



BRERETON UNDERSTANDS WOMEN

By Holloway Horn.



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PAUL BRERETON, a famous wealthy artist. At 48, as far as a man may, he understands woman. Certainly far more than

FLIGHT LIEUTENANT RONNY VE-VONS, who is very much in love.

SONIA, who may not have been much of an actress but had other and perhaps greater qualities.

DR. MARY BARNWELL was not merely a good doctor, but a charming woman. . . She was in love with Brereton, and the woman in the picture which Paul Brereton painted in Paris.

CHAPTER XII.

DR. MARY MEDITATES

Brereton took Dr. Mary into St. Malo the following morning.

It was August and the boat was likely to be crowded. He had a word with a steward and a deck chair was reserved for her on the best part of the promenade deck.

"I suppose you're settling down to some work now that you've got rid of me?"

"I suppose so."

"When do you return?"

"I'm not sure. Towards the end of September, perhaps."

"Surely you don't mean to spend the winter in Cheriton—with all the world at your feet?"

"I think so. It will probably kill me," he smiled.

"Frankly I hope you do," she said.

"What . . . die?"

"No, silly! Spend the winter in Cheriton. One can't have too many friends."

"One can," he said. "But you and I are very good friends. I feel that I have known you for years."

He glanced at his watch as the ship's siren sounded: "Later than I thought, I must go. Goodbye!"

Gravely they shook hands.

"I'm very glad we ran into each other," he said.

"You've been charming to me. I've had a delightful time."

She watched him go down the gangway. He turned and waved to her from the shore and she saw him turn back towards the gate in the city walls which led into the town.

Again she waved to him as the lock gates opened and the ship made its way into the open sea.

The rhythmic throb of the engines was soothing as she sat in the sun on the upper deck. Her eyes were closed but she was not asleep or even sleepy. She was thinking.

It was an extraordinary story he had told her.

She realized that she had heard only one side of it and her experience as a doctor had taught her that such stories invariably had two sides. . . at least.

"Are you taking lunch, madame?" a steward asked.

"No, thank you," she said.

"Going to be as smooth as a mill pond, he assured her and went on his way.

What would Paul Brereton have thought if he had suspected that the meeting in St. Jactud had been engineered by her? He didn't know, so the point did not arise. They were good friends.

She fell to thinking of the curiously intent look he would give one at times, of the quiet smile that would occasionally hover round his mouth without actually settling on it. Of that gentle understanding of his. One never had to explain what one meant to him and he never said stupid things. Many less subtle men might have attempted to make love to her.

After all, she wasn't a hag. Thirty-five wasn't old as things went nowadays. Men had tried to make love to her.

Everything had gone wrong. He might have thought more of her and less of that wretched wife who had let him down so abominably.

It was growing dark when she reached London and quite dark when she got out at Cheriton. There was only one taxi and she was fortunate to get it.

She was, of course, expected, and a spinsterish meal was ready for her. Her locum was going in the morning but there was not much to discuss for nothing of any great import, apparently, had happened in the practice.

"You're looking remarkably fit," she said. "You look, indeed, as if you'd had a wonderful time."

"I did."

"By the way there's a picture for you."

"A picture?"

"Yes. Rather a wonderful one by Paul Brereton. It's a picture of a Breton peasant woman."

"You mean it's here now?" Dr. Barnwell asked, incredulously.

"Yes. It's in the consulting room. I didn't know where to put it nor did your housekeeper."

"Mr. Brereton promised that he would give me one," she said doubtfully.

"Let's see what Martha says about it." She rang the bell.

"When did this picture come, Martha?" she asked.

"Yesterday morning, mum. Fossick, the gardener at the big house, brought it down. He said that his master had wired to the housekeeper there about it. That'll be Miss McKechnie I suppose."

"I see. Thank you, Martha."

"A picture by Paul Brereton is worth a packet. I should think," said the locum enviously. "When you open up in Harley Street it would look splendid in the waiting-room."

"It's extraordinarily kind of him," Dr. Barnwell said, almost to herself.

"A grateful patient?" the locum asked with a smile.

"Not at all. I don't think he's ever ill. And I'm quite sure he wouldn't consult a woman doctor if he were. Let's go and have a look at it, shall we?"

Gravely the two women contemplated the picture which was leaning against the wall.

"Goodness knows what it's worth," the locum said.

"I'm not interested, I shall never sell it. All his portraits are alive."

"It's a beautiful picture!" the locum said.

"I saw women like that in Brittany."

That evening the doctor gave far more thought to a letter than she usually did to her correspondence.

"Dear Paul," (she wrote). "It was characteristic of you to have the picture after the most delightful holiday I have ever spent. It will hang where I can see it whenever I look up from my desk. It's a lovely thing and I thank you for it. If only I could give you something in return—Yours, Mary Barnwell."

