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THE FOOTPATHS.

By MARTHA WOLCOTT HITCHCOCK.

Away and away I see them wind whenever I shut my eyes,
Like delicate countless threads to bind our manifold destinies;

For over the circling world they go where dominant man has gone,
And the human tide in its ebb and flow the way of its will has worn.

The rigid highways straightly pass by the fields unreconciled,
But the wanton path over dimpling grass escapes like a joyous child;

For nature tenderly decks the way that leads to her secret heart
As a mother would tempt her babe essay the first few steps apart.

And the footpaths dance over hilltops cool, dividing the golden broom,
Lovingly nearing the peaceful pool and the humming clover bloom.

Fern-waves cleaving in woodland deeps (with the thrush and the veerie near)
Where the lovely fugue of the wild flowers keeps its rhythm thro'out the year.

They are always to the ferry, the forge, the mill, or the clanging factory's gate,
Or the market town up over the hill, or the fields where the milch cows wait;

For under the joy that moves us so, like an innocent child's at play,
Are the human need and the human woe that walk in the paths to-day.

Bird and blossom have made them sweet-scent of the fragrant soil—
But each was carved by the patient feet of age-long daily toil.

Like leveled lances point the rays as the bent forms come or go,
Nor heed the hush of the dawning days, nor the peace of the evening glow.

Little can nature, mother dear, with her softest wile or play,
The listless brow of the toiler cheer who has wrought from break of day.

* * * * * * * *

But we, we follow the pleasant way of pains we have never borne,
Reaping the joy of the footpaths gray that labor's feet have worn.

—The Criterion.

A Hero—An Involuntary Trip Into a Fever-Stricken Country.

By A. S. DUANE.

IT is said that every man has a blind spot in his eye. Sometimes I think that I must have a blind spot in my brain, and that the disasters and the sufferings of humanity get before it. Floods and earthquakes and epidemics devastate the earth, but they make little impression upon me. I read the headlines in the newspapers, and when a man asks me for a dollar for a "sufferer" he generally gets it; but I lose no rest worrying over his sorrows.

It may have been an unconscious seeking after an antidote for my entirely practical nature that attracted me toward Julia Maitland. Julia was beautiful, young and romantic, and did not seem to desire any corrective for her disposition in the way of an alliance with me. I asked her to marry me once, and when she declined I continued to visit at her home, with the full approval of her father, and with the full intention of asking her again.

She told me when she did so that she respected me and liked me, but that she could never, under any circumstances, be happy with a man who could appreciate nothing but the sordid side of life. She said she had noticed that when I looked at a painting I always valued it, took into consideration the reputation of the artist, and then gave my opinion upon it.

It was just 10 o'clock when I left her house. I had time to go down to the office and finish up some correspondence, which the thought of a few hours with her had made to seem of the most trivial importance earlier in the evening.

We kept a light in the office all night. It looked a trifle brighter than usual as it came peering over the transom, but I had a genuine start of surprise as I opened the door with my key, and found Ransom, my bookkeeper, still busy. He looked up as though he had had been expecting me.

"Mr. Duane," he said, "here are some letters that I think ought to be attended to at once."

I sat down and looked the letters over. The matter was much more serious than I had imagined it could be. After talking and writing, and talking again for an hour, we arrived at the conclusion that the only possible way to save the two or three thousand dollars involved was for me to make a trip to a city in the northern part of the State.

"There is a train at midnight—or—half-past. Why don't you take that?" Ransom suggested.

It seemed the best possible thing to do. I walked over to the hotel where I lived, packed my satchel, and in another half hour was waiting in the station for my train. I took out some papers I had brought along with me, and went over them while I waited.

After a provoking delay the train pulled out and soon I ordered my berth made up and turned in for the night.

It was 10 o'clock next day when I arose and dressed myself. I didn't think to look out of the window until my toilet was completed. I knew about where we would be at that hour. Already the lake breeze ought to be rushing through the car, and yet it seemed sultry.

I walked out in search of somebody official and met the conductor.

"What train is this?" I asked him, rather excitedly.

He looked at me in bewilderment.

"Ain't you one of 'em?"

"One of what? Isn't this the train to Clinton? Where are we, anyway?"

The conductor looked at me stupidly.

