

The Truant Soul

By
Victor Rousseau
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"IT ISN'T ENDED"

SYNOPSIS.—Nurses in the Southern hospital at Avonmouth are angered by the insolent treatment accorded them by Dr. John Lancaster, head of the institution, and there is a general feeling of unrest, into which Joan Wentworth, probationary nurse, is drawn. Doctor Lancaster is performing a difficult operation, for which he has won fame. Joan, with other nurses, is in attendance. She is upset, through no fault of her own, and makes a trivial blunder at a critical moment. The patient dies and Doctor Lancaster accuses her of clumsiness. She is suspended, the action meaning the end of her hope of a career as a nurse.

CHAPTER II—Continued

In the town of forty thousand inhabitants Joan was as isolated as she had been in the latter years at home. Her life was as unsophisticated and as simple, and she was so unacquainted with the conditions and circumstances of existence that her dismissal seemed to her an irreparable disaster. She had won good opinions, she had been praised, and it seemed monstrous that her faintness at a critical moment should have ruined her whole life prospects. What made the tragedy the less tolerable was the admixture of the farcical. There was a simple and absurd explanation. Mrs. Webb's colored cook, Amanda, had quarreled with her mistress that morning, and Joan had had to go to the hospital without her breakfast.

She got up and walked slowly home without having resolved her problem. Inside the boarding house the air was like a furnace, and the smell of cooking was triumphant and dominant.

Inside the kitchen, seen through the open door, was Amanda, the cook, and Mrs. Webb, the landlady.

"Here's Amanda again!" Mrs. Webb called to Joan. "My dear, the idea of your running away without your breakfast this morning! Now you sit right down and have your lunch, Miss Wentworth!"

Joan was not hungry, but it was impossible to oppose the resolute insistence of Mrs. Webb, backed by the penitent cook whose black face, as she flitted from the kitchen to the dining room, radiated remorse and good intentions.

"One can't get along without the proper food at the proper times," said Mrs. Webb as she set down the dishes before Joan. "But I call it real sensible of you to have come home early. Some girls wouldn't have thought of that."

Joan choked suddenly, and Mrs. Webb perceived her distress. She bent over her and placed a kitchen-roughened hand upon her shoulder.

"My dear, what is it? What is the matter? Something gone wrong at that old hospital?" she asked. "Tell me now, honey!"

"It isn't anything, Mrs. Webb," said Joan, striving valiantly to keep back her tears. "Well, then, I'm—I'm discharged."

Mrs. Webb withdrew her hand and placed it upon her hip, bringing the other into corresponding position. She glared at Joan, as the convenient focus of her indignation.

"I never heard of such a thing!" she cried. "Who's dared to discharge you, Miss Wentworth? Why, it was only yesterday Miss Gray was saying you were the only one in the hospital that attended to her work instead of trying to make dates with the doctors! I've had the nurses two years now, Miss Wentworth, and they ain't a snap better than the salesladies I used to keep. A pack of featherheads! If some of them had been discharged 'twould serve them right. But not you, my dear. It's that old Doctor Lancaster!"

"It was, and I think he was right. I felt faint from the smell of ether."

"Of course you did!" cried Mrs. Webb. "I always knew the day would come when you would. Those smells make my head go round and round whenever I take the short cut that side of the park. I always said you weren't cut out for that sort of work. It's all right for them strong-he-horse girls that's made for it, but what you need is to marry some good man who can take care of you, not to go nursing a lot of dock-hands and seeing people's insides opened up. It's my belief that when the Lord put our insides inside and our outsides outside he meant 'em to stay there," snorted Mrs. Webb.

"Well," said Joan wearily, "it's ended now. And I don't know what I'm going to do."

"But I say it isn't ended!" cried Mrs. Webb, concentrating all her indignation against Lancaster in a venomous glare at Joan. "It's only just begun. If that old Doctor Lancaster dares to discharge you, I'm going to tell everything I know about him, Miss Wentworth, that man's no more fit to be at the head of a hospital, with ladies under him, than he's fit to fly. What is he? Nothing but a fast liver and a common drunkard."

"Never mind, Mrs. Webb!"

"But I do mind. To think of a man like that, who went about with a gang of common tramps for years, Miss Wentworth, just breaking away from his job and hobnobbing it up and down the country and then coming back and getting his job again and acting as he does! All that I say is common knowledge. Five years after

nurses coming home off duty. She slipped on her cloak and went out of the house softly, and to escape the landlady's attentions Joan went hastily toward Lancaster's house.

She had passed it almost daily on her journeys to and from the hospital. It was an ordinary brick house in a new block at the north end of the park, and commonplace enough, but now, to her excited eyes, it seemed to reflect the grim personality of its owner in the staring windows, with the shining door knobs of brass, and the brass name plate. Her heart was beating with panic, and it was with difficulty that she contrived to press the bell and to remain until the door was opened.

A white attendant confronted her—a sullen, underbred man with square shoulders, who scowled at her as he stood blocking the passage.

"Doctor Lancaster?" asked Joan.

