

W. M. Stevenson

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IN ABSENCE. BY FRANK CARL. WATCH her kindly, strong—From the sweet protesting skies Follow her with tender eyes!

TWINS. BY N. P. DARLING. I MET Miss Dudley at the house of Mrs. Wheeler. She was visiting there at the time, and so was I.

Now that wasn't just what I wanted, I suppose we are all foolish enough sometimes in our lives to want someone to love us; but I had never, until the day I met Miss Dudley, seen the woman that I thought I could love.

Miss Dudley was neither. Taken altogether, that is in form and feature, one might call her superb; but she was the last woman that most men would fall in love with.

I looked out of the window just then, and espied the object of my thoughts coming up from the garden. She looked so grand and stately that I couldn't help smiling at the thought of her ever condescending to love a poor mortal of the masculine gender.

Who she was I could not have told at the time. I had come down from the city to visit my particular friend, Bob Wheeler. Miss Dudley was there when I arrived.

"Why, with your establishment, Frank, she's just the woman to make a display. You could trot her out on state occasions, you know; but a man in a small country town like this, for instance, would be in quite as bad a fix as the man who bought the elephant, with such a woman for a wife."

"Unhand me, villain!" she shrieked. "Murder! Help! George!" Was the woman crazy? I really feared she was; and then I thought perhaps she never loved me.

"What are you doing here, you rogue?" he asked, stepping up and laying his hand on my shoulder. "I was just the least bit excited. I am sure I could not have been in my right mind, or I should not have done what I did."

"Well, you can't understand my feelings, and I cannot describe them. I was bewildered at first, but now—why, deuce take me, but there were two Minnie!"

"I didn't reply. You perceive that I didn't consider that that was any of his business. Besides, too, when I thought of it, I remembered that she had never told me anything of the kind."

"The next day, when I met the Misses Pizobob in their carriage on Broadway, they hardly noticed me. They bowed stiffly. You see I had been somewhat attentive to the young Miss Pizobob, though I had never entertained serious thoughts concerning the fair creature."

"I hurried to the door and rang the bell. There was no answer, and so I rang again. Then I heard foot-steps, and at last a key rattled in the lock, and then the door opened."

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"The young gentleman's embarrassment was visibly increased as he replied, 'About six months.'

"Well, if you must have it, here it is: You see, about six months ago, I (just for fun, you know) advertised for a wife, and this young lady happened to advertise for a husband about the same time, and we answered each other's advertisements."

"The young man hesitated, and at once his manner became confused and nervous."

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Advertisements for a wife, a mail agent's story, dress in England, a charitable lady, and other notices.