"You didn't offer no ticket," he said finally.

"No, I didn't. I showed the porter my pass—here it is—and told him to tell you about it, or to take it and show it to you, and let me go to bed."

"Oh, him!" the conductor said, plucking at his beard. "He can't read. He supposed it was like all the rest—they've all got 'em."

"All got what?" I fairly shouted at him. "What are you talking about?"

"Young man," said the slow fellow, solemnly—I found out afterward that he had been chosen for this mission on account of his calm nature—"you are on a special train, carrying nurses and doctors to the fever towns. You are in quarantined country now, and how you are going to get back I don't know."

"Oh, I'll get back," I said, cheerfully. "Just let me off at the next town, and I'll find my way back."

"I wouldn't do anything rash, if I were you," he said.

It was a very still little town where I stopped. There was only one other passenger for that place—a slender girl, with a clever face that looked too young for a nurse's. I walked briskly down the empty platform, hot with sunshine, and exuding a strong smell of rosin from the new pine boards. There was a black sign over one of the closed doors with "Telegraph Office" in white letters. Inside there was a "click, click" of instruments, but the door was locked. A negro lad came lounging round the corner.

"You needn't try to get in thah," he said, importantly. 'The operatah he's daid. Th' fevah's got him."

"Isn't there anybody in this town who can send a message?" I inquired.

There was a touch on my arm. I turned, to see the girl. "I can," she said. "I am the volunteer operator who has come to take charge of this office and send dispatches about the state of things here."

"Weren't you afraid?" I asked her. She looked so young.

"No," she said. "I have had the fever. New Orleans is my native city, and I had it there years ago. I couldn't take this sort they have, so far north." And then, turning to the boy, she asked for the key.

Ten minutes later he had returned from the house where the last operator lay dead, with the big door key, and we were let into the sweltering, dusty little box of a room, which seemed to me as if it still held traces of the disease. I opened the windows, to make the girl comfortable, and sent the boy out after some ice water and some lemons. Then I remembered something.

"Say," I called to him, and I went outside and asked him where I could find the nearest bar.

"Ovah thah in th' tavehn," pointing to a long, low, unpainted house.

I ran across the street, followed leisurely by the boy, and found my way into a bare room with a shelf across it, and perhaps a dozen bottles. A portly man, in soiled yellow linen, was dozing in a chair. I awakened him.

"Have you any tonic?" I said.

"Who's got it now?" he asked, with a start.

"Got what?"

"The fevah. Yes, sah, I've got plenty, sah;" and he went into another room, and brought out two greenish bottles of tonic.

"It's the best medicine thah is fur it. Who's got it? The nusses bring down tonic, but it's no sich brand as this?"

"No, I suppose not," I said; and then I asked after ice, but I found that beyond the supply held by the "nusses," there wasn't any in the town.

I took the bottles and went back across the street, followed presently by the boy with the water.

"I can cool it," the girl said, and she sent the boy back after an earthen jar of water. She wrapped it in wet cloths, put the bottles in it, and set the whole in the window.

"What's that message of yours?" she asked. I found she had already introduced herself to the other offices along the line. I sent a telegram to Ransom, telling him in the office cipher of my plight, and instructing him to make some arrangements about getting me out of the fix I was in, without saying anything about it. I wanted to sneak back without being quarantined.

"What is your name?" I asked the girl.

"Fanny Martin," she said.

"Well, I am going to have the answer to my message sent to you. I am not anxious to have people talking about my being down here."

"Don't want your right hand to know, eh?"

But I made no explanations.

Suddenly Miss Martin came running down the path.

"Come in here, quick," she said, and went back ahead of me. I followed her into an old-fashioned square house, with a wide oilclothed hall, and thin balustraded stairs, which she lightly mounted. In the room was an old man who had fallen back on his pillow, dead, his face drawn and yellow with the scourge. Standing by his side was a tall, sallow woman, who—I am ashamed to confess—even in that moment presented herself as a familiar figure. I had seen her counterpart on the stage hundreds of times as the typical spinster. There were even the glasses and the keys, and the bunches of skimpy curls behind the ears. She was looking down at her father in a hard sort of dumbness.

"The servants have gone," Miss Martin said. "There is nobody to do anything. It is lucky you are here."

