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## Uncle Terry

By  
**CHARLES CLARK MUNN**

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The buxom Abby Miles had the best and longest story to tell, and her praise of Mr. Nason, how polite he was and "how he couldn't keep his eyes off'n Alice all the afternoon," was whispered to every girl she knew. The five dollar incident created the most gossip, however. The miller had remarked that a "young feller who threw money round that way must be rich," and that remark soon grew into a story that Alice Page's beau was worth a million and that she was engaged to him.

As might be expected, the subject of all this gossip heard none of it until the storm had reached alarming proportions. Mrs. Means was the first one to tell the extent of the gossip.

"They tell me," said that worthy matron to Alice one Sunday afternoon, "that you ain't likely to teach school after this summer."

"And why not?" answered Alice. "Don't I give satisfaction?"

"Oh, 'tain't that. I guess you can imagine the reason, and I want to be the first to congratulate you. They tell me he's worth a pile o' money, an' he's sartainly well favored so far as looks goes; but, then, 'handsome is as handsome does' was allus my motto."

Alice colored.

"Do you mean Mr. Nason, my brother's friend?" she said seriously.

"Why, who else would I mean? I've heard that you was to be married this fall and that he is worth a million. They say he told Amos Curtis he was, though I don't believe that. But anyway, Amos says he gave him \$5 'jest fer usin' his old boat that wa'n't worth splittin' up fer kindlin's!"

"It's not true, not one word of it," exclaimed Alice angrily, "and if you care for me one bit I wish you would tell everybody I said so."

She waited to hear no more, nor for Aunt Susan, who had lingered to chat with some one, but walked home hurriedly, as if to hide herself. Once in the silent house she began to cool off.

"I won't believe he told Amos he was worth a million," she said to herself. "He isn't so stupid as that. But I am afraid the silly boy did give him \$5, which has started all this gossip."

When Aunt Susan came in she fairly pounced upon her. "Why haven't you told me, auntie, about all this gossip that's going the rounds regarding Mr. Nason and myself? I know you have heard it."

"It's all nonsense, Alice," answered that lady rather sharply, "and you are foolish to listen to 'em. I've heard it, of course, but so long as it's no discredit to you, why let it go into one ear and out 't'other, same as I do! Folks must talk in this town, an' what they're sayin' 'bout you ought to make you feel proud—that a young fellow like him and worth money wanted to come courtin', and he certainly showed he did or I'm no judge."

"He's got Aunt Susan on his side as well as Bert," Alice thought, "and I

am glad I kept him at a distance, just to pay him for being so silly with his money."

Late that afternoon Alice called upon Abby Miles and talked about everything except the subject she most wanted to talk about, and then as Abby usually had a Sunday evening caller, Alice came home at dusk. Never before had the house seemed so lonely, and as she sat on the porch and tried to talk with Aunt Susan her thoughts were elsewhere.

When the lights across the valley, which served as curfew by saying bedtime when they went out, had disappeared, she came in and, seating herself in the dark at the piano, softly played the chords and hummed the words of a song.

"It'll come out all right," said Aunt Susan to herself, and she waited till Alice called to her to come in and go to bed.

## CHAPTER XIX.

**F**RANK NASON had consoled himself during the many months of hard study with visions of a yachting trip in July and August, when perhaps in some manner Alice Page could be induced to come, with his mother and sisters to chaperon her and her brother and some other friends to complete the party.

He had the Gypsy put in first class shape and all her state rooms refurnished, and one in particular, which he intended Alice should occupy, upholstered in blue. So well formed were his plans that he timed the start so as to utilize the July moon for the first ten days and mapped out a trip taking in all the Maine coast, spending a week at Bar Harbor, and then a run up as far as Nova Scotia.

He had described all the charms of this trip to Alice and extended to her the most urgent invitation. He had obtained her brother's promise to supplement it and also to make one of the party, and he had persuaded his sister Blanch to aid him with his mother, but he had met discouragement on all sides. In the first place, Alice wrote it was doubtful if she could go. It would be a delightful outing and one she would enjoy, but it would not be right to leave Aunt Susan alone for so long, and then, as her school did not close until the last of June, she would have no time to get ready.

To cap the climax of Frank's discouragement, when July came his mother announced that she had decided to go to the mountains for the summer.

"It's no use, Bert," he said to his friend one evening. "I wanted your sister to go to Maine with us and mother and the girls and a few more to make a party, but it's no go. I can't induce your sister to join us, and it's no use if she would, for mother has determined to go to the mountains, and that settles it. If you and I have any outing on the yacht we must make up a gander party."

"That suits me just as well as, and in fact better than, the other plan," replied Albert consolingly. "If we have a lot of ladies along we must dance attendance upon them, and if not we can fish, smoke, play cards, sing or go to sleep when we feel like it. I tell you, Frank," he continued, evidently desiring to cheer up that young man, "girls are all right as companions at home or at balls and theaters, but on a yacht they are in the way."

