

The Truant Soul

By
Victor Rousseau
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"IT IS TOO LATE"

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 who 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 what 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. The only patient at the institution is a Mrs. Dana, demented but harmless. Joan is vaguely uneasy, feeling that there is some mystery about the place. Doctor Lancaster arrives. Joan accuses him of deceiving her, declaring her intention of leaving. He tells her he is the patient who needs her, saying he wants help in a "big fight," but makes no further explanation. She decides to stay. Evidently Doctor Lancaster is afraid of Myers.

CHAPTER V—Continued

"There is no reason why you should not see him because he happens to be with Mr. Myers."

"Well, Miss Wentworth, you see, Mr. Myers is his secretary, and there's always a lot of business to be done."

"Doctor Jenkins, Doctor Lancaster is in no condition to attend to business," said Joan. "What is the matter with him?"

The doctor looked right and left, as if trying to find some refuge. But the girl was standing in front of him, and he could not enter the buggy without pushing her away.

"Miss Wentworth, please don't ask me about the doctor," he said. "I do my best for him. It isn't in my power to do more than I am doing."

"It is in your power to help him to be master of himself. How can the most famous surgeon in the South come here and be at the mercy of a man like Myers?"

"Why, Miss Wentworth, you've got that wrong," protested Jenkins. "Mr. Myers is only the secretary. Mr. Myers does all he can for the doctor. We've got to keep the institute together, Miss Wentworth, and we're each doing our best. You see, the trust fund wasn't made over to the doctor. He was only in charge of it, and when the money was missing it worried him. And—and—"

He stopped, as if he had caught himself babbling about something that should not have been mentioned. Then, as Joan stood aside, he leaped into the vehicle. "Good morning," he muttered, raising his hat, and drove away furiously.

Joan remained where the buggy had been. She realized that for the present she could get no help from Jenkins. He had seemed afraid, not for himself, but for Lancaster. What had Lancaster done, then, that he should be in the power of Myers? Had he embezzled the funds of the institute?

The question was an absurd one. It was unbelievable that Lancaster should be a thief; besides, the explanation would not solve the problem at all.

She went back to the verandah. She was resolved to reach the bottom of the mystery, for Lancaster's sake; to prove her loyalty although he had withdrawn his demand on her.

As she reached the front door she was startled to hear her name spoken in the matron's room. The speaker was Myers.

"But she knows nothing at all," Mrs. Fraser was saying.

"She knows a good deal too much," Myers answered. "What do you suppose the doctor brought her here for, if not to try to publish his shame to the world?"

"Aye, his shame," repeated the matron bitterly. "It's hard work for three people to try to hold up one man, without a fourth coming in."

"Well, is that his game?" demanded the secretary. "Is it or isn't it?"

"We want a nurse. You know we've often tried to get one, Mr. Myers, but they won't stay here. It's hard work taking care of the patients sometimes, when there's a rush."

"Rush!" repeated Myers scornfully. "Who'd rush to this old place with the doctor's reputation?"

"They do come, and the people trust him," said Mrs. Fraser, half crying.

"Yes," scoffed the other. "And the doctor still has his grandiose ideas

upon the problem again. Lancaster had taken an immense overdose, one inconceivable in the ordinary morphine habitue. And he must have taken it during the brief period when Myers was with him; he must have taken it as soon as he got back to his room. Why had Myers permitted it?

At last Lancaster opened his eyes. His gaze fell upon Joan's face, at first without recognition, then with wonder. "Water!" he gasped, after a few ineffectual attempts to speak.

Joan drew a glassful and gave it to him, and then another. Lancaster gulped down the liquid greedily. Presently he sat up, stood on his feet, and groped his way to the chair.

"I'm sorry," he said, looking at Joan with a whimsical expression. "I should have told you."

"Doctor Lancaster, I am ashamed of you," said Joan.

"God knows I'm ashamed of myself," he burst out fretfully. "Miss Wentworth, in the third drawer of that desk, beneath a pile of letters, you'll find a bottle—"

"No," said Joan decisively.

She knew by the wholly unnecessary secrecy in the concealment, characteristic of the drug habitue, that Lancaster had gone a long way down the declivity.

"Miss Wentworth, you misunderstand me. It's an antidote for alkaloidal poisoning. I was experimenting with a new drug."

