

The TRUANT SOUL

by Victor Rousseau

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SOMETHING HIDDEN

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. Joan is struck by the favorable change in the appearance and demeanor of the doctor, recalling that at times in the hospital he has been gentle and thoughtful and at others supercilious and bullying. He tells her he can do nothing for her at the hospital, but offers her a position in a nursing institution in the country, telling her she can be of "great assistance" to him. A man named Myers demands she tell him the doctor had said to her. She denies him the information, and he covertly threatens her. At the institution, which is owned by Doctor Lancaster, Joan finds Myers. He tells her he is the secretary. She instinctively dislikes and fears him.

CHAPTER IV—Continued

The girl, after a moment's hesitation, preceded Mrs. Fraser into the building. She saw a long corridor, with a number of doors on either side, and the stairs in front of her.

"You would like to see the building, Miss Wentworth?" asked the matron. "Or perhaps you are tired and would prefer to go to your room."

"No, I should like to see it. Have you many patients?"

"Only Mrs. Dana. She's always here, you know. There was a boy with a broken arm, but he left this morning. In winter, though, we're often crowded. It isn't much of a place, Miss Wentworth, but we do a little good. This is the doctor's apartment. He sleeps here; next door is the clinic, and next to that the operating room. Here we keep the supplies. This is my room. Mr. Myers, the secretary, has his room opposite the doctor's. This is the dining room, and here is the kitchen. Now I'll show you your room upstairs, Miss Wentworth."

The corridor above was a replica of the one below. At the head of the stairs a little passage branched off toward a large window in the wall, with a door to one side of it.

"Mrs. Dana occupies this room," said the matron. "Perhaps the doctor mentioned her?"

"Doctor Lancaster said something—"

"She is out of her mind, poor woman, but she is perfectly quiet. You see, Miss Wentworth, she is like an infant mentally. She will not trouble you. Excuse me a moment."

She drew a key from the bunch that hung at her waist and unlocked the door very softly, and with a certain furtiveness, Joan thought. Looking in, the girl saw a strikingly handsome woman of about seven and thirty years, seated in a chair beside a window, with a shawl over her knees. She was in a dressing gown, and her hair hung over her shoulders in two braids. She did not look up or stir as the matron entered, and Mrs. Fraser, after closing the door behind her, presently came out and locked it again.

"I'll show you your room now, Miss Wentworth," she said. "You will be alone on this floor except for Mrs. Dana, but you are not afraid of her?"

"Not in the least. Is she incurable?"

"Yes, quite, poor thing. She has sat in that chair all day for nearly three years."

"And never goes out?"

"Out? No, we don't let her out. It might excite her. But I am not supposed to speak about the cases. It's very sad, though. She comes of a very good family, and they neglected her when she was in trouble. Miss Wentworth, and she's as good as dead to everyone now. She never speaks, but I don't know whether she could. I've never heard her since I came here three years ago. This is the ward. And this is your room."

The open doors along the corridor had revealed clean little rooms with iron bedsteads and plain furniture; the room at the end of the passage, however, was well furnished, with a heavy new carpet and old mahogany furniture. Outside the window, through the twilight, appeared the distant mountains.

Joan, turning, was surprised to see Mrs. Fraser watching her intently. As their eyes met the matron lowered her own in some confusion. There was a furtiveness about her glance that momentarily revived Joan's uneasiness. It was a strange journey, and Doctor Lancaster's behavior had been strange. Then there was the man Myers. Joan felt a sudden sinking of the heart; she was almost regretful that she had come.

A colored maid brought up her suitcase.

"This is Lucy," said the matron. "She will do anything you tell her."

There was almost a look of agony on her face, and again she turned her eyes upon Joan's face as if to search out her thoughts. Then, with an abrupt "good night," she turned away.

Joan called to her as she was leaving the room. "Mrs. Fraser," she said. "I understood there was a patient here besides Mrs. Dana."

The matron turned slowly round. "There was the boy who left this morning," she said inquiringly.

"But I understood from Doctor Lancaster—at least, he didn't tell me in so many words, but he gave me to understand that there was a special case here, requiring care and sympathy."

The matron stared at her. "No, there's nobody," she said. "Nobody except—"

Suddenly she uttered a convulsive sound, and putting her hands over her face, ran from the room. Joan heard her stumbling down the corridor outside as if she had gone blind.