"He doesn't see patients after five," answered the man.

"I must see him. It is important," faltered the girl.

"Well, I'll find out if he can see you," the fellow grumbled. "Walk in if you want to."

He had not recognized Joan's uniform beneath the cloak. She gave him her card and went into the waiting room. There the sense of the terror which made that place its domain, the accumulated fears of all who had ever waited there for the approaching verdict, seemed to leap out at her.

Then Joan heard Lancaster's voice in the next room, which was divided from her waiting room by foiled doors. It was audible as a bass rumble, emerging occasionally into a distinguishable sound. Lancaster was talking with somebody, and he was growing angry. That was an ill omen of what was to come!

Joan braced her nerves. She was anything but a coward, and having made up her mind, she intended to carry her scheme through.

Suddenly Lancaster's voice was raised in violent altercation.

"A nice mess you've made of everything!" he cried. "I've tolerated you too long. I've been a fool, but I've finished with you now. Go back where you came from!"

Another voice spoke in indistinct tones. It was that of a man, and it was almost abject in contrast with Lancaster's violence.

"I've finished with you, I tell you!" cried Lancaster. "I've borne this burden long enough. You can get out of my house. You can get out of my life."

"I've borne it long enough, too," replied the other, doggedly. "Who started it? Who made the first proposal?"

"I did, out of kindness to you. And how have you repaid me?"

"By placing myself, soul and body, at your service," retorted the second man, aroused into some show of spirit.

"Who picked you out of the gutter and set you on your feet?" rejoined the doctor. "Answer that! You can't! You know you can't! Where would you be today if it were not for me?"

The second man said something in a low voice.

"Myers? A lot I care about that!" retorted Lancaster. "I tell you, what's that?" The white attendant was speaking at the door. Joan recognized his rasping voice.

"No! No!" cried Lancaster, violently. "I see nobody. Why can't these women come during my hours? Aren't they posted plainly enough upon the card in my window? Tell her—what? Important? Well, let her wait, then, until I get ready to see her."

The man's steps died away along the rear end of the passage. Joan heard the two men talking again. Then the sounds ceased. She heard the floor in the adjoining room creak beneath a quick tread. Lancaster was coming in! Her fears gave her resolution. She would anticipate that movement, see him, insist. She left the waiting room and went into the hall.

It was hung with little pictures of a uniform size, each exactly like its neighbor. It came into the girl's mind, even during those few hasty steps, that this was essentially a man's house; a woman would have arranged things differently, have given the place personality, have made her presence felt somehow, even in the decoration of this dark passage. The atmosphere was that of an institution.

Then she was standing with caught breath at the door of the consulting room, which was a little ajar, as if the catch had become unfastened. She knocked, opened it, and went in.

"I must see him; it is important,"
Faltering the Girl.

Is it? You'd be a precious fool if you didn't. Any girl can twist a man round her finger, especially if she looks weepy.

Joan looked at Mrs. Webb in great distress. She rose, but the landlady followed her toward the door.

"You see, my dear," she went on, "if you were given that sort of face by the Almighty, why shouldn't you use it to get plain, common justice done you? It's your job that's at stake, and you all alone in the world. All you've got to do is to make him forget that he's dealing with a nurse. There isn't anybody would think twice about it. Didn't Amanda do it this morning, coming to me with her big, black, honest face, and looking at me so that I had to take her back, as I was glad enough to do? You go straight and see that old Lancaster and try it, that's all!"

A nurse passed the window and came up the steps.

"Mrs. Webb, you won't say a word about what I've told you to the others, please?" asked Joan.

She flew upstairs and, flinging herself down on her bed, stared out dismally toward the monument. The catastrophe had swept her little, unsheltered world away. The sense of her loneliness swept over her like a black cloud, appalling her. She was cut off from life, and utterly helpless outside the medium in which she had lived.

Because she felt this sense of helplessness, her outraged pride began to vanish before the terrors that her imagination conjured up. Starvation, the ultimate terror of her childish days on the estate, which like a living thing had gnawed into her mother's nine hundred dollars, seemed incredibly real and near. She must ask for her position back!

She must face Lancaster in his home, humble her pride, and bow to him; but she watched the sun decline and the shadows lengthen, and for a time she could not bring herself to her task.

What strengthened her at last was the realization that her status must be settled before she faced the day

Style and Grace in Outdoor Togs Boyish Clothes Have Call and Are Regarded as Ultra Smart.

The ever-growing love for the life out of doors is reflected in apparel designed for days in the open. The girl of the hour is the sports type, says a fashion writer in the New York Times. She is the country girl of the Twentieth century, a creature of athletic femininity, of style and grace and dash, and the very best designers put their very best imagination and workmanship into the things that make up her equipment.

The really smart woman of today is the sports woman, and her togs are worn by even those who form the "gallery" at sports events. Few are guilty, these days, of overdressing at outdoor affairs. It simply "isn't done," and sports clothes on these occasions are the proper thing quite as much for the audience as for the actors.