Joan found herself sobbing and she was astonished. It was the wreck of the man's moral nature that was unbearable. She saw the latent fitness in him, and it was as if the needless devil that spoke through his lips.

Lancaster looked distressed. "Miss Wentworth, you had better leave me and go back to Avonmouth on the evening train," he said. "I ought never to have brought you here. It was pure selfishness on my part. Miss Wentworth, please don't cry. Go away now, and we'll talk it over before you start for the station."

"If I go away," wept Joan, "you'll take another hypodermic."

"I pledge you my word of honor no," said Lancaster, with almost ingenuous candor. "I am really not accustomed to such a thing; that is why it knocked me out. I have been suffering from insomnia, and I tried a new alkaloid—not morphine, you know, but a derivative—for the benefit of my patients."

The words came from his lips so glibly that Joan was almost convinced—would have been, had not the first lie been different. She hesitated. She had no intention of leaving the room, but she turned away.

Lancaster misunderstood her action. With incredible swiftness his hand shot out toward the little bottle. He had uncorked it and plunged in the syringe before the girl could snatch it away.

"Your word of honor!" said Joan.

He leaned back in his chair and looked at her with amusement.

"Miss Wentworth," he said, "you are a nurse. Surely you are aware that I am not to be trusted, that my word of honor is worthless? That I am essentially devoid of honesty and decency? Don't you know that this accursed thing—he pointed toward the bottle—'robs men of their honor and self-respect, and lowers them beneath the beasts?'"

He spoke as if at a clinic, and quite impersonally; there was the shadow of a whimsical smile about his lips, which twitched, nevertheless, with pain.

"That does not refer to you," answered Joan. "You asked me to help you in the biggest fight of your life. Well, I am going to help you in that fight."

"It is too late," said Lancaster.

"Never!" replied Joan valiantly.

"You don't understand, Miss Wentworth. That's the mistake all people make in trying to cure us. Don't you know that a man or woman never becomes a victim to a drug except from sleeplessness, or physical pain, or under stress of mental anguish? If you could cure me the old trouble would still be there. I should fall a victim again. Life is worthless to me, Miss Wentworth," he ended, quite simply.

The truth is out at last. The morphine habit is hard to cure. Will Joan succeed?

(TO BE CONTINUED)

Many Legends Treat of Woman's Creation

Woman's first appearance has been a popular subject of legends. The Phoenician myth of creation is founded on the story of Pygmalion and Galatea. There the first woman was carved out of ivory by the first man, and then endowed with life by Aphrodite, says the Kansas City Star.

The Greek theory of the creation of woman, according to Hesiod, was that Zeus, as a cruel jest, ordered Vulcan to make woman out of clay, and then induce the various gods and goddesses to invest the clay doll with all their worst qualities, the result being a lovely thing.

The Scandinavians say that as Odin, Vili and Ve, the three sons of Bor, were walking along the beach they found two sticks of wood, one of ash and one of elm. Sitting down, the gods shaped man and woman out of these sticks, whitening the woman from the elm and called her *Erlin*.

COLOR PLAYS PART IN FORMAL FROCKS

Loveliest Shades Are Conspicuous in Daintiest Evening Attire.

Sweater in Black and White for Spring Wear

Evening, dinner and dance frocks are of interest, both matron and maid coming under their spell, for there is something so alluring, so colorful about these dresses which belong to the electric lighted part of the day that few can withstand them, observes a fashion writer in the Cleveland Plain Dealer.

Perhaps it is best to scrutinize the materials in vogue for evening before we turn our attention to the varied modes. Velvets, both in white and colors are especially good, and they may be plain chiffon veaves, or gorgeous velvet brocaded chiffons and georgettes. Solid-colored and shaded chiffons are especially youthful, while satins, silk brocaded chiffons and laces, gold and silver are also smart.

Color, too, plays an important part in evening attire. The loveliest reds are used, flame, freckler and castilian with rose, coral and shell pink, glowing yellows and golds for those who can wear them with blues, lavender,



Here is shown a trimly tailored black and white sweater for early spring wear. It fastens snugly at the throat and is one of the most popular of present-day styles.



Buffant Frock, Embroidered and Lace Trimmed Back and Paniers.

ders, purples, fuchsia and several tones of green.

The all-white evening gown is also featured to a notable degree, and very attractive such frocks are, the necessary color touch being given by gorgeous ostrich fans, gayly embroidered scarfs or shawls, Spanish or oriental in design.

