



PITY FOR HIM

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. Without relatives or friends, and desperate, Joan, urged by her landlady, goes to Doctor Lancaster's office to ask him to overlook her blunder and reinstate her. She overhears a violent altercation between Doctor Lancaster and other men she does not see.

Chapter III

She found herself in a large, lighted room, with the sense of an institution, though it was well furnished. She saw the white enameled table, the glass case full of instruments, the empty court outside; then John Lancaster himself, alone, standing with bent head behind a chair, on which he was leaning.

As Joan entered an inner door began to open. Joan knew that the man with whom Lancaster had been quarreling was inside a room behind it. She dreaded lest he should come in; but suddenly the door closed.

She looked at Lancaster again. It was still quite light within the consulting room, but Lancaster, standing with his back to the window, was in silhouette, so that Joan could not see his face clearly.

"Well, madam?" he asked, raising his head.

"I came to speak to you about this morning," began Joan hurriedly. "It means—"

He indicated a chair. He was gazing at her with some embarrassment—Joan thought because of the scene in which he had just participated. "Tell me the trouble," he began, as she seated herself, drawing up his own chair toward hers.

Now Joan could see his face, and to her astonishment, it did 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 unmistakably 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. Then she was recalled to herself by Lancaster's repetition of his remark.

Joan rose up hastily. She realized that the doctor had mistaken her for a patient. Her face meant nothing to him, any more than her distress of the day had affected him. With a nervous movement she unfastened her cloak, disclosing her uniform.

"I am Miss Wentworth," she explained. "I came to tell you—I came to say—"

Then, treading out her pride once more, "I came to ask if you won't reconsider your decision to suspend me. My work means everything to me. It is my life work, my vocation. I always wanted to be a nurse. I felt that it was my task to help alleviate suffering. Doctor Lancaster, apart from my own interests, I want to graduate to be able to help others. Won't you give me another opportunity?"

She spoke with her hands unconsciously clasped before her; the recollection of her earlier hopes, the thought of their frustration brought a quiver into her voice. When she stopped she saw that Lancaster was looking at her with obvious interest.

"Tell me about this morning," he said quietly.

"I had to come away without breakfast, and the fumes of the ether made me faint. I was nearly fainting when you asked me for the scalpel, and I couldn't see the tray. Indeed it was not the operation that made me ill. I have never been reprimanded before. The lady superintendent had told me several times that the hospital appreciated my work. So I hoped you would be willing to overlook my blunder and let me graduate."

my hour for seeing patients—I mean people."

"I am sorry if I did wrong!" cried the girl. "But if you knew how much it means to me—"

"I can do nothing for you now," said Lancaster.

The voice was harsh again, but curiously flat, as if he was trying to restrain his emotions, hold himself in; as if he was afraid. . . . but afraid of what? Not of his anger.

Joan was standing in front of him, and even then the appearance of the man had something pathological about it to her mind. There was not the least jauntiness or self-consciousness about him. He looked older than in the morning, depressed, and certainly ill. His manner indicated that of one just aroused from sleep. His eyes were very bright, and his face unnaturally pale. He was pressing his thumb and finger firmly against the arm of the chair, as if for support. Joan remembered the stories of his drinking habits. But she saw at once that Lancaster had not been drinking. She had attended too many alcoholic patients at the hospital not to be sure of that.

"Doctor Lancaster, my dismissal means the loss of all my prospects. I came to ask if you won't inquire about my record and then give me another chance," said Joan. "And I am sorry if I came at an inconvenient time; but now that I am here I must request the courtesy of a final answer. I shall not come to you again."

"I can't answer you," said Lancaster, as if speaking in his sleep. "In the interests of discipline—it is impossible to answer you now."

Joan turned away. The flat refusal stunned her. And there was something preposterous about Lancaster's manner, perfectly incomprehensible to her. What was the matter with him? Why did the room turn round and round? Suddenly she felt Lancaster's hand on her arm. He was supporting her, helping her into a chair; and through the fog she saw a look of concern on his face.