Necessary uniformity in sports and semi-sports styles suggests the dress of the Scotch highlands, whose plaids are being reproduced in the very latest woollens and introduced in most effective ways in out-of-door costumes. The simplicity, even severity, of this type of dress is costly and demands more nearly exact skill on the part of the tailor than softer more elaborate clothes, and variation is a problem.

The Scotch tartans offer a most picturesque quality, and some of the most stunning outfits for sports and general country wear receive more importance from the introduction of one of these. Among the newest fabrics are reproductions of historic patterns that have an artistic value far above the ordi-

Charming Winter Hat of Black Felt, Velvet Trim



Black felt with velvet bow and band, with brim bound with black velvet to help retain its shape, are the interesting features of this chapeau.

er's green, the Grhams', the Senforth Highlanders', the Skyes', or the shepherd's tartan in black and white that as "shepherd's plaid" has long been a staple among materials for tailored things.

This fancy for Scotch plaids has become the rage, and they are used in a great variety of ways. Some saucy little suits are built of a clan tartan alone—showy—but wanting a clean-cut, "upstanding" sort of girl to wear them. Now and again one sees a genuine Scotch suit in the junior class, made of a Mackenzie or a MacDougal tartan for the kilted skirt, jacket of plain blue or green, and the costume completed with sporran and glengarry. The sight of such a costume always revives one's faith in tradition, poetry and patriotism, which are not always to be spewed from modern dress.

Band of Fur on Skirt Adds to Ensemble Garb

A noticeable feature of several of the smartest ensemble costumes is the band of fur around the edge of the skirt. The coat extends to this band and the effect is that of a fur-bordered coat. This is a distinctly new note which is exploited by a number of the best houses.

A strong rival of the twilled materials is found in softer finished wools of which probably the most noteworthy is kasha. Returning travelers from Paris brought word that beige and natural kasha was pre-eminently the favorite of smart French women and on this side of the water its vogue promises to be equally great. Black kasha, given character by touches of white, Chinese red and bright blue, appears again and again in the showings of well-known houses and these models are among the most interesting of the newest frocks.

Bead Combinations to Add to Accessories

One kind of bead to make a string is quite the correct thing, but it is never to have two or three shapes such as a triangle, a cube and a barrel all on one string, but divided by a small fit or round jet or crystal. The combination of color is also noted. Strings of fine beads, say turquoise and gold are twisted together with a barrel bead at intervals.

One of the newest fancies in necklaces is a combination of pearls and amber, say, six or eight pearls, according to the size, with three small barrel-shaped amber beads, etc. Pearls strung this way are, of course, not so generally useful as when used alone, as neither amber nor any other stone can be worn with every costume as can pearls.



Motor Coat of Green Rodier Material; Shawl Collar of Cross Fox.

nary commercial merchandise. The display in the largest shops is arresting and fascinating, and one is able to select a tartan that has for her the most sentimental appeal.

She may like the plaid of the Gordon Highlanders or the Mackenzies—the ever-stylish green and blue with overlies of red and white, or yellow; or the black and green of the Black Watch tartan, the hot, bright red and white of the Stewarts, Rob Roy's black and red, the Camerons' red and black, the MacDougal's' red and hunt-

Rainy-Day Precautions in Care of Wearables

Wet garments should be dried at once and properly or they will mildew and get out of shape. Coats should be brushed to remove any dust which the dampness is likely to hold, then placed on a hanger where there will be a free circulation of air. It is sometimes desirable to press a garment when it is nearly dry to restore the surface, finish and proper creasing. In such a case, put a piece of thin, white cloth between the iron and the material.

Shirts should be brushed also and put on a hanger of the right shape.

Umbrellas should be dried by placing them on their handles with the tip up. This is to prevent rotting of the fabric where the ribs come together. Avoid putting an umbrella up when it is wet, as it bends the ribs to stretch the wet cloth over them, and the umbrella is never likely to close properly afterwards. Never permit an umbrella's rib to be crowded full as some one is sure to force the point of an umbrella through the cover of another one.

popular materials are now shown in beads as large as marbles.

The chokey necklace of large bead balls is considered smartest. It is now very chic to wear one bracelet made to match the necklace, the beads of such size as to give the impression of burdensome ornaments.

Chains of turquoise are much worn. The most charming among the colored necklaces is one of peking glass—an adorable shade of blue, most nearly described as "periwinkle." From the chain is pendant a medallion of the glass, delicately carved. The pendant to match is shown with many of the pretty necklaces of rose quartz, emerald, turquoise, amethyst and matrix.

How to Prove Purity of Woolens and Silks

Any housewife can determine the purity of woolen or silk materials by burning a few threads. If it looks like woolen goods, burn separate threads of both the warp and the filling. Cotton burns readily with very little odor, leaving scarcely any ash, wool burns slowly, has the characteristic odor of burned hair or feathers, and leaves much ash.

If the goods look like silk, burn a part of the sample. Pure silk will burn readily and curl up in a hard, shiny, beadlike ash. Weighted silk, when burned, will leave a residue which will hold the original shape of the cloth, but fall in pieces when touched.

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(TO BE CONTINUED.)

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