# The Truant Soul

By Victor Rousseau ====

DOCTOR AND NURSE

Now Joan could see his face not bear the expression of the smirking bully whom she had seen that morning, nor yet of the man who had addressed another man in such terms as one might use to a slave. It was not an unkindly face. And it was un-mistakably that of a sick man.

For a moment she remembered the stories told of his behavior in the operating theater, of the gentleness that seemed to transform the man, as if he possessed

a dual personality.
"I am Miss Wentworth," she explained. "I came to ask if you won't reconsider your decision to suspend me. I always wanted to be a nurse. Doctor Lancaster. apart from my own interests, I want to graduate to be able to help others. Won't you give me another opportunity?

Here are hero and heroine. The reader who wants mystery, plot, action and a real love story can get it here in "The Truant Is it a story of dual personality or of an impostor and his victim? Is the woman with maternal instinct the best wife as well as the best nurse? Can a victim of the morphine habit be permanently cured? These are questions the reader asks himself as he reads.

The author is Victor Rousseau. whose many stories of American life have given him a large

#### Chapter 1 -1-

"I let him see I wouldn't stand for any language like that, and I reckon he understood, even if I didn't have to say much," remarked the darkhaired girl to Joan Wentworth. "It doesn't seem to have occurred to Doctor Lancaster yet that a nurse is a human being under her uniform.

"If he'd treat us half as nicely as he treats some of his lady friends," she added, in a suggestive tone that changed into the accentuation of ordinary speech under Joan's discouraging look. "I've seen him driving them round town nights in his auto, and I've never seen the same one twice. I guess he takes it out on us when they've been mean to him."

Joan did not answer her. She was watching the head surgeon as he came into the operating theater. At his entrance the general buzz of conversation ceased, as if the outpouring of The students on the benches settled themselves in their places and craned their heads forward intently. The two essistant surgeons, Ivers and MacPherson, assumed attitudes of constraint, for everybody was constrained in Lancaster's presence. The orderly, who had been peering through the crack of the swinging door into the anesthetic room, where the head nurse was holding the patient's wrist and watching the face beneath the mask intently, straightened himself and stood up in military fashion. Only the risiting doctors seemed at their ease as they advanced to shake hands with John Lancaster.

They had come from several neighboring cities, drawn by the news that Lancaster was to perform his famous operation of arterial excision, which was just then the subject of discussion In the medical press. Plenty of surgeons had tried to remove a section of one of the larger blood vessels, but only Lancaster had succeeded in bringing down the mortality to 15 per

Lancaster was something of a myslery both to his colleagues and to the nursing staff. The Lancaster fund supported the Southern hospital, and John Lancaster was firmly established at the head of the institution. The board of guardians, which existed according to the terms laid down in his father's will, had apparently only an advisory capacity, and it was supple and plastic in Lancaster's hands. And John Lancaster was more feared and admired than any doctor in the

country. Feared by most for his tyranny, admired by a very few on account of his extraordinary skill, he seemed to have a dual personality. The man whose fast life was the scandal of the conservative little southern seaport, who was ostracized by the better families. whose infrequent appearances in the hospital were usually the occasion for injustice, storms and dismissals, changed in the operating theater into a man whose gentleness and humility and skill made him adored for the time by all who came into contact with him But it was only rarely that a case

occurred that required his attention. On such occasions his manner was in itself remarkable: He would slip stealthily into his private room, dress there, and emerge masked like a mummy to perform his miracle almost in silence, and afterward to make his

ing performed some shameful action. So much Joan Wentworth had heard. Naturally she watched his entrance on Ahls, her first day of surgical work, Nith absorbed interest. But Lancaster came in unmasked, and Joan could discern nothing humble or secretive in the self-satisfied face or the brisk My! he must have been on a terrible Transcript.

ing surgeons.