"Now sit quiet, Miss Wentworth," he said in a new tone of decision.

"Sit quiet, I tell you. Wait a minute."



But They Meet in a Day or Two, and Then—

and, when you are feeling composed, let me see if I can't help you."

He drew his chair toward hers again and leaned toward her.

"I have not been feeling well," he explained. "I was not myself when I discharged you this morning. When I refused to discuss the matter with you it was because it is an invariable rule that the nurses are not supposed to come to my house. Outside the hospital I see nobody connected with the hospital. I'll see what I can do. The matter will have to go before the board now, I suppose. Why did you come away without your breakfast? Why didn't your folks insist on your having something to eat?"

"I have no people," answered Joan. "My mother died nearly two years ago. We came here from Lucas county, and she was taken ill soon after our arrival. I hoped to get my diploma and have my profession."

"You had no breakfast, and you discharged you for fainting, and your diploma means everything to you," said Lancaster slowly, clasping his hands as if in thought. Then, with a decisive, odd gesture, he leaned still nearer Joan and dropped his voice as he spoke, as if he was afraid that the man in the next room would hear him.

"Remember this as long as you live," he said. "In this life people are not penalized for incapacity; they are punished for being unfortunate. Are you unlucky, Miss Wentworth?"

"I—why, yes, I suppose I must be," she answered, looking at Lancaster in growing astonishment, mixed with a little fear.

"And you have sympathy for the unfortunate? You—you said something like that just now—about wishing to be of help to others. Are you loyal and staunch?"

"I hope I am," said Joan uneasily. "If one is loyal to others, one does not fear one's own misfortunes," said Lancaster. "They rise out of some fault or weakness—if one follows the trail far enough back into one's self. I've learned that, heaven knows! Miss Wentworth," he ended suddenly, "would you consider a temporary position while your case is under investigation by the board?"

"But they meet in a day or two, and then—"

"Would you consider it," repeated Lancaster, "if you could be of greater service than you know? Suppose I said to you as I am saying now, that you seem to me the best suited, by loyalty and good will, to help, of all the nurses I know, would you accept?"

"Then, Doctor Lancaster," cried Joan triumphantly, "if you have that opinion of me you have no excuse for not getting the board to reinstate me."

The man faltered as she looked at him. He was no longer terrible to her. He seemed to have put off some hateful armor that he assumed, and revealed weakness that none had suspected. Pity for him, a vast and heartfelt pity whose cause she was unable to divine, began to stir the girl's heart.

"I pledge you my word to do all I can for you," said Lancaster. "But you must help me in turn, I need you for this purpose. I want you to go into the country for a month. It will rest you, too, and you are run down. Have you ever heard of the Lancaster institute in Drexham county?"

"I think so," answered Joan, rather doubtfully.

"It is a hobby of mine. My father established it twenty-five years ago for the hill people, but the funds became squandered, and it is not in good shape. However, it does some good, and it is the only place of its kind within a score of miles. Doctor Jenkins is in charge, and I—I run down there every now and then to keep him up to the mark. There is a matron there. The cases comprise a little light surgical work occasionally, an alcoholic or two after pay-days for the mining element, pneumonia in its season, and—yes, there's a demented woman there, but she won't come under your care. It's in the hill country. How would you like to go?"

"I don't know what to say," answered the girl.

"But you have no attachments in Avonmouth?" he asked, looking hard at her.

"Nobody. But, Doctor Lancaster, all my thoughts are bent on my reinstatement."

"I'll do my best for you if you will help me out with this case," he answered. "And you will get strong in a month and take up your work again with a light heart. You will have a small remuneration, and your fare, of course. You'll go?"

"I'll go, then," answered Joan.

"Then listen to me," he said, again speaking with lowered voice and glancing back in apprehension toward the inner door. "I shall not see you before you start, but I rely on you. You must leave on the nine o'clock train tomorrow morning. And you must speak to nobody about this undertaking."

"I shall say nothing, Doctor Lancaster. And I have to thank you with all my heart."