Sitting there in her silent house, she watched the picture while thoughts came and went.

A quarter to midnight. What was he doing? Probably sitting in the little room beyond his studio reading. And she was sitting there watching the picture he had given to her . . . thinking.

Her reverie was broken as reveries so often are by the telephone. A frown crossed her face. She was not due to renew her practice until the next day.

"Hallo!" she said, and as she spoke she heard the locum on the landing above.

"Is that Dr. Barnwell?"

"Yes."

"This is Miss Mary Rossall."

"Who?"

"Miss Rossall. I'm a member of the Repertory Company. One of the girls in the company—Sonia Petanel was taken ill at the theatre to-night and I brought her back to my lodgings with me. I'm afraid she's worse."

"Where are you lodging?"

"In St. Phillip's Street. Myrtle Cottage. The first house on the left."

"I know it. I'll be round as soon as I can."

There was a light in a ground floor window and as she walked up the flagged path the door was opened.

"Oh I'm glad it's you, doctor," the landlady said. "The poor child's in dreadful pain."

Sonia Petanel, in a shabby, brown dressing gown was lying on a sofa; her eyes were closed and she groaned as the doctor entered the room.

Within ten minutes Dr. Mary had made her diagnosis.

"I'm practically certain it's appendicitis."

"I think so—and at once. Are you on the phone?"

"I thought it was that," Miss Rossall said. "It means an operation?"

"Yes. It's in the hall, I'll show you." In the dim light inside the ambulance, Dr. Barnwell watched the face of the girl on the stretcher. Tiny beads of sweat were standing on her forehead. Once her eyes opened.

"I'm frightened," she said.

"There's no need to be," the doctor said quietly. "But don't talk—just relax and don't worry."

"You'll be as right as rain in the morning," the nurse said soothingly.

It was four o'clock before the doctor reached her bed that morning. The operation had been an entire success; the patient had not only survived, but in the absence of untoward happening, would soon resume her ordinary life.

The doctor rang up Miss Rossall from the hospital. "You did quite right to send for me," she said. "Had you waited until the morning it might have been a very different story."

Later in the morning she was her patient again, and in the waiting-room discovered almost the entire repertory company, who were, of course (not allowed to see the sick girl).

"How is she, doctor?" Raymond Murray asked.

"She'll be all right," she smiled.

"Now clear out—all of you, and don't come back until Tuesday at the earliest and then one at a time."

Her letter to Paul Brereton had not

been posted, and she added to it the news of Sonia Petanel's illness and operation.

The following evening she was called to the phone.

"That Dr. Barnwell?"

"Yes."

"This is Paul Brereton. How is she?"

"Much better, Paul. She'll be all right. The operation was quite successful."

"She has everything she wants?"

"Of course. She's in hospital."

"Will you see that the child has everything she needs? Let her have a private ward, and do not hesitate to call in a specialist if you think it advisable."

"It isn't," she assured him.

"Let me know what it comes to, Mary."

"I'm keeping an eye on her, Paul—apart from the fact that she is my patient, she happens to be a friend of yours."

"Thank you very much, Mary. Thank goodness, I don't have to explain things to you."

"And thank you for that picture, Paul—and the thought behind it. Good-bye!"

There was, he had said, no need to explain things to her; she pondered as she replaced the receiver.

Sonia made an excellent recovery, but the necessary inaction irked her. She had been moved into a private ward, and there she received, one after another, the members of the company. There were lovely flowers in her room, and when Dr. Barnwell asked her who had sent them she said she hadn't any idea.

"Evidently an unknown admirer," the doctor smiled.

"I've been worried about my mother," the girl said. "But Mary Rossall has been up to see her. She's an invalid and can't get down here."

"There's someone with her?"

"No. She's alone. There's a woman goes in in the morning who will look after her but I should get back as soon as I can. She's all right, but she shouldn't be alone."

The doctor met Miss Rossall the following day and mentioned Sonia's anxiety about her mother.

"I can understand it," Mary Rossall said grimly. And with an expressive gesture made it quite clear what was wrong with the woman in the Bloomsbury flat.

CHAPTER XIII.

WHY BRERETON RETURNED

Mary Barnwell was at breakfast a morning or so later when a maid told her that Mr. Brereton was on the phone. He was speaking from Southampton.

"But I didn't expect you back until later," she said.

"I know. I'll tell you about it when we meet. I came over on the night boat. How is Sonia?"

"Much better. She will probably be in better general health now."

"Good. I'm coming by car as soon as we're through the Customs."

"Would you care to lunch with me?" she hazarded.

