

Aunt Diana

The Sunshine of the Family

CHAPTER XIX. (Continued.)

It was a lovely evening, as Missie said of those rare September evenings that come when summer and autumn seem blending into each other.

Miss Carrington's knees were very grave and tender. They spoke volumes, but she seemed to have no words at the moment.

"Allie, my poor, dear child, what have they done to you? Oh, dear, what thin cheeks, what heavy eyes!"

"Yes, I know," replied Miss Carrington, almost abruptly all the more because her feelings were not so well under control as usual.

"You must not tempt me, Aunt Diana," she returned, rather gravely.

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as though it were we who were blind, not he—he seemed so steeped in the light of heaven.

"Do you think he wanted to die?" asked Allison in an awestruck voice.

"Why not?" replied her aunt. "Death has no terrors for him. Why should he fear the summons from the Master whom he loved and tried to serve here, and who died on the cross for his redemption?"

"I don't think any one was ever so wicked as I, Aunt Diana," sighed Missie.

"Well, my dear," returned her aunt, "it is not my concern to go about weighing my neighbor's trespasses in a balance."

"I don't know what it is," she said that night, when Allison gave her the good-night kiss.

"I thought forgiveness meant that," returned Allison, simply.

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"My dear little girl, we none of us want to see our poor little butterfly broken on the wheel; we are far too sorry for you."

"Of course, you have been a naughty child; you have been setting your small world on fire, and have got your pretty wings singed."

"I don't think any one was ever so wicked as I, Aunt Diana," sighed Missie.

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The calendar year of 1908 will be memorable as the most disastrous twelve months in history in point of the destructiveness of forest fires in the United States.

Even in an ordinary year it is estimated that not less than sixty-five fires are included in the toll exacted by forest fires during the twelve months.

Another unusual feature of the forest fire of 1908 is found in the wide range of territory visited by the flames in the Maine woods and in the Adirondacks of Northern New York.

The season's unparalleled record has given the country an unpleasant object lesson as to what may happen any year and has aroused everybody concerned in a realization of the need of some better system of fighting and preventing this immense yearly loss.

As a first step the national government has had one of the most efficient employees of its forest service, Mr. Raymond W. Pullman, traveling over the burned areas in the Northwest and elsewhere, and not only gathering detailed statistics that will be of value in urging congressional action on the subject.

At the same time the national authorities have detailed an expert on forestry, Mr. Paul G. Redington, to make an investigation of the whole broad subject of forest fires and to devise ways and means for an improvement of conditions in the future.

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posed upon any man who refuses to give his services in time of need. It is realized that the railroads through their spark-emitting locomotives constitute one of the chief sources of forest fires and consequently one of the first moves which has been made by Uncle Sam in the present undertaking was to invite the railroads to make common cause with the federal government against forest fire menace.

When it comes down to systematic methods of fighting forest fires, the subject does not, happily, present a wholly unexplored field. For some years past the United States government has been rapidly developing an efficient patrol and fire-fighting system on its own forests, and, inasmuch as Uncle Sam now controls about one-fourth of the forest area in the United States, it can be seen that the national authorities have had an excellent practice ground on which to try out their theories on a large scale.

Under the forest patrol system maintained by the United States government on its own land a ranger or guard travels on foot or on horseback over the district of which he has charge at regular intervals and keeps a careful lookout for any fires that may have started since his preceding patrol.

The articles of travel through the forest are also extensively printed or placarded with printed notices warning hunters, campers and the traveling public in general against the dangers of starting fires except when absolutely necessary, or abandoning a camp site while the embers of the camp fire are still aglow.

Another unusual feature of the forest fire of 1908 is found in the wide range of territory visited by the flames in the Maine woods and in the Adirondacks of Northern New York, through out the State of Pennsylvania, in Michigan, Minnesota and Wisconsin and other territory adjacent to the Great Lakes.

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