

# The Truant Soul

By Victor Rousseau

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## MYERS

**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 another 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.

## CHAPTER III—Continued

"You're a fool! You don't know when you are well off. I tell you, I wash my hands of you. This is final!" Joan could not help but hear. And as she emerged into the passage, all the time hearing the sounds of the quarreling voices, Myers came hurrying past.

He did not see her. He ran to the door, flung it open, and rushed down the steps into the street. As he went along the passage the girl saw him staring right and left; then, as she came out, he saw her and went toward her. She knew that it was she whom he had been seeking.

"What was it Doctor Lancaster was saying to you, Miss Wentworth, before I came in?" he asked in his rasping tone.

Joan stared at him in astonishment. Now she realized that she had mistaken him; he was not a servant, but apparently a member of the doctor's household.

"Will you let me pass, please?" asked Joan, as he blocked the way.

"I want to know what the doctor was saying to you," repeated the man doggedly.

"Are you going to refuse me passage?" demanded the girl, flushing with anger.

He stepped aside with a sneer and a mock bow. "O, very well, if that's your attitude," he answered. "I shall find out."

Joan turned swiftly upon him. "I don't know who you are, but I shall complain of you to Doctor Lancaster," she said.

Myers looked at her and sneered and chuckled. Then, without a word, he went back into the doctor's room. And still the voices kept up their quarreling dialogue.

Joan found herself in the street in the twilight, and now the unreality of the absurd interview struck home to her. She tried to puzzle it out. Before she reached the boarding house she thought she had her clue.

That Lancaster, the terror of the nurses, should have been unable to promise immediate reinstatement, his evident good-will, his indecision and illness were explicable only in one way. The man Myers must be a relative, the third man perhaps a nephew. Lancaster had been supporting a worthless pair in idleness, and had turned on them in exasperation. That was the meaning of his look of illness, his preoccupation—the shock of some domestic discovery.

At any rate she was satisfied with some such solution. And she was certain that, if she pleased him with her mysterious mission, her reinstatement would follow. She went home happy, and Mrs. Webb read the news in her face the moment she opened the door.

"I knew it, my dear," she exclaimed with pleasure. "I knew that you could twist that old devil round your finger if you tried hard enough."

"Mrs. Webb, it was nothing of the kind," said Joan. "And Doctor Lancaster is one of the kindest of men. He's going to try to have his decision reversed, and—Mrs. Webb, he is sending me to a sanitarium, on a case, in the meantime."

She checked herself, suddenly remembering Lancaster's caution. But Mrs. Webb took the girl to her wide bosom and kissed her.

"You little humbug!" she said.

"Mrs. Webb," cried Joan, scandalized, "if you knew—"

But when she was upstairs she sat down suddenly and faced her conscience. What impression of herself had she given in the consulting room? She did not know. This scene, like that of the morning, had become blurred in her memory, and time had begun to flow very fast after the slowest of her twenty-two years. Certain stranger things had happened

that day than at any time since her mother's death!

She leaned out of the window. She suddenly remembered that the institute was not many miles from her old home. It would be almost going home—and on the morrow. Joy leaped into her heart.

Then she saw something that for an instant chilled the blood in her veins. Across the street, leaning against the park railings and looking up at the house, was a short, square-built figure of a man wearing a hard hat. She could not distinguish the face, but she thought it was Myers. And she remembered his threat.

What did it mean? Bewildered, she turned into her room again. She half regretted now that she was to go to Lancaster.

But in the morning she dismissed the incident from her mind as a fantasy.

## Chapter IV

At half-past seven in the evening Joan descended from the train at Lancaster station, after an all-day ride.

It was like going home. Joan could not see her village, which was on a branch line, but at Medlington she was only four miles away. There were the same misty mountains, breaking the horizon line, the same small, straggling towns, the same fragrance of the deep forests, bringing back to her those remembrances which a chance odor suddenly unlooses, as at the touch of some magician's staff. The two years that she had spent at Avonmouth seemed to slip out of her recollection.

As the afternoon flew by the distant mountains changed into a semicircle of irregular heights. Now the train was climbing into the foothills. It was a lonely land. This was further in the back country than Joan had ever been. The villages were becoming mere clusters of negro cabins. There had been two changes of trains



The Horse Breaking Into a Short Gallop Near Every Summit.

and each time the coach became shabbier and more disreputable, and more impregnated with tobacco smoke. The character of Joan's fellow travelers changed as well. They were uncouth, they wore chin beards and rough store suits; they sat perspiring and collarless, the soft hats pulled over their foreheads. But she looked at them with the loving appreciation of her own people that was in her heart, and they, in the presence of the pretty girl who was traveling alone, displayed the innate courtesy of the Southerner.