She stood irresolute in her room. Her sleepiness was gone; she was afraid, and she seemed to have got out of her depth. It had begun with John Lancaster's strange behavior in his office the evening before. She had not been able then to reconcile him in any way with the Lancaster whom she had seen, smug, self-satisfied and vain, in the operating room, the bully who kept the nurses in agitation and fear, though he was the traditional John Lancaster of whom she had heard. Then there was the man Myers, equally strange; and the matron. Some mystery was at the heart of it all; and Joan was the more afraid because the reason for her fear was unknown to her.

Her sleepiness was gone. She stood beside the window, looking out into the darkness. A whippoorwill was calling monotonously among the pines; here and there among the hills a solitary light was twinkling. The air was cool and balsam scented. It was like the dearly remembered days at home. But in the heart of that peace was apprehension.

Looking back now, Joan thought that she had undertaken a rash and extraordinary adventure in coming so far from Avonmouth alone, and at the proposal of a man whose reputation was an evil one. She would go home on the morrow.

Something was wrong, and in spite of his apparent kindness an inner prompting warned her to beware of Lancaster. He was at the heart of all this, and had ensnared her in some scheme for his own purposes. She locked her door and went to bed, to sleep restlessly.

Chapter V

When she awakened it was morning. The sun was streaming brightly into the room. Through the window Joan saw a scene of exquisite beauty in the rolling hills, the winding road, the forest glades. Underneath the chickens were scrambling for the corn which the matron was flinging to them. A thousand birds were awing, the universal robin and the bluebird of her beloved home. The dew lay heavy on the leaves and grass. Joan felt a sudden ecstasy. This was her own country, and she had come back to it. Her fears were dissipated with the night shadows.

She would remain. She decided that while she was dressing. And yet a doubt was in her heart. And with it came the remembrance of something that had disturbed her during the night. Filtering into her consciousness came the recollection of an automobile rolling up to the door, and of men's voices conversing in low tones under her window. Then the machine had rolled away. It must have been about two in the morning.

Perhaps a patient had been brought to the institute, thought the girl, as she went downstairs. Mrs. Fraser's door was closed, and the only person still seemed to be the colored maid, who nodded and smiled as she looked up from her sweeping. Joan began to pace the long verandah in front of the building, looking out across the hills and thinking over her situation.

Perhaps it was only morbidity, or mental fatigue, that had made her read things in the faces of Myers and Mrs. Fraser which did not exist there. Perhaps the day would disclose her position more definitely.

She was walking past the open door of the building when she saw a man leaving the doctor's room. It was Myers, the secretary. He saw Joan and came briskly out upon the verandah.

"Good morning, Miss Wentworth," he said, in his rasping tones. "Pleasant weather, isn't it? Much better here than in the heat of Avonmouth."

"How do you do, Mr. Myers?" said Joan, trying to overcome her instinctive disgust of the man. "You have a new patient here, haven't you?"

He looked at her with a sort of quizzical shrewdness. "What makes you think that, Miss Wentworth?" he inquired.

Evidently the institution is a place of mystery. And what brings Doctor Lancaster?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

No Danger From Comets

The Naval Observatory says that the mass of a comet is never large; and the material is, for the most part, exceedingly tenuous. It is probable that the earth, if struck by a comet, would witness nothing more than a meteoric shower. The explosions, if any, would be similar to those hitherto observed in the case of large meteorites.

Appreciate Color, Line, Accessories

Distinguished Appearance of Women Due to Their Keen Judgment.

If women have not learned perfection in the art of dress they are not far from it. One glance at a group of smart women, says a correspondent in the Kansas City Star, will quickly establish the fact that their distinguished appearance is due in a great measure to a keen appreciation of color, to a knowledge of line, and to a sense of fitness in the choice of accessories.

There is clean-cut definiteness about the silhouette of the season that is most intriguing and the effect of subtle slimness adds an intangible air of distinction.

In the modern woman's scheme of things sartorial there is no such thing as buying a hat or dress or coat without considering its relation to every part of the costume. The result is a harmoniousness that is infinitely chic.

In plaid designers have found a material peculiarly adapted to the needs of youth and it is not surprising to discover that practically every countenance of note has included in her collection of youthful models a number developed in plaided fabrics.