After one has a general idea as to material and color, deciding on the particular mode in which the gown is to be fashioned, if it is to be made by a modiste, is the next step. Indeed, even when buying a garment of any type in the store it facilitates matters to have some idea as to the material and color desired.

For the young girl, a full-skirted mode is always becoming. This fullness may be achieved by a straight gathered skirt, a circular one, or by the use of godets. A pretty model

shown recently was of tangerine-colored georgette made with a tight bodice and an extremely wide circular skirt, the sides being a trifle longer than the front or back. The trimming consisted of self-colored flat silk roses about two and a half inches in diameter, set at intervals over the entire skirt.

Knitted Dress Durable, Comfortable and Warm

The knitted dress is a much perfected product today, in comparison with that of only a few years ago, says the Kansas City Star.

As to the definite advantages of the knitted dress, it is, when well made, extremely durable and comfortable warm and yet light weight. And it doesn't wrinkle! The freedom of movement which the knitted fabric permits makes this costume suitable for sports and for general wear.

If you are not careful to buy a dress that is of good, firm, close knit, and made of first quality yarns, it is quite likely to sag out of shape and wear out quickly. You must do more than select a garment of excellent material and workmanship, too, to secure a maximum of service and continued beauty in a knit dress. It is particularly important that you select the correct size, for a too-small knit dress, however high grade, will soon stretch and become shapeless. You must be careful not to pin collars or accessories to your knitted costume, since to do so is to invite holes and "runs."

The knitted fabrics you will most commonly see in outer apparel are jersey, silk jersey, tricotette and knitted coatings and suitings. The best grades of knit wool suitings are carefully finished, stretched and shrunk, so that the possibilities of their getting out of shape will be a minimum.

Sometimes you will see goods of this type made with a knitted background and a heavy, napped surface. Or, you may see knit goods in which the face is made of one kind of fiber, and the back of another—the "plated" materials. The same term is applied to a knitted fabric with face of one color and back of another color.

Fur Wraps Should Be Kept in Cold Closet

"This coat is too gorgeous for words. I can't get over it!" And reluctantly the owner of a new fur coat opened the door of the closet in the hall, where her new treasure was to hang.

But her practical aunt rose and peered into the closet suspiciously, even thrusting in an exploring hand.

"My dear child," she ejaculated, "you mustn't dream of keeping your coat in that hot closet! Why, the air in there is superheated. That will not do at all. Furs, you know, are cold weather affairs, and were never intended for tropical temperatures. Furs that are overheated lose their richness and luster just as feathers that are rained on lose their fullness and sheen. Don't you know how different a dog's coat looks in winter? In summer it is limp and dull in appearance, but in midwinter, when the air is snappy cold, the hair stands out from his body full of life and shiny with vigor."

"Your fur coat is subject to the same changes. Warmth and lack of fresh air will take all of the 'pep' out of fur that should be bristling with life and sheen. It really should hang out of doors, I suppose; but lacking that we can surely find a cold closet, somewhere—the icier the better. Why not that chilly storeroom off the pantry? You can arrange a clean corner for it, and I assure you it will look a hundred times better than if it hung in this furnace-like closet."

The experts say that the reason fur is so warm is that it forms air spaces which keep out the cold. Fur that is crisp and live has many more of these

air spaces, whereas artificially heated fur droops and grows limp, preventing the circulation of the air. Warmed fur, neither looks as well nor keeps you as warm as cold fur. You can bring in your coat and warm it slightly before going out in it, if you wish, but it should be kept in a cold place the rest of the time.—Kansas City Star.

Stones in All Colors

The synthetic stones in all the colors of precious stones shown in the chokers are so large as to be burdensome but they are having a great vogue, and almost every woman one sees is decked out in glass of some sort. The newest things in crystal quartz beads alternating with smaller beads or disks of bright glass, green, blue or coral, are becoming to almost everyone.

Seen on Newest Wraps

Honeycomb, an old form of English embroidery, now is employed on the newest and most delectable of evening wraps. One such covering is of chiffon velvet of the true honey shade, with a long cross-over front but sleeveless, a deep cape taking the place of sleeves. This is honeycombed around the shoulders and hem in half-foot deep bands.

For Bobbed Coiffure

Ingenious and varied have been the devices for keeping bobbed locks demurely dignified for formal evening dances. The latest idea is a bandeau of fine silver wire, studded with crystals and worn low across the ends of the hair from ear to ear.