He looked a man of seven or eight and thirty, and he bore his years heavily. The eyes were lined and a little sunken; the features, which Joan had seen only a few times during her eighteen months of work at the hosdone, a rather repellent effect upon the girl. The face was eminently cruel and hard. Nevertheless the man obviously dominated the assembly.

He dominated her. She was much more afraid of some nervous lapse in Lancaster's presence than of seeing the use of the knife. The hissing of the steam tank, the nervous movements of the spectators upon the benches, whose heads seemed to swing with a uniform and rhythmical motion, the deepening sense of constraint. acted upon her with a sort of hypnotic effect not lessened by Lancaster's decisive manner.

She pulled the tray of instruments out of the boiling water and set it down upon the table by the side of the bichloride solution. Lancaster. who had been pulling on his rubber gloves, came to her side and plunged both hands into the antiseptic fluid. There was a look of self-conscious satisfaction upon his face, and Joan thought that every gesture and each movement was designed to impress the visitors. Presently she became sure of it. The man was acting. A feeling of disgust came over her. Lancaster cast a quick glance at

Joan. "New nurse?" he asked.

"My first morning of surgical work, Doctor Lancaster," she answered. He grunted in a contemptuous sort of way. Joan flushed to the hair. He turned to the other girl.

"You there!" he shouted. "Look alive with those sponges!" And he



The Struggle Ceased; the Man Sighed Deeply and His Limbs Relaxed.

cast a quick glance toward the visitors, as if to see whether they appreciated his harshness

A look of chagrin came over the dark-haired girl's face, but she ran to obey and dropped the wet sponges into the bichloride with shaking fingers. At the same moment the swing door opened and the stretcher with the patient appeared, wheeled by the orderly. Behind it walked the head nurse, still maintaining her crouching attitude as she moved. The stretcher stopped inside the theater, and the head nurse and orderly lifted the man who lay upon it on the glass table

He mumbled and tried to raise himself. The nurse put her hands about his shoulders, pressing them down, while the orderly held the body, protesting against the indignity about to be offered to it, to which it had emphatically not consented, whatever arrangement had been decreed by the brain. Lancaster's harsh voice boomed through the theater: "That's no way to bring a patient here, Miss Symons! Deep anesthesia!"

The head nurse lifted her face for an instant. "There's a history of nephritis, Doctor Lancaster," she said. "The pulse is 150, and Doctor Mac-Pherson said-"

"Who's running this business?" shouted Lancaster, striding toward

her; and Joan was sure that he looked out of the corner of his eye

toward the visitors. He snatched the green ether bottle out of the nurse's hand and poured a quantity of the fluid upon the mask. The struggle ceased, the man sighed deeply, and his limbs relaxed. The nauseating stench of the ether fumes made Joan's head reel. It seemed to fill the theater. Miss Symons, flushing, but displaying no resentment, escape in a way suggestive of his hav- took the bottle from Lancaster's hand and resumed her position, holding the

> face, the green bottle upraised. The girl who was in charge of the sponges whispered bitterly to her: "He doesn't know how to treat a

patient's wrist and peering into his

manner in which he greeted the visit- | racket last night! He can't keep up that gait much longer unless he gives up his work here,"

Joan ignored her; she had concentrated all her attention upon Lancaster's probable demands; she was resolved not to be found wanting. It was said that Lancaster was absopital, exercised, as they had always lutely merciless and had ruined many a girl's career by refusing to allow her to complete her graduating course. He was tyrannical, overlooked nothing, and never appreclated good work. Rumor went that when a certain nurse had once handed him benzine instead of alcohol he had taken her by the shoulders and run her bodily out of the hospital, forbidding her to show her face there again.

"He can't last long if he leads that sort of life," the dark-baired girl repeated. "You'd think he'd be old enough to have learned how to pretend to be a gentleman even if he isn't one."

Joan shook her off mentally as one chases away a persistent fly. For the tenth time she counted the instruments in the tray. Lancaster picked up a scalpel, and MacPherson and Ivers took up their positions, one on either side of him. The operation was beginning.