Tunics of plaid taffeta are an integral part of the ensemble costumes designed for schoolgirls and their sisters of subadult age.

A street dress achieved smartness with fine tailoring and trim of rich



Trim of Rich Plaid Is Featured in This Street Dress.

plaid. An attached scarf was wrapped around the throat to give the effect of the high neckline.

One of the prettiest dresses is a dark blue flannel which has a three-quarter length tunic bound with red and blue plaid, and worn over a skirt of plaid. The fashion of lining the coat with plaid, or of using one of the new woolsens which are plain on one side and plaid on the other for the coat is a distinctive note of the new modes and one that has achieved a decided vogue.

A row of tiny red enameled buttons extends from neck to hem on a dress of black bengaline, two large buttons of repoussé silver fasten a coat frock of navy kasha, while numberless buttons covered with green crepe de chine trim a gown.

Approve Simplicity of Little Youthful Frock

After all is said and done, it is the straight little youthful frock that holds first place in feminine affections. And in its utter simplicity, its freedom from useless and superfluous details, it fittingly interprets the modern spirit.

Social life is much more informal than it was a decade ago and the scope of women's activities has widened, all of which has had an effect upon fashion.

During the war women became more or less dependent upon the dress that was appropriate for all hours of the day, that was practical and useful and at the same time sufficiently smart. That they still remain faithful to dresses of this type is proved by the newest models.

An important feature of these simple dresses is the excellence of the material used and the cleverness displayed in their trimming. A touch of color, a line of tiny metal buttons, a row of braid, or an outline of plique are all that is allowed in the way of decoration.

An example of the best of these simple frocks was made of kaslin in the pale natural tone that Paris took up in the latter part of the summer and which quickly attained a decided vogue on this side of the water. The cleverly cut overskirt forms pockets and the necessary bit of color was supplied in the black and gold embroidery on the neck and sleeves.

The high favor of natural muskrat and leopard cat cannot be overestimated. Many new coats which are appearing are of either of these two furs. One natural muskrat coat noted was so dark in color that it looked very much

Coat of Shaggy Finish Dashing in Appearance



A decidedly novel note has been struck in this new all-weather sports coat. It is duo-tone in effect, the boxes being separated by bands of long-haired lustrous mohair and filled with a raised face of downy wool.

Vegetables and Greens Must Be Strictly Fresh

Fresh vegetables and greens must be strictly fresh when purchased. It is quite useless to expect to prepare an appetizing, crisp salad if the materials are wilted, writes Helen Harrington Downing, in "Saving at Home."

Care must be given salad greens as soon as they are delivered. Separate the lettuce or romaine, wash and shake to dry, then place the quantity in a fresh tea towel or salad bag, shake any remaining moisture out and put in a cool place until needed. Never leave fresh salad greens in water. Wilted lettuce is sometimes partially revived by immersion in cold water for twenty minutes or so, but it receives much better if cleaned and placed in the salad bag on ice.

Cress is an addition to any salad. A sprig of watercress added to a cottage cheese or bean salad adds just the touch that lifts them out of the seemingly overthrifty class. Cress will keep indefinitely if given the same treatment we give parsley for long keeping.

Wash the greens thoroughly, shake as dry as possible and put in a mason jar. Screw the top down just one thread to hold. Moisture will gather on the side of the jar and so long as it does the greens will keep fresh. Add a few drops of cold water as the moisture dries out.

Canned spinach, beans, cabbage or any canned vegetables to be served as salad should be opened, turned into a dish, and chilled for an hour or so before serving. Any cleansing necessary, as removing the veins from shrimps and any washing of dry-pack products, should be done when the can is first opened.

Metal Lace for Dance Hat

One of the interesting accessories sponsored by Fashion is the little restaurant and dance hat for which metal lace is chosen. Gold is the favorite this season, made up in turban shapes with little or no trimming. In addition to gold lace, there is the turban of metal embroidered net, which often introduces color.

Scarff Still in Fashion—Day and Evening Wear

The scarf is still with us, but in more varied and flexible incarnations than before.

Evening dresses accomplish scarf effects by means of a panel fixed to the shoulder with a band of red roses. Ties of fur, or in material bordered with fur, take the place of scarfs. They can be sewed to the coat or put on separately. One end is often passed through a slit in the other and thus held snugly about the neck.