He frowned at her. And the curious indecision in his manner, the furtiveness of the man, which still disquieted the girl, was in extraordinary contrast to Lancaster's appearance in the theater that morning, to everything that she had associated with him. She was utterly bewildered.

As she rose Lancaster came very close to her, and now his voice was little more than a whisper.

"I'll wire to Mrs. Fraser, the matron," he said, "and I'll have the buggy meet you at the station—Lancaster station, Miss Wentworth. And I wish—"

But the door opened, and the white attendant slouched into the room. He stared insolently at Joan. "Doctor Lancaster—" he began.

"I'll see you when I am alone," Myers, answered Lancaster.

"Doctor Lancaster, will you please give me a few moments of your time," said the man urgently; and underneath the plea Joan seemed to see the insolence and contempt in his heart. Suddenly the idea came to her that this must be the man whom Lancaster had berated in the consulting room.

She went out, and as soon as she was in the passage she heard the attendant begin to address Lancaster in excited tones. Then the inner door opened. She fancied there were three men, after all. Somebody was speaking in high tones; and then Lancaster's deep, booming voice rang out.

Apparently, Dr. Lancaster has a dual personality. Is his offer genuine? Or is it a trap for the handsome nurse?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

Spares Wanted

Considerable excitement was caused among the guests at a wedding ceremony in a Havre church recently when the lady refused to marry the bridegroom. Such painful scenes might easily be avoided if the bridegroom arranged to keep one or two ladies in reserve.—London Opinion.



New Year's Eve in Good Old U. S. A.

How Love Found a Way, Following Sinking of Big French Liner.

By ELEANOR E. KING

THE "Superba" disaster had occurred on November 9. It was now well into December. The Allison, American passengers on their way home to the United States, were on the French liner at the time of the sinking of the vessel. When but two days away from the French port a fire broke out in the hold, which proved fatal to the ship. Now the Allison were en route to England. This time, they were to sail on a British liner from London.

Mr. and Mrs. Fred Allison were passing the time, which hung heavily on their hands during their journey to London, discussing previous events with their daughter, Felice. She, young, perhaps in her twenties, presenting quite a striking spectacle with her black curly hair, and her dark brown eyes, was saying:

"It seems to me if Wilmer were saved, he has surely had ample time to notify us."

"Did you call at the American Express office in Paris before we left?" inquired Mrs. Allison.

"Yes, and the clerk informed me Wilmer Daggett's mail had not been called for in the last month. I have



A Fire Broke Out Which Proved Fatal to the Ship.

tried in every way to locate him in Paris, hospitals and the like included. I give up. The fact that his mail is not called for ought to be sure enough proof he is not in Paris."

"I will never forget," she began, pondering over previous happenings. "Wilmer, as I last saw him standing on the deck, his huge frame, calm and serene, silhouetted against the chaos round about him in the huge, brilliant mass of the burning liner, as he helped crazed and fainting women and children into the lifeboats, speeding them to safety. I couldn't bear to look any longer. When I did glance back again, the nose of the flaming ship was buried far into the ocean. It is queer he should have come into my life so abruptly, and then, only to vanish equally suddenly. It is miraculous the way we were all spared," and her voice trailed off into silence.

One more day and the British liner would land in the New York harbor. The voyage had been a very rough one, and the Allison had had what little food they ate served in their rooms. Tonight, however, found a calm after the storm. The Allison made a heroic effort which resulted in the three being present at dinner in the dining room.

It being New Year's eve, some of the passengers had planned a little entertainment for those on board. When the programs were given out that evening, Felice's cheeks first

The New Year

By Katherine Edelman

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THE New Year, little child of hope, Emerges from the night, With courage high and heart serene, In robes of radiance bright.

And to each one his coming brings New hope and vision, too, Unwritten pages to be filled, Great things to plan and do.

flushed pink then turned white; as she read, clutching her mother's arm, she stammered excitedly: "Mother, do you suppose—surely, there couldn't be two Wilmer Daggetts."