The sun descended; it was gliding the whole land with level rays of gold and dancing on the horizon like a red ball when the train pulled into Lancaster, the last station before Millville, the terminus. Joan got down and looked about her.

The station was a tiny place and seemed deserted. The booking office was closed. In the waiting room, appearing almost to fill it, was a stout negress with a dozen parcels; from the wicker sides of one two hens' heads with blinking eyes protruded. Outside a ramsheadle buggy, with a lean chestnut horse attached, was drawn up to the edge of the muddy road.

A well-dressed young mountain boy in a hard-felt hat was standing beside it. As Joan came out of the station he turned toward her, took off his hat, and bowed.

"Miss Wentworth?" he inquired, in a well-bred tone.

"Yes, You are from the institute?"

"Yes, Miss Wentworth. Mrs. Fraser will be expecting you." He looked beyond her, and Joan, turning, perceived to her discomfort the man Myers, in his hard hat. He must have traveled up in the train with her.

Myers came forward, taking off his hat grudgingly. "Miss Wentworth, I'm sorry if I annoyed you last night," he said. "I ought to have explained

to you that I'm the secretary of the institution. I guess my manners ain't very good, but I meant no harm."

Joan, who had witnessed his presence with consternation, now felt a sudden reaction from her fears. Of course, Myers' explanation made the situation intelligible.

She bowed, and he turned to the boy. "You can take Miss Wentworth up," he said. "I'll find a buggy somewhere."

As there was only room for two in the buggy, Joan did not demur to the proposition. She stepped in, the young man holding out his hand to guard her dress from the wheel. Joan glanced at the man with momentary interest. He had the appearance of a gentleman, and the manners of one. There was no hint of either servility or presumption, and yet there was a sort of independence about the man which fitted him admirably. He flicked the horse, and the buggy began to crawl out of the station yard along the single street of a tiny village, straggling uphill. It was a white village, but clusters of shanties a little back among the pines betrayed the presence of the black element. There was a store or two, their fronts plastered with tobacco and baking powder advertisements, and in front of each stood a gaunt, yellow-faced hillman, chewing and gazing after the buggy with unamused face.

"This is Lancaster?" asked Joan.

"Yes, Miss Wentworth."

"The people here look depressed."

"There's a good deal of sickness, Miss Wentworth. Hookworm, and what they used to call malaria. But there isn't any malaria here; it's bad diet—salt pork and soda biscuits. And there's pellagra; it's been here for generations, but it wasn't till last year that the medical commission discovered it."

The coachman's knowledge might have been ludicrous in most men of his class, but there was nothing ridiculous in the grave, refined face of the young mountaineer. He must have picked up some knowledge at the institute, thought Joan.

"But it's healthy up in the hills, Miss Wentworth," he added. "This village is Millville. They used to grow cotton in the valley over yonder, but the frost killed the crops three years ago, and the mill fell into ruin. Quite a little water power in that stream."

The buggy ascended a steeper grade, the horse breaking into a short gallop near every summit, and then resuming its leisurely crawl.

"That's the institute, Miss Wentworth," the coachman continued, pointing toward a straggling building on a little plateau. It had the appearance of a large but rather dilapidated farmhouse. "It's three miles by the road," he added, "but less than a mile over the hills."

The horse had stopped to gain breath again. Looking back, Joan saw a white line that crept upward over the rocky slopes almost direct from the station to the building. Half way up was a little speck of black that seemed to move. Joan knew it was Myers' hard hat, his body being hidden from view among the bushes. She shuddered slightly; the man was very repugnant to her.

The horse went on again, the road winding uphill through pastures gay with buttercups and white with little branched asters. It dipped between hedgerows pink with meadowsweet. The sun had set, but its light still gilded the hills. The scene was very peaceful. Now the institute seemed to swing out from among the undulations of the mountain flanks immediately in front of them.

The buggy came to a standstill before the long wooden building, which was of unshingled boards and very much the worse for weather. It had not been painted for years, and two windows in one wing were broken. A patch of weedy, unweeded lawn extended between what had once been hedges, but were now mere tangles of undergrowth. Nearby was a large inclosure in which were a few chickens, pecking for grains of corn, and a cow at pasture turned her head and gazed at them placidly.

The door opened and a pleasant-looking woman came forward.

"How do you do, Miss Wentworth," she said. "I am the matron, Mrs. Fraser. Doctor Lancaster telegraphed about your coming. I'll show you your room, and your supper will be ready in a few minutes."