"I shall be delighted. It's a very welcoming gesture, Mary."

The doctor was detained rather longer than she had anticipated by one of her patients, and Brereton's car was standing outside her house when she got back.

He was in her sitting room turning over the pages of a rather weighty medical paper when she entered.

They shook hands.

"Hallo, Mary!" he greeted her.

"It's good to see you again," she said "sit down. I won't keep you a minute while I remove the microbes."

"This seems curiously readable," he said, indicating the copy of the British Medical Journal, when she rejoined him.

"I find it so."

"Nothing flippant about it," he smiled and "As a profession we're not flippant," she admitted.

The maid announced lunch and a little solemnly they faced each other across the doctor's dining table.

"And now tell me why you've come back so soon. Is it all this political bother?" she suggested.

"No. If war had come I would just have soon have been in Brittany as anywhere in the world. It wasn't the politicians. I wanted to be quite certain that the little actress, Sonia Petanel, was all right."

"I can assure you that she is."

"She struck a chord in my memory. It worried me. It was not merely as if I had seen her before somewhere—it was deeper than a mere memory. Look at this."

"It's a very beautiful face," she said after a silence.

"It was painted by Jerome, the American miniaturist."

"About sixty years ago—judging by the dress."

"Not quite. It's my mother."

The doctor turned again to the miniature and examined it even more closely.

"The family resemblance isn't obvious," she said. "There something about her mouth that is reminiscent, but that's all."

"Not of me?"

She looked at him:

"No it isn't you. For a moment I thought it was."

"Yet it's reminiscent?"

"It's very like little Sonia Petanel."

"Very. That's the chord the child struck in my memory. I thought for a while it was of my wife she reminded me but it wasn't."

"She's rather up against things," the doctor said. "I don't suppose she'd like me to tell you but the fact came to my knowledge, not from her but from Mary Rossall—you remember, the

middle-aged actress in the Repertory Company?"

"Of course, a very clever actress."

"Sonia was taken ill at the theatre and Miss Rossall took her home to her lodgings with her. And she went to tell her mother. I rather gather that the invalid mother is a dipsomaniac."

"That's bad luck on the girl."

"You're interested in her aren't you?"

"I find her most attractive. And I've a strange feeling that I've known her before—ever since I first saw her, I've felt it."

(To be continued)

Retiring Employees Were Long in Employ of T.N.O.

Four retiring telegraphers of the Temiskaming and Northern Ontario Railway were each presented with a mantle clock by the members of Order 99 of the Railway Telegraphers at a banquet held in the Kirkland Lake Hotel recently.

The four men, reaching the age of 65, were retired from service. They served the T. & N. O. from 18 to 39 years. The four men have been continuously employed serving in various Northern Ontario towns.

H. A. Beemer, former agent at Temagami and Arntfield was employed by the T. & N. O. for 24 years. E. Vanmeer, formerly of Englehart, and for the past 19 years at North Bay, has been with the company for 29 years. Formerly of Timmins and South Porcupine Mr. T. J. Shields has served the T. & N. O. for 18 years. Mr. W. J.

New Regulations in Regard to Landlords and Tenants

Under regulations of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board it is now necessary for landlords of commercial or housing accommodation to give the tenant a signed statement on the form prescribed by the Rentals Administrator and forward a copy of same to the nearest office of the Board within 10 days in the following cases: Where there is a renewal of lease; where there is a change of tenant; where there is a change of rental; where there is a change in service or accommodation and where new accommodation is first tenanted.

The forms referred to are available at any office of the wartime Prices and Trade Board.

Trucks Not to be Used Going to and From Work

Truck owners who allow employees the use of trucks to go to and from work in the morning and evening and even go home for lunch are told that this action is contrary to the spirit of regulations respecting curtailed use of gasoline and conservation of rubber.

Notice of this abuse was received by Prices and Supply Representative A. J. Smith at the North Bay Regional Office of the Wartime Prices and Trade Board, over the signature of James Stewart, Administrator of Services, who stated that there is a distinct possibility that a prohibitive order will have to be issued if employees are allowed to use trucks for unessential transportation.

Mr. Smith in enlarging on the notice

said that employers who are the owners of trucks must not allow their vehicles to be used in any manner than for essential movement of goods. The practice of using their trucks for going to and from work or home to lunch, on fishing trips, picnics, entertainments and other unessential transportation is definitely out under the regulations.

ALMOST A REFLECTION

The hostess was trying to persuade one of her guests to contribute a song. "I'm very sorry," the guest replied, "but I'm afraid most of my vocal efforts are confined to singing in my bath."

"Well, I'll tell you what I'll do," said the hostess. "I'll put you down for a song and I'll mention the fact that you're out of practice."—Exchange.

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