A week afterward, and early one bright morning, the Gypsy, with skipper, crew and a party of eight jolly young men on board, sailed out of Boston and that night dropped anchor under the lee of an island in Casco bay. She remained there one full day and the next ran to Boothbay and found shelter in a landlocked cove forming part of the coast line of Southport Island. It was after dinner next day, and while the rest of the party were either playing cards or napping in hammocks under the awning, that Albert Page took one of the boats, his pipe and sketchbook and rowed down the coast a mile to an inlet he had noticed the day before. The outer point of this was formed by a bold cliff that he desired to sketch, and pulling the boat well up behind the inner point, tying the painter to a rock and taking the cushions along, he found a shady spot and sat down. The sloping rock he selected for a seat was a little damp, but he thought nothing of it, and lighting his pipe began sketching.

He worked for an hour putting the weed draped rocks and long swells that broke over them into his book, and then, milled perhaps by the monotonous rhythm of the ocean, lay back on the cushions and fell asleep. The next he knew he was awakened by a cold sensation and found the tide had risen until it wet his feet. Hastily getting up, he took the cushions and returned to where he had left the boat, only to find it had disappeared. The rising tide had lifted the boat and painter from the rocks, and it was nowhere to be seen.

"There must be some road back up on the island," he thought, "that will lead me near the cove where the Gypsy is," and still retaining the cushions, he started to find it. But

he was a stranger to Southport Island, and the further away from the sea he got the thicker grew the tangle of scrub spruce and briers. It was too thick to see anywhere, and after a half hour of desperate scrambling the afternoon sun began to seem about due east. He had long since dropped the cushions, and finally, in sheer exhaustion, he sat down on a rock to collect himself.

"It looks as though I'm billed to stay here all night," he thought as he noted the lowering sun, "and nobody knows how much longer. There must be a road somewhere, though, and I'm going to find it if the light lasts long enough."

He searched more and more and had now gone ten rods ere he came to one, and then he breathed easier. His clothes were torn, his hands and face scratched by briers, and to save himself he couldn't make it seem but that the sun was setting in the east. He sat down to think. All sound of the ocean was gone, and a stillness that seemed to crawl out of the thicket was around him. He rested a few moments more and then suddenly heard the sound of wheels and presently saw, coming around the curve, an old fashioned carryall, worn and muddy, and, driving the horse at a jog trot, a man as dilapidated looking as the vehicle. Gladdened at the sight, he arose and, holding up his hand as a signal, halted the team. "Excuse me, sir," he said to the man, who eyed him curiously, "but will you tell me where I am?"

"Waal," was the answer in a slow drawl, "ye're on Southport Island an' 'bout four miles from the jumptin' off place. Whar might ye be goin'? Ye looked bushed."

"I am," answered Page, "and badly bushed too. I lost my boat over back here on the shore and have had a cheerful time among the Mohawk briers. I belong to a yacht that is anchored in a cove of this island, I can't tell where, and if you will take me to her I'll pay you well."

The man in the wagon laughed. "Say, stranger," he observed with a chuckle, "you 'mind me o' the feller that got full an' wandered round for a spell till he fetched up to a house an' sed to the man that cum to the door, 'If you will tell me who I am or whar I am or whar I want ter go I'll give ye a dollar.'"

Page had to laugh in spite of his plight, for the humorous twinkle in the old man's eyes as he uttered his joke was infectious.

"I'd like ter 'commodate ye," he added, "but as I'm carryin' Uncle Sam's mail an' must git home an' tend the light, an' as ye don't know whar ye want ter go, ye best jump in an' go down to Saint's Rest, whar I live, an' in the mornin' we'll try an' hunt up yer boat."

It seemed the only thing to do, and Albert availed himself of the chance.

"Can you tell the spot where you found me?" he said to the man as they started on. "I'd like to go back there tomorrow and find my cushions."

"Waal," was the answer, "as I've dray over this road twice a day for nigh on to thirty year, I'm tolerable familiar with it. My name's Terry, an' I'm keeper o' the light at the Cape an' carry the mail to sorter piece out on. Who might ye be?"

(To Be Continued.)

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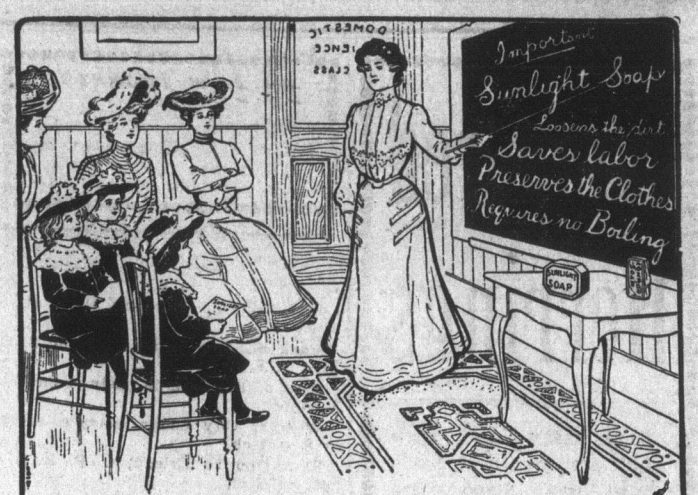
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