The visiting surgeons watched with an occasional whispered remark. The assistants already were snapping the little forceps upon the ends of the divided arteries. Lancaster issued his commands from time to time, without looking back:

"Sponges!" "One-two," whispered the darkhaired girl, "Three-four-five-" "Bistoury, Scissors, Dilator, Number four Simms."

Joan never faltered. She felt easier in her mind, her quick hands found the instruments in the tray the moment Lancaster demanded them. Meanwhile the dark-haired girl never ceased counting the sponges:

"Six-seven-eight-nine-" Suddenly Lancaster stopped, wheeled and turned flercely upon her. "For God's sake, stop that chatter!" he cried.

The girl let a sponge fall, snatched it up, and shot an apprehensive glance at him. Joan saw that she was losing her nerve in spite of her brave talk of a few minutes before. It was the critical time of a very dangerous and difficult process. She tried to pull herself together.

Yet, without looking up, she realized that a sense of general apprehension had stolen through the operating theater. The nurse at the head of the table, looking like a velled Vestal, had not shifted her position since the beginning of the operation, except that from time to time her hand shifted slightly as she let one or two drops of ether fall upon the mask. MacPherson and Ivers stirred busily, their heads bent level with their chief's as they moved to and fro at their work. The patient began to mutter. Then a hand, upraised in weak protest, struck a clamp from Ivers' fingers. It rattled upon the floor. "Keep bim quiet, Miss Symons, con-

found you!" shouted Lancaster. "Doctor Lancaster, the nulse-" she began. But, after a quick glance at the head surgeon, she shrugged her shoulders, tilted the bottle, and deliberately poured out nearly all the ether remaining in it. The renewed stench of the anesthetic filled the room. Joan saw the benches swing, the craning faces seemed to become multiplied; Lancaster and the two assistants, the visiting surgeons were tiny gnomes. an immense distance away, surrounding a tiny table on which a doll-like figure lay extended. She tried to bring them tack into focus, but could not; and, what was worse, she felt that she had lost her nurse's sense of divining the surgeon's requirements before he gave expression to them.

The feeling of suspense was growing. Something was wrong, and although nothing had been said, even the students on the top row of benches farthest from the table were aware of it. The assistant doctors appeared as busy as ever, and yet they seemed at a loss, and once or twice looked up at Lancaster as if his technic was puzzling them. Joan saw two of the visiting surgeons exchange brief glances, one with inquiry, the other, answering, with uplifted eyebrows. Once Lancaster stopped; he resumed his work, stopped again, and stood staring at his work. Then he wheeled round upon Joan, the upper part of his body seeming to move upon a pivot, while his lower limbs remained

This is certainly a bad beginning for both hero and heroinesurgeon and nurse. What next?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Model Prayer for Authors Old Thomas Fuller had a prayer he used before starting to pen his sermons, which should commend itself to writers generally: "Lord, lo! here is Thine arphabet. Grant to us that we may put the letters together woman-not a lady. He isn't our kind. so as to make good sense."-Boston success for the tip-top cook.

# MAKING GOOD IN A SMALL TOWN

Real Stories About Real Girls

By MRS. HARLAND H. ALLEN 

GROWING CATS FOR CASH

THOSE aristocrats of catoom, the Persian, Angora and Slamese cats, are good means for making money. A natural love for the dumb beauties, a willingness to treat them as if they had brains and feelings; and just a little capital with which to buy a lady puss-those are the only requirements any girl needs for a fair start in the business of raising them.

"The cat raiser's main considerations," says a girl who specializes in the breeding of the Slamese variety. "are care as to selection of foundation stock, which must be free and healthy, care as to cleanliness and care as to feeding.

"I give my animals fresh raw beet twice a day, with the heaviest feed in the morning. I see that they have access to plenty of water at all times. give a patent cat-food every other day, and milk not more than three times a week. And I see that both cats and kittens have plenty of sunlight and exercise."

