

# THEY FLASH UPON THAT INWARD EYE

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Of course we never want or intend to forget the dear loved ones with whom we have lived and learned — those who have enriched our minds with their wisdom, beliefs, and interpretations of life, and have given us a gallery of happy memories which have a permanent place along with our ever increasing store of knowledge. However vivid these personalities may seem to us, yet, a few turns of the pages of a photograph album can bring their faces back again without any effort put forth on our part. Allow me to open this priceless book in order to refresh my memory.

Here is Uncle Dan, my favorite of all my uncles, just as he so often appeared to me. While he holds his pipe in his firmly pressed lips, he stares, as if deep in thought, far off into the distance. His straight, cot-tage, porch chair, holding his heavy frame, is tilted back against the house wall, and one of his legs is resting comfortably across the knee of the other one while his right arm also relaxes on the chair arm with his large hand dangling limply. His bald head reflects the evening glow of the Maine sun which shines down upon his tanned face offsetting his large straight nose; and the gleam on his glasses somehow makes the learned expression of his deepset blue eyes appear even more powerful, although his eyes are seemingly hid by shadow.

In his less tranquil moods, Uncle Dan seemed to me like a Mr. Scrooge when he woke up after his visits from the spirits. His chief happiness was gained through making others happy, especially those of his own blood. Often, when he gave me driving lessons, he would say in his deep, loud voice, and with a twinkle in his eye, "There's nothing I'd rather see than that

dimple in your cheek." And I didn't have to force myself to show it when he planned exciting futures for me and talked of humorous escapades of his youth. One thing that always amused me was his contrariness to conventionalities or his stubbornness when he was compelled to act against his own judgment. No one ever saw Uncle Dan wearing a tie other than a bow tie and a vest under his coat; and whatever was the custom, he cared little about what others thought. If they didn't like him as he was, he said they knew where they could go. I'm afraid that only too often did his over-spirited and too-expressive vocabulary of profanity shock strangers. But to those who really knew him, they were meaningless and not at all representative of his true nature.

The old wrinkled, shrunken, little lady, peeking merrily over the rims of her reading glasses and holding an armful of kittens, is my dear neighbor, Mrs. Lewis. This picture portrays her quite well because it exposes her two loves — her love for cats and her love for books. It was a familiar sound in the late hours of the night to hear a high, thin voice calling determinedly over and over again, "Kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty, kitty." At fifteen minute intervals she would again and again call in her pets until all were home with "mama."

Although Mrs. Lewis was very old and at times seemed a bit childish, her mind was as alert as any young person's when she had a chance to discuss a book with one of her neighbors. Most of her reading material consisted of volumes on religion. She had studied earnestly over two-hundred different tenets of Christian sects, and could talk, in truth, for hours without re-

tracing a thought or wandering from her subject, about the faults and virtues of Christian teachings. When she had once begun on her favorite topic, there was no possible hope of leaving her until the lesson was closed. Even an interruption at the front door could not break the stream of thought; she would pick up the sentence on the following word and continue her lecture as if nothing had interfered. As much as Mrs. Lewis studied religion, oddly enough, she had never joined a church. But when it came to living up to the teachings of Christ, no person could have lived the part better than she. I know, for she loved her neighbors.

When I look at the picture of Aunt Kate standing in her garden at the back of her old frame house gazing pleasingly at roses — Aunt Kate in her starched, white, summer dress and white, low-heeled shoes, with her thin, gray hair brushed smoothly back from her slightly wrinkled high forehead and pinned in a neat, little knot at the back of her neck — I think of a family treasurer and spic and span housekeeping.

To look at Aunt Kate for the first time and to converse with her, one would indeed have been a bit uncomfortable because of her striking ugliness — small, colorless eyes, a large lopsided nose which seemed to pull to one side where her thin-lipped mouth had its origin, and fell down into place in normal order on the other side of

her nose. Her skin, with its wrinkles, was so thin that the blood vessels showed through it as if it were thin paper, and the glands of her neck projected noticeably when she swallowed. Her voice was shrill and her laugh quite annoying because of the squeak that accompanied it. But in spite of all the unfortunate defects in her outer make-up, one soon lost all consciousness of them, aided by her pleasing personality and her charming way of easing the conversation.

Aunt Kate's house, which had belonged to her father, was kept in perfect order and also spotlessly clean. Nothing was ever misplaced and everything had remained in its appointed position for all the many years she lived there alone. The furnishings were family heirlooms, and if one were interested, Aunt Kate would proudly display her chests of family belongings and have an interesting history to tell with each article. Everybody in the little town loved Aunt Kate, and she was never idle when she could be of help to a friend.

Are we not fortunate to have such pictures which help to freshen in our minds the spirits that shall live on in spite of ended lives? Some people do not like to recall the past — they live entirely for the future, and the present; but even at my age, the past is one of the most precious valuables that I possess.