

A dozen other homes of distress were visited in the same way, every one worse than the one before it. There was misery in all its forms—disease, want, squallor, filth and degradation. Goldenrod could not bear any more.

"Oh, please take me home," she exclaimed; "I don't know how well off I am. I'm full of a tremble with pity and disgust at the sights I've seen and the sounds I've heard. My own dear, cool, clean, quiet home seems like a palace now. Oh, do please take me home."

The giant seemed mad with Goldenrod for wanting to quit slumming so soon. He opened his arms and let her fall. She fell and fell, through the rushing air, down, down and down, until she struck the earth with a loud noise.

Then she woke up to find that she had slipped out of the rocking chair in the parlor on to the floor.—American Home Monthly.

#### DEAFNESS FROM BATHING.

"When the warm weather heats your blood and you long to his to the cooling seaside and plunge boldly into the briny, pause, hesitate, consider," says an eminent nose and ear specialist. "Observe the numbers of bathers who during the season evince a sudden deafness, which often lingers for weeks at a time and sometimes becomes a permanent trouble."

"To avoid this do two things. Remember the ancient instruction to wet the top of the head first, and never allow any cold water to percolate to the drum of the ear. Many people do not know that the sudden application of cold to the back of the ear will cause the delicate mechanism to expand sharply under the rush of blood to escape. This is always followed by partial deafness, which sometimes becomes a serious matter. Another thing to watch is the shampoo. The same danger lies here if the hatterdresser is either unskilled or careless. In rinsing the hair the spray should first be applied to the top of the head and gradually brought down to the nape of the neck, thus obviating the trouble."—Philadelphia Record.

There is a Clearing House for packages lost on the British railways, and about 1000 packages per day are handled.

I saw a doll house built by a boy of twelve, says a writer in the Philadelphia Ledger. It had a slanting roof, painted green, with a well-made chimney on one side. Outside

the heavy window was a baywindow, and the three lower rooms had a porch around them.

The whole front was an exact imitation of a house, with window and doors complete, and it worked on hinges so that its little mistress could swing it open and play with the things inside. The entire outer surface was covered with brick paper, and it was a credit to the builder when it was complete, and a joy to the happy little girl who received it on her eighth birthday.

#### THE BUSY SPIDER.

The question, "Do spiders sleep at night?" is not easy to answer. I have made a careful observation of the sleep of ants, said a well-known scientist, and that could readily be done by watching colonies in their artificial formicaries (ant-hills). It is almost impossible to deal with spiders in the same way, writes a student of insect life. I would answer, however, in general terms, that spiders sleep, as all animals do, and doubtless parts of the night are spent in slumber. Many species, however, prey on the night-flying insects, and so must be awake in order to catch their prey. If you will watch the porch or outbuildings of your home on a summer evening you will be likely to see an orb-weaving spider drop slowly down on a single thread in the gathering dusk of the evening. From this beginning a round web will soon be spun, and either hanging at the centre thereof, or in a little nest above and at one side, is the architect, with forefeet clasping what we call the "trap line," and waiting for some night-flying insect to strike the snare. In this position spiders will sometimes wait for hours, and it is just possible that they may then take a little nap. They might easily do that and yet not lose their game, for the agitation of the web would arouse the sleeper, and then it would run down the trap line and secure its prey. Some species of spiders do the chief part of their hunting at night, and there are some that chiefly hunt during the day, but as a rule these industrious animals work both day and night.

#### ROBIN COMES TO BREAKFAST.

An English gentleman has a tame robin which carries his mate plentiful supplies of oatcake crumbs, butter, bits of candy and other delicacies. And when he has to cater for the little ones as well, he is really to be pitied; so busy is he that he neglects his toilet, and his generous donor in the mansion has to be satisfied with hurried scraps of soap.

He gets quite fearless in his anxiety for his family and will join his human friend at breakfast and help himself to buttered toast without invitation. It is no use to break a piece for Robin; his way is to hop on the plate and peck off for himself what he considers the delectable bit. He has been known to come in five times during breakfast.

At night a window is left open that he may come in for crumbs when he pleases. Should all the windows be shut Robin sits on the window-sill and sings loudly. Nobody can resist that appeal as he knows from experience. And when he wishes to get out he flutters from room to room, uttering a little frightened "Chick, chick!" And as the family know that the cat often lies in wait for him, someone will rush to the rescue at once.

Robin is a very amusing and cheery little fellow.

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### LIGHT RUNNING NEWHOME

Have you a little sister? If so, would you like to make her a doll house? It is quite easy if you are handy with tools. Take two soap boxes of the same size and nail them together, placing them side by side. Divide one of the compartments into two sections by nailing a board horizontally across, half way between the top and bottom, thus making two rooms. Paper the lower room with some dainty "leftover" wall paper for the parlor, and the room above, if papered in some rich shade of green or red, will make a cheerful sitting room or library.

Divide the other box into four equal parts by nailing flat boards horizontally and perpendicularly through the centers. The two lower parts for the kitchen and dining room should be furnished and papered accordingly, and the upper floor should be the bedroom and bathroom.

This is merely the skeleton house, but there are many pretty touches you can add if you want to make it extra nice. I saw a doll house built by a boy of twelve, says a writer in the Philadelphia Ledger. It had a slanting roof, painted green, with a well-made chimney on one side. Outside

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