Then started a frantic search of the crowd which refused to disclose the face of her Wilmer. In vain did her gaze pierce every nook and corner of the salon during the performance. She wished she could have had something to say about the printing of the programs. She would certainly have arranged it differently, so she would not have had to wait so long for this one most important of all the selections. Every one seemed to be dragging out his part terribly. What would this Wilmer Daggett look like? She could not locate the face of the one she sought any place.

Finally, a French door over at one side of the room opened to admit Wilmer Daggett, as his selection was announced from the platform. There he stood, the same old Wilmer Daggett, Felice was so happy she couldn't tell which one was singing the louder, she or Wilmer. In fact, she concluded it was a well-balanced duet. The program hadn't stated it, but that is what it turned out to be.

It had evidently been a huge success with the audience, for they insisted on an encore. Felice never realized what a wonderful voice she had been endowed with until now. What torture! She had not figured on all these encores. Why did he not pick out something shorter? To be sure, he didn't know he was keeping Felice waiting.

Ah! At last, he was leaving the platform. Hardly knowing what she did, she flew into his arms. The concert held no further attraction for Felice and Wilmer. As soon as they were away from the crowd, and Wilmer had recovered from the shock of the surprise, Felice commenced her siege of questions.

"Where have you been? We thought you had gone down with the boat. We could get no trace of you in Paris. Just think; we searched the city and surrounding towns with no avail. How does it happen?"

"You see I was hurt a little that night of the disaster," Wilmer explained; "an English freighter came along the next morning and picked up our boat load. In it was only one other passenger besides myself, and the rest were members of the ship's crew. When we arrived in England, I was put in a London hospital, where I stayed for almost three weeks. They told me I had some broken bones; I seemed to feel all right."

"That is just like you, Wilmer," broke forth Felice, protestingly.

"I thought you must have called about two or three weeks ago," continued Wilmer.

"And there I spent those weeks trying to find out whether you were dead or alive."

"Anyway, Felice," Wilmer added, slipping his arm around her, "by some good fortune we were guided to the same boat, and here we are tonight."

An intermission of several minutes followed.

The next afternoon, New Year's day, found Felice and Wilmer on the deck watching for the New York harbor. As darkness began to close in on them they could discern a few lights in the distance. Then the lights outlined shapes and before long, New York with its many skyscrapers and multitude of people, loomed not far before them. They watched the wonderful skyline as it grew plainer and more complicated each minute. As they came closer, that most magnificent of all magnificent sights presented itself, silhouetted against the darkness and lesser lights of the buildings.

"In her cloak of ermine, a recent gift from the clouds for the Christmas festivities, with all the dignity, majesty and grandeur a woman can possess, stands this huge figure of Liberty, a symbol to all those who



They Watched the Wonderful Skyline as it Grew Plainer.

may come into our country, of the standards which our fellow countrymen uphold. Felice," breathed Wilmer, awe-stricken, at the sight of this old familiar statue.

"Think how this sight must impress the foreigner who is landing here for the first time. I never saw that statue in quite that light before. It is gorgeous, supreme. Isn't it wonderful? Felice, here we are together, arriving safely this time, to start the New Year right, in the good old U. S. A."

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Where the New Year Is Born

THE lonely Chatham island, lying in the South Pacific ocean, may be described as the birthplace of each new year, and the handful of Brits who inhabit the place are the first to welcome it in, says the Manchester Guardian.

Lying nearly on the meridian opposite to that of Greenwich, and some 40 miles east of New Zealand, this island has been chosen as the spot where the day begins, the critical meridian which decides the birth of each day, and of each year being arbitrarily laid down almost entirely in the waters of the ocean. From Chatham island the new year wings its way to the tiny Antipodes islands and thence to the mainland of New Zealand and across Australia and Asia to Europe, arriving in the British Isles at midnight exactly twelve hours old.

New Year Resolution

"Are you expecting any disorder on New Year's Eve?"

"No, sir," answered Cactus Joe. "In order to preserve the Gulch's reputation as a peaceable community we have all decided to leave home and give Snake Ridge a few lessons in how to make another start in life."