Every queen (the kennel term for female) deserves a good comfortable bed, where she can stretch out comfortably, and can lie down when nursing her kittens. Catnip, to be eaten or rolled in at will, is a nice luxury in the cat world. If there are more than one queen, they should be fed separately, or the ones which eat most slowly will lose out on the food, and their offspring may suffer. If the grower can afford to own her own male cat, she will not be troubled by rats or strange cats.

There will be at least eight kittens a year from each female. When a cat's bables number only four, she can rear them herself. But when there are six, the grower will have to search her neighborhood for a common cat, whose kittens are the same age as her own cat's bables.

The Slamese or "Royal Cat of Slam" is probably most difficult of all to get, and most expensive. But it is both beautiful and intelligent, and a Slamese mother cat with her kittens will attract attention anywhere. At birth, the kittens are pure white, and look like baby cats of lowly birth; but after a time, their faces, ears, legs, feet and pads and tail become dark chocolate, the body always re-

maining white. When the kittens are a cute age, the best advertisement they can have will be exhibition with their mother in the home-town drug store windows. and the druggist will be benefited by the trade-attracting novelty. The grower may dispose of her pets to pet stock stores, as well as to private individuals. Both playful kits and proud queens practically sell them-

# THE COOK CASHES IN

MOST everybody likes to eat. "And," says a girl who has capitalized her knowledge of that fact, "the woman who's a 'tip-top cook' can always be independent.

"That natural womanly ability to transfer raw 'groceries' into luscious edibles can be used to captivate cash," she declares. "I inclined ple-ward at the start, and I am still known as the 'pie lady.' But there is no reason why one couldn't braffch out if one cared to.

All the "tip-top" cook needs in order to succeed in this 'homely' line her own kitchen as a workshop; probably a few more utensils than she is accustomed to using, and sufficient ingredients, preferably purchased at wholesale, for the concoctions she has in mind. Add one small boy to make deliveries, and she is prepared to fill many orders.

Jellies and preserved fruits are one popular choice of the commercial The woman who decides on them as her forte might refer to her home workshop, in advertising, as a "Jelly Kitchen." Marmalades and candied fruits make good accompaniments for the jellies and preserves. Crullers, cookies, doughputs and cakes are other "best sellers," and make good specialties, either together or separately. The cake-concentrator found quite often, but she should

take care not to let mediocrity claim her cakes, for the inclination of the cake-maker is sometimes to let originallty go by the board. She should try the "filled" cakes or "Washington ples," almost always a success with something toothsome between the layers. Loaf cake should be rich enough to keep for days when encrusted in icing. Fruit cake is salable, but pork cake, eggless, is economical and is more palatable than a dry butter and egg fruit cake. Fancy cakes, plain cakes with fancy frostings, for holldays, birthdays and, above all, wed-

dings will keep the cake-lady busy. A bit more out of the ordinary than jellies, cakes, ples, candles, cookies, doughnuts, and the like, are hot tamales-but they're an excellent spe-

The pet "trick of the trade" for the cook to practice is keeping the way, that's what it did for Coraish. preparation of her concoctions down to relatively small quantities, Preparation in huge quantities will lose the products that much-acclaimed "home taste." Such phrases as "personslly cooked", "home cooked" and "like mother used to make" will spell

#### ALONG LIFE'S TRAIL

By THOMAS A. CLARK

(©, 1924, Western Newspaper Union.) WHEN YOU KNOW A MAN

#### IT WAS Charles Lamb, I believe, who was responsible for the statement that you can't hate a man when you know him. Whether or not the experience of people in general will bear out this view, I cannot say. I do know, however, that a superficial acquaintance with people tends to confirm one in pessimism; most of us

seem to have our worst qualities on

the surface. It is curious how few men we really do know. Those whom we meet daily at our places of business or in our households are often strange to us. Fathers and sons, mothers and daughters, husbands and wives even have little real knowledge of each other's thoughts and characters, and the people with whom we associate every day are often as strangers to us. Even our own brothers we often misunderstand or have little sympathy for.