Joan descended. The driver, who had leaped to the ground, held his hand over the wheel, but did not offer it to her. Then he re-entered the buggy, and, rather to Joan's surprise, drove off along the road by which they had ascended.

The mystery deepens, with Myers the secretary of the institution. Is Joan in for a disagreeable adventure?

(TO BE CONTINUED.)

In parts of Africa and southern Asia the cowrie, a small shell, is used for coin.

## Famous Forts in U. S. History

By ELMO SCOTT WATSON

### World's Greatest Civil War Began Here

On the morning of April 12, 1861, Edmund Ruffin, an aged Virginian, pulled the lanyard of a cannon and made history. For the shot which went screaming across the water of Charleston harbor and struck the walls of Fort Sumter set 2,000,000 armed Americans at each other's throats in the greatest civil war in history.

Fort Sumter, named for Gen. Thomas Sumter, the famous partisan leader of the Revolution, was built in 1828 and was a casemated brickwork of five faces, mounting two tiers of guns. It was situated on a little island between Morris and Sullivan islands in the mouth of the harbor of Charleston, S. C. At the opening of the Civil war it was commanded by Maj. Robert Anderson, who had evacuated Fort Moultrie in December, 1860, and occupied Fort Sumter when he saw that South Carolina was preparing to seize the forts in the harbor. In January, 1861, the steamer Star of the West had been fired upon when it tried to bring supplies to Anderson, but no further hostile move against the fort was made until April 11 when Gen. P. T. Beauregard, the Confederate commander, demanded that Anderson surrender.

When Anderson refused, Beauregard the next day ordered his batteries to open fire on Sumter. After three hours Anderson returned the fire and for the next 34 hours 19 batteries rained shot and shell against the fort. Three times the fortification was set on fire but the brave defenders kept up the fight until their ammunition was almost exhausted. Then Anderson sorrowfully lowered the Stars and Stripes and on April 14, after he had evacuated the fort, the Stars and Bars of the Confederacy were hoisted in their place.

Twice during the war the Union forces tried to recapture Fort Sumter. On April 7, 1863, Admiral Dupont tried to reduce it with a naval bombardment but failed. That summer Admiral Dahlgren reduced the fort to an earthwork, but could not take it.

So the men in gray held this fort until February 17, 1865, when they were forced to evacuate Charleston and the next day the Union flag was raised over it by Major General Hennessey. The last chapter in the stirring history of this fort was written on April 14, 1865. On that day Robert Anderson, now a general, led a force of boys in blue into Fort Sumter and over its ruined walls he hoisted the same shot-torn flag which he had been forced to lower from the fort's flagstaff four years before.

### "Hold the Fort for We Are Coming!"

It was only a small fortification built high up in Allatoona Pass in the mountains of northern Georgia and history does not even dignify it with a name of its own. But it once was a post of the greatest strategic value in an important Civil war campaign and it also furnished the inspiration for a famous hymn, "Hold the Fort for We Are Coming!"

Late in 1864, just before General Sherman began his famous march to the sea, Confederate General Hood slipped around his right flank and began capturing the small garrisons, which Sherman had left along the line of his march. One of the most important of these posts was located in Allatoona pass where a million and a half rations were stored. A rich prize if Hood should capture it.

This post, surrounded by earthworks hastily thrown up, was commanded by Gen. J. S. Corse of Illinois with a force of about 1,500 Minnesota and Illinois troops. Hood detailed General French with 6,000 men to drive Corse out of the pass. It was soon surrounded and a demand for its surrender made. Corse refused and in a little while a hot battle was in progress. Although many of his men were killed, Corse still held out and retired to the little fort at the top, which he prepared to defend to the last.

In the meantime Sherman had started north from Atlanta in hot haste to save the pass from being captured. Just as Corse was beginning to despair of holding out against the attack of the grayjackets, an officer called his attention to a white flag that was being frantically waved from the summit of Kearsaw mountain, 15 miles away. This signal was answered and then the heartening message was waved from mountain to mountain: "Hold the fort; I am coming. W. T. Sherman."

A wild cheer went up from the beleaguered men and with renewed courage they kept up the fight. By this time more than half of the men in the little fort were either killed or wounded. General Corse was shot through the head three times, but undismayed by the fall of their leader the men of Minnesota and Illinois fought on for three hours more until Sherman came to their relief.

No sooner had Philip Paul Bliss, a writer of hymns and later a partner of the famous evangelist, Dwight L. Moody, heard of this incident than he sat down and wrote the thrilling old hymn which has been sung wherever the English language is spoken.