Hats Growing Higher

Hat crowns are growing higher. One new model is an exact reproduction of a man's "topper," except that it is in log cabin brown velvet and has a wide band of black satin around it.

Mark New Gown

Six large cloth-covered buttons on the right shoulder and a scarf of the goods which ties at the back of the neck are features of a new frock. The material is a suede finished fabric in caramel brown.

POINTS ON KEEPING WELL

DR. FREDERICK R. GREEN
Editor of "HEALTH"

X-RAY FOR WHOOPING COUGH

DURING the winter of 1923 there was an unusual amount of whooping cough in this country. Ordinarily, this disease kills about ten thousand babies a year. This is bad enough, but every four or five years for some reason, it is particularly prevalent. Evidently, 1923 was one of these years.

Existing methods of treatment are of little use. Once contracted, the disease runs its course of from four to nine weeks. The frequent spasms of coughing, exhaust and weaken the child, who often develops pneumonia and dies, indirectly but none the less actually, a victim of whooping cough.

We do not know the exact cause of this disease. We do know, however, that in most cases, the thymus gland, located in front of the bronchial tubes and trachea, is considerably enlarged. This gland, which corresponds to the sweetbread in the calf, is large during early life, but shrinks after the first fifteen years, until in the adult there is left only a fibrous cord. It has long been surmised that this enlarged gland, pressing on the air tubes, might have something to do with the spasms of coughing.

While treating these enlarged glands with X-ray, it was noticed that, soon after the light treatments were begun, the spells of coughing were relieved. So Dr. Ralph Leonard, of Boston, decided to test the value of X-ray treatment in a large number of baby patients in the Boston Floating hospital. Four hundred babies with whooping cough were selected and carefully examined, so that there might be no question about the existence of the disease. Two hundred were also carefully examined, as so-called control cases. All were given the same care under the same surroundings, except that four hundred were given X-ray treatment, and two hundred were not. Of the children treated, 75 per cent showed marked improvement. In children under one year, 100 per cent were benefited.

Used in the early days of the disease, the X-ray does not prevent the coughing nor does it shorten the disease. In children under two years, however, in those not given X-ray treatment, the disease lasted nine weeks, while those given the X-ray treatment were well in five weeks. As the death rate is higher the longer the disease lasts, this shortening of the duration doubtless saved many babies' lives.

This number is by far the largest that has ever been treated by X-ray. After long experience and careful study, the opinion of all the doctors on the staff of the hospital was that the X-ray was the best means at present known for controlling the spasms in whooping cough and for shortening the duration of the disease.

SPECTATORITIS

TOM MARSHALL said that what this country needed was a good five-cent cigar. What it needs more is a good game in which anyone and everyone can take part. We are suffering as a nation from what the health commissioner of one of our largest cities very aptly calls "spectatoritis." There are too few playing and too many occupying grandstand and bleacher seats. During the beautiful days of summer, thousands of men, most of them middle aged, many of them too fat and with muscles that are crying for exercise, sit on the benches and watch a few other men play baseball. When fall comes and the baseball season closes, the same men sit in the grandstand and watch 22 men play football. Or it may be a wrestling match or a boxing contest or a six-day bicycle race or a billiard tournament. A few men are doing the work. Thousands are looking on.

The players are trained to the minute. To be a star baseball player or a crack football player, they have developed their bodies far beyond the needs of present-day life. This means that their hearts are twice as large as they need and that by middle life, when they ought to be in their prime, they have fatty instead of muscular hearts. Athletes generally die young.

The locker-room doesn't take any chances of a fatty heart. He has his fat around his waist. His muscles are flabby and he doesn't have a good sweat from muscular exertion once a year.

So the 18 ball players or the 22 football men overwork and shorten their lives to amuse the thousands of spectators who underwork and shorten theirs.

Sounds silly, doesn't it? It is. The object of games is not to produce stars, any more than the object of eating is to produce men who can eat four times as much food as the average man. Our present system of athletics is killing off our picked young men at a time when they should be in their prime. The hundreds of thousands of spectators who pay to sit still and see other men work when they should be working themselves are kidding themselves. You can't keep fit by watching another man work, any more than you can keep strong by watching another man eat.

Can't some wide awake American invent a universal game? We need it in our schools and colleges and more than all in our every-day lives.