It is only when we get at the heart of a man that we recognize his real worth. I have wondered sometimes if we could get into more intimate acquaintance with our pet enemies or with the devil even if we should not find them less black than they have

been painted. I really ought to be a pessimist, for I have seen the worst sort of men, and so many men at their worst. On the contrary, however, as time goes on my faith in human beings strengthens. Even the worst of men whom I have known have revealed so many good qualities when I have really got at them that I could not admit that anyone was wholly bad. The evil which had come to the surface, and which had attracted attention, was only inci-

after all predominated. At times when I get to the point of admitting that no one keeps faith, no one is virtuous, no one honest, something is sure to happen that drags me back to a safe harbor of hope and faith and anchors me fast again.

dental in most cases and the good

Every day I get new insights into human character. Fellows whom I had supposed I knew through and through show trafts that I had never suspected, strong qualities which through all the years of our association had been entirely concealed.

I am coming more and more to be lieve that Lamb was right, and that If we could bring ourselves really to know a man, we should find in him so much to respect, so much to admire, so much to wonder at that we could not bring ourselves to hate him-not even to dislike him.

I haven't a doubt but that old Marvn the street, whom I have asways looked upon as the most despicable of men, has virtues that would shine, qualities that are really lovable if I could only know him fully.

# SITTING STILL

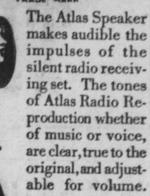
IT IS Stevenson who, in discussing the subject of marriage, advises women not to marry a man unless he smokes. The theory is that such a man will more contentedly stay at home, will sit quietly before the fire for a time after meals and so will more readily submit to that feminine domination and control which is so essential to domestic peace and happiness. Neither in the home por in business affairs can you do much with a man who is nervously rushing from one place to another; It is only when be is quiet that be can be successfully hypnotized either by his wife or a book agent. Men think best, rest more completely, gain more polse while sitting still.

Cornish was as nervous as a kitten. He could scarcely sit still long enough to eat his meals properly, and when he had swallowed a few mouthfuls he would rush out of the house and hurry to his work again. He was rapidly developing fadigestion and an impossible temper; but he would not consult a physician, so Mrs. Cornish confided her trouble to her pastor. He

was a wise shepherd, this one. "Buy him a pipe and a package of tobacco," he advised, to her horror and astonishment, "and encourage him to smoke. You mustn't overdo it, however," he continued, "for if you do you may not be able to drive him away from the chimney corner; he may become lazy, and that is worse than being nervous."

Cornish was a docile and tractable husband in this regard, and he was soon sitting as coatentedly in his easy chair after each meal as a lapdog. He read the newspaper, got chummy with his wife, he began to lay on flesh, and before long his business began to pick up because he went at it quietly, with calm self-possession and deliberation. I am not advising smoking; it is, in general, a dirty, vicious habit which ministers seldom advise taking up; but whatever induces a nervous, busy man to sit still and relax for a few minutes after meals, whatever lures him into quietly meditating for a time, cialty, easy to make and easy to sell, to that extent prepares him for the more strenuous duties of the day. Any

> Ship That Turned Back Speedwell was the name of the ship that started from Southampton with the Mayflower for New England in 1615. It was bought and fitted out in Holland. It was compelled to turn back on account of accidents



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Concerning Pet Names The pet name for Mary is Polly, and although this may seem rather a jump, it is a curious fact that the M initial is often changed to a P. Maggle, from Margaret, becomes Peg or Peggy, while the pet name for Martha is either Matty or Patty. Pet names seem to know no law.

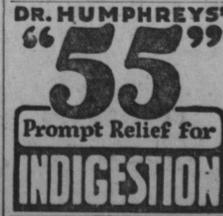
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