

Whom Did She Love

Written for The Western Home Monthly by Brenda E. Dow

WHAT a very attractive young lady!" said Mr. Harold Dalton to himself; "and what a wonderful resemblance to —." He suddenly stopped, stroked his chin thoughtfully, and gazed out toward the sea as if for inspiration or instruction.

Resuming his soliloquy, "These American scenes are full of suggestions of the past, though there are great differences. Perhaps the change has been more in myself than in my surroundings. Why, it is nearly—yes, quite, nineteen years since I last stood on this spot and gazed at the waves gently breaking on that headland yonder. A change does come over a man during nineteen years of travel in foreign lands, rubbing against foreign men. Yes, nineteen years of adventure, business, pleasure. The time has not seemed long, but I realize that I have changed greatly. Nineteen and twenty are thirty-nine. Why, to a young lady like the one over there, tripping gaily along, with light and innocent heart, I must seem to be rather well-preserved man of sixty—sixty years old at the very least.

That's the way she would describe me to the man she has given her heart to. Well, what matters it how old I am? When a man has passed the time of life when cupid darts may enter his heart, he might be Methuselah so far as the girls go. But while the season of love lasts, the love-fires burn something out of the soul that never grows again. It is well that it should be so. It would be extremely troublesome to carry a susceptible heart round the world with one for ever. It is not like me to be even thinking of such things; but I suppose the memories that cling to this spot are responsible. It was here that we met, and here that we parted. What a different place this was then! A lovely cape, smooth near the sea, but rising into deep restful woods farther back; a few rocky headlands round which circled coots and gulls in great numbers; and one old farmhouse, standing all alone, where now stands that grand new summer hotel, with its balconies and wide verandahs, and elegant porticos. What a fine array of cottages and cement walks and bridges, and bathing houses and pleasure boats! And what an admirable concourse of well-dressed and pleasantly inclined men and women! After all is said and done, it is hard to find a finer looking crowd anywhere else than can be found in my own country. I believe I would like to live here for the rest of my days. Yes, I'll buy a nice little cottage here at The Point, and spend my time between here and New York. I wonder whether Alice is still alive? Perhaps she is the mother of a dozen children by this time." And so his thoughts ran on, while he watched the crowded summer resort, the people at which gave him no concern.

As Miss Grover and her aunt reached the verandah of their cottage after their morning walk, Miss Grover asked her aunt who the gentleman was who had looked at them.

"What? Who?" asked Mrs. Cutler absently.

"The gentleman in the light gray suit and Panama hat; surely you saw him. He was rather tall and thin, very distinguished looking and yet quite simple and pleasant apparently. His eyes and chin were extraordinarily handsome, and he wore a heavy beard. Auntie, why in the world do you never look at people. Now I think that men of forty or fifty are ever so much nicer than younger men. This one looks as if he would be anyway. I think he must be somebody. He has such an air of refinement about him, and he is so graceful and manly looking that I couldn't help noticing him more than anyone else this morning. Who can he be, Auntie?"

"Who? What were you saying, Alice dear?" and Aunt Cutler looked up from a letter she had just opened while her niece chattered on. "Sarah writes me that Fred Fernton is to sail on the 20th. So he won't be here for over a week yet."

"Fred Fernton," said the girl quickly. "Yes, I am sure when he went away I expected him to come back at

all." Her face reddened perceptibly as she spoke.

"You are both of you a year older and wiser," said the widow, thoughtfully; "I hope you have learned how wrong it is to irritate a man needlessly. Why, I never irritated Cutler in all my life. Men don't understand it, and it just makes trouble."

"Here comes Mr. Clovertop. I'll ask him. He always knows about all the newcomers."

"For pity's sake don't ask him in," said Mrs. Cutler, picking up her letters and going upstairs. "He is for ever chattering about nothing."

"The top of the morning to you, Miss Alice," came the greeting from Mr. Clo-

vertop effusively. "How fresh you look after your morning dip. Did you ever see such a fine morning? I never saw a place I liked so much as this. So fashionable already, and only been on the go three or four years at that. Why, one meets such a gay crowd. Who do you suppose has blown along this morning? But there, you don't know him. He has been gone since before you were born I should think. Most charming man I ever met, and very rich at that. Made his money in the tea trade I think; or, hold on, I believe it was at some big silver mines. Anyway it don't matter about that. He has travelled abroad for years; been to Africa and Australia, and they say he had charge in some diplomatic affair in China once. You really must meet him, Miss Alice. I'll manage an introduction. Likely he will be here all summer. Oh you'll be charmed with him, I'm sure you will."

"What does he look like?" asked Miss Grover, interestedly.

"Oh, perfectly elegant, you know," replied Mr. Clovertop. "Rather above middle height, and a lighter weight man than I am, but graceful as a greyhound. Wears a heavy beard, hair a little gray, eyes blue. Looked like an English army officer somewhat. You understand—cool, but pleasant mannered. There he goes now—that man over there just lighting a cigar. That's Harold Dalton. I'll introduce you to him on the sands this afternoon. How is your aunt today? So sorry not to have seen her. Give her my regards, won't you? Good-bye, I must be off. See you again this afternoon. Tra la."

"Has that fool gone?" demanded a voice from within.

"Yes, Auntie," the girl replied.

"Then come in and eat your dinner," and Alice heard her aunt draw a chair

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