

THE SET PROFESSOR.

BY HENRIETTA FAIRBANK. If Beatrix had not been introduced to me as my cousin (a very distant one at that), I don't think that we should under any circumstances have grown intimate. I was past girlhood, fond of quiet, and books, and patchwork, while she was the type of a bright and sprightly American girl—too refined to be assertive, yet with plenty of confidence and self-possession. She had been in-lag at home, a favorite in society, and accustomed everywhere to having her own way without appearing to demand it. She was a lively, pleasant, and entertaining companion, whom I liked and admired, though conscious that there was little congeniality between us. It was at the Beaufort Springs that I first met her. She was with her grandmother, a fine, dignified old lady, who was first cousin to my own mother. Though living in different States they had not met in many years. The old lady was, like myself, an invalid, and when the legitimate season was past, we both lingered, having faith in the doctor's assurance that the quiet and pleasant September weather would benefit us more than the heated and crowded season through which we had just passed. I don't think that Beatrix was particularly pleased with this arrangement, though she never said so. She would sometimes yawn, and remark how dull it was now that the gay people had left, and only invalids remained. She often came to my room, and would sit and chat familiarly, amusing me with descriptions of and anecdotes concerning the guests, whom I rarely saw, being generally confined to the hotel. "There is only one man worth looking at," she said, one afternoon; "a recent arrival. He has a splendid facial and intellectual, and is a professor, although he can't be thirty. He sits at the table opposite ours across the saloon, and drinks coffee without cream or sugar. Now, I have observed that when people are partial to such a beverage they are sure to be original and interesting." Next day she again mentioned him. "He seems very shy. There's but one person that I've seen him conversing with—old Doctor Wayland—an acquaintance of grandpa's, by-the-by, so I can find out something about him."

"Suppose we send for the hotel register." A servant was dispatched for the book and the names of the new arrivals were read and commented upon. Then one of the group ran her eye up the column. "Two departures to-day by the early stage-coach," she said, indifferently; "Colonel Latimer and Mrs. Fleetwood." "Who?" said Beatrix, sharply. "The Colonel's daughter, that quiet, delicate little creature who looks too young to be married, though she is really twenty. Why, didn't you know that she was Professor Fleetwood's wife?" I dared not glance at Beatrix. I bent over the pages of the magazine as in absorbed attention. "He fell in love with her when she was a schoolgirl, and he a student of twenty-one," proceeded the lady, still turning the leaves of the register. "He waited three years for her, and they've been married about two years, and are still as devoted as lovers, and quite absorbed in each other. Nearly his whole time here was spent in her sick room, or in wandering about the woods in search of flowers, for which she has a passion, and which she sketches beautifully. I saw one crop of water-lilies which was a perfect gem, and—"

"I turned my eye to the gossiping group and spoke to a lady near Beatrix who disappeared. For a day or two she seemed quite unwell and kept her room. She must have taken a cold, or a chill, she said, and would like to go home. When she and her grandmother had me good-bye, they invited me to pay them a visit; but in that six years since then I have not seen them. I have, however, heard that Beatrix is lately married—'quite a brilliant match; a wealthy senator, though old enough to be her father.' I wonder how long she remembered the interesting professor. I have a sister now just grown, and my advice to her is:— 'Never fall in love with a man until you are sure that he is not married.'"

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