## MAKING GOOD IN A SMALL TOWN

Real Stories About Real Girls

By MRS. HARLAND H. ALLEN

### KNITTING NETS NEAT SUMS

ALL THE nation needs knit-wear. That's why home knitting is more than the nice, but more or less unnecessary, occupation which the uninitiated consider it. The big factories, it is sometimes presumed, can take care of all the knitting that is necessary.

"But they don't," insists one woman who started a big knitting business in a small way, "for the home knitter not only exists, but she is an important factor in the business."

It's true that she doesn't always knit by hand now-a-days, she adds; if she has gone into the business seriously, she has probably procured for herself a knitting machine.

This young woman, living in a small Michigan town, started a "knitting factory" in her own kitchen. She "peddled" her wares from door to door, knowing that every person in town was a possible customer. Her idea "direct from mill to home" made a hit, and she soon found it necessary to install two knitting machines, and to employ girls to run them. From that small start has grown an organization running six hundred knitting machines, and employing eight thousand workers.

The small town girl who wants to take up knitting as a profession should start in on a small scale, knitting by hand, or buying only one machine.

Even before the present vogue for knitted outer-wear, the need for knitted stockings and underwear kept knitting needles—and machines—busy. Formerly, objections to a complete costume of knit goods were that it was too "stretchy," that it lost its shape almost before the buyer could get it home, and that it was not becoming to anyone weighing over one hundred and twenty pounds. Recent manufacturing methods have, in part, overcome these objections, and recent dressmaking methods have done the rest. Knit wear is fashionable; and the small town girl knitter should keep up on the fashions. She will then know just what knitted novelties are salable. If she is expert, she will be able to make, herself, the scarves, gloves and caps sportswomen are asking for; but for complete garments, she will, in all probability, need an expert tailor's aid.

Right now, when women are demanding complete knitted costumes, with all knitted accessories, is the time for the girl with the knitting needles—or machine—to "make good."

### BOARDING, WITHOUT BORING, THE SUMMER GUEST

VARIETY, not satiety, is the objective of the summer boarder.

He wants "eggs with the cackle attached," and he'd like to sample every vegetable in the garden—but not all at the same meal. That's the conclusion of a girl who has seen several summers at "taking in boarders. Her town is something of a resort; her "paying guests" are tired-out and more or less critical cityites.

"They want fruit from the tree and not from the can; they want country cream that has never seen the inside of a chemist's laboratory," she declares. "They want what they can't get in the city. What they do not want is a poor imitation of metropolitan fare—and they don't want to see the table unattractively overloaded with coarse country foods, either."

The professional summer hostess should, then, provide the vacationist with simple foods, daintily and attractively served. Two green vegetables, besides potatoes, are enough for that type of food. She should always have some fresh wild flowers on the table; and she can garnish the dishes with a lettuce leaf or a bit of parsley.

She may increase her margin of profit by continuous replanting of her kitchen garden, thus assuring an abundance of fresh vegetables all through the season. Small fruits from her own bushes and vines; plenty of milk, butter and cream all are cheap and good. A few hives of bees to supply honey are an excellent investment. The poultry plant should be enlarged to provide fried chicken as a regular thing, not just for "Sunday dinner." The rabbit pen is good for an occasional rabbit-pie or fricassee, a pigeon loft is easily managed—and, the hostess should remember, broiled quab is a luxury that comes high in city hotels.

She may economize legitimately on her laundry bills, too, by discarding the heavy cover-all tablecloth in favor of dollies and runners, or the new luncheon sets of decorated oil-cloth, which are both practical and artistic.

But she cannot afford to confine her activities to the dining room. The entire house must be clean and well-aired, beds comfortable, furniture simple, pictures appropriate. She may decide to solve the problem of room scarcity by using tents—which in many cases will be more popular than the rooms. The hostess may provide a tennis court, and a playground for children at little cost. If there is water, diving-boards, fishing-tackle and canoes are easy to furnish.

She must "put her house in order" both in-doors and out.

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### Stupid Question

"My mother," writes E. O. Somerville in "Wheel-Tracks," was of that race of professional mothers that seem to have been a special product of the Victorian age; mothers who took seriously their trade as such, and devoted themselves unflinchingly to their offspring. I have heard of one who, being asked of which she thought most, her husband, or her son, replied indignantly, "Me son, of course! Why wouldn't I think more of me own son than a strange man!"

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### Sicilian Lemons

The fruit quarantine maintained by the United States in an effort to keep the Mediterranean fruit fly out of this country has reacted severely upon the Sicilian lemon industry. The exports from Palermo to the United States for the first quarter of 1924 were one-half million dollars less than for the corresponding quarter of 1923.

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