The Kitchen Cabinet

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To talk with God, no breath is lost;
Talk on!
To walk with God, no strength is lost;
Walk on!
To wait on God, no time is lost;
Wait on!
To work with God, the Truth is found;
Work on!

—Anon.

DISHES FOR OCCASIONS

For the children's party these little cakes will be enjoyed:

Come - Again.—Sift two cupfuls of flour with one-half teaspoonful of salt, two teaspoonfuls of baking powder. Add one cupful of chopped raisins and pecans, mixed in equal parts, and one cupful of brown sugar. Beat one egg very light, add one-half cupful of milk and stir this into the dry ingredients. Lastly, stir in two tablespoonfuls of butter. Drop by small teaspoonfuls on a greased baking sheet; sift over them a mixture of cinnamon and sugar and bake in a hot oven.

Children's Cake.—Melt one-third of a cupful of butter; add two-thirds of a cupful of molasses, three-quarters of a cupful of milk and two eggs, well-beaten. Sift together two and one-half cupfuls of entire wheat flour, three-quarters of a cupful of salt, combine mixtures; add one cupful of seedless raisins and turn into a well-buttered melon mold. Cover and steam three hours. The next day make a thick icing, flavor with coffee. Have slices of bread cut to represent the head and tail of a turtle; place these in position at the ends of the cake. Melt a square of chocolate; add one teaspoonful of butter and enough boiling water to make a thin mixture. Frost the cake; then, with a small brush, dipped frequently into the chocolate mixture, draw parallel lines over the sides, following the depressions made by the mold. Paint the mouth and eyes of the turtle with the chocolate. Serve on an oblong platter.

Orange Ice Cream.—Strain two and one-half cupfuls of orange juice; add one cupful of sugar and, slowly, one cupful each of milk and cream. Freeze as usual. Mold, if desired, in individual molds and garnish with candied orange peel.

Head Cheese.—Clean the head, removing the brains, tongue and eyes. Place in a deep kettle and cover with cold water. Cook at a low point until the meat leaves the bones. Remove the meat from the head and cut into neat pieces. Add to the liquid the juice of two lemons, the grated rind of one lemon, one tablespoonful of poultry dressing, two tablespoonfuls of celery leaves, one of dried parsley, two tablespoonfuls of salt, one tablespoonful of paprika, one clove of garlic minced fine. Mix well and pour into an oblong pan to mold.

Good Puddings.

At this season of the year richer puddings and sauces are enjoyed.

Suet Pudding.—Take one cupful each of suet, chopped fine, molasses and sour milk. Beat two eggs, add to the milk, mix with suet and molasses and add three and one-half cupfuls of flour, one teaspoonful of soda, one cupful of raisins and currants mixed and spices to taste. Steam two hours. Serve with:

Egg Sauce.—Beat the white of an egg until stiff, add the yolk and beat again, one cupful of powdered sugar, a pinch of salt, one teaspoonful of vanilla, and just before serving a cupful of rich hot milk.

Prune Pudding.—Soak and remove the stones after cooking from one pound of prunes. Cut up, add one pint of coarse bread crumbs, one cupful of sugar, one-half cupful of butter, one-fourth cupful of molasses, three eggs, one teaspoonful of cinnamon, one-half teaspoonful of cloves, one-half teaspoonful of soda dissolved in one tablespoonful of milk. Mix and steam three hours.

Prune Pudding.—Take one cupful of choice prunes, soak overnight, mince fine, add three stiffly beaten egg whites, one cupful of sugar; pile into a well-buttered baking dish and bake in a slow oven. Serve at once with cream.

Baked Indian Pudding.—Moisten one cupful of corn meal with one cupful of sweet milk and stir into one quart of scalding milk with one teaspoonful of salt. Cook ten minutes, then add one cupful of suet, one-half cupful of brown sugar, one-fourth cupful of molasses, two eggs and a cupful of raisins. Add another quart of milk and pour into a deep earthen dish and bake for four hours. Stir well every fifteen minutes for the first hour, then sprinkle the top of the pudding with flour to form a brown crust with the suet and continue baking until thoroughly browned. This pudding may be reheated and served to the last tablespoonful and will be good as long as it lasts. Serve hot with hard sauce.



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Nellie Maxwell