I did not stop to contradict her, but set to work for humanity's sake to do what I could.

One of the sorrows of those times was that the dead must be buried so quickly. I took a lantern, went out to the burying ground, and hunted up the family lot. With the assistance of a negro man, whom Miss Martin discovered, I dug a grave. We went back to the town and found a coffin, and in the early summer morning we buried the dead man.

As we came out of the graveyard I stopped Fanny Martin.

"Have you been to the office?" I asked.

"Yes, indeed."

"Well, where is my message?"

"There wasn't any."

"The deuce!" I said, and walked on back with her. The spinster lady lingered by her father's grave. Miss Martin seemed inclined to stay, but I knew she could do no good there. I took her by the arm and led her back to the telegraph office, and dictated some messages that would bring answers.

I left her clicking off a long message to somebody.

It was almost dark when a knock came on my door, and the grayish negro boy put his head in and followed it by the rest of his body, carrying a yellow envelope. It was from the superintendent, telling me he would do what he could for me, but he feared I should be stopped, as quarantine was very strict.

"If I don't get out, any way you will be sure to get your tonic," I said to Fanny Martin. We had grown to be famous friends. She was a smart, clever little thing, with a shrewd way of looking at life, and a keen sense of humor. She had made excursions round about during the day, riding on horseback. There were very few cases left, and they were going to move on to the next town.

"The reports are exaggerated," she said; "but then that's what sells the papers. It's all in the day's work. Now, suppose you tell me what brought you down here?"

"The nurses' train."

"Yes, but before that. Had you a secret sorrow? Had your wife died, or your sweetheart jilted you, that you valued life so lightly?"

"My sweetheart had jilted me, or refused to marry me, the night I started, but I can hardly say that I valued life much the less. I am going back to try it over again."

"What is the matter with you?" Fanny Martin asked. "You seem like a very respectable person. The President of the C. A. & S. seemed to think you were a reliable man."

"I am. I am too respectable. She says I am 'practical.' For example, she says that all I see in a yellow fever epidemic is its effect on trade."

"And you came down here to nurse and show her better?"

"Not by a great deal!" said I emphatically. And then I told her exactly how it all happened.

"And she wants a romantic lover?"

"I suppose so."

"Ah!" said Fanny Martin.

* * * *

It seemed to me that men looked at me oddly, and shook hands with me more heartily than usual. My friends are serious, hard headed fellows, a good deal like myself, not much given to effusive expression; but one of them actually called me a hero.

It is very seldom that ladies visit my office, but as I went in I saw a gleam of summery apparel. A moment later there was a rush and a sob, and Julia, actually Julia, was in my arms.

"My darling girl!" I said. "What is the matter? Is your father ill? Is anything wrong?"

"No! No! Oh, suppose you had died! And it was all my fault—I should have driven you to that dreadful death! Oh, I know you saved hundreds of lives, but what would that have mattered to me!"

"Julia, my child," I said, "will you tell me what is the matter?"

"I know you didn't want anybody to know it, and I am rightly punished for having driven you to it, by all this publicity. I am so proud of you!" And Julia, Julia who had scorned me, actually put her tear-stained cheek against my own, and then kissed me.

I turned to Ransom. "Now tell me," said I, "what all this is about."

He put his pen between his teeth, and took down a copy of a New York paper of the Sunday before—which had just reached our town. He turned to a head-lined page, pointed out an article, and went back to work. I sat down and read it.

It narrated the experiences of one of the paper's young women correspondents, who had volunteered to go as telegraph operator to the yellow fever infected district. Half the letter was taken up with the noble self-sacrifice of the young millionaire business man from Ohio, Alfred Duane, who had brought not only his personal services and sympathy, but his wealth and influence to aid the sufferers. He had buried the dead with his own hands, and that spinster became at the touch of this pen a beautiful girl, supported in her grief by Alfred Duane! And then of a strong man with a broken heart, hiding his own wounds by ministering to others, risking the life he no longer valued because the woman he loved had denied him his heart's desire! The letter was signed "Fanny Martin."—New York News.

Chinese Careful Buyers.

Of one thing the American manufacturer should in particular beware, namely, of the delusion that it is possible to pass off a spurious article on the Chinese as the real thing. The Chinese are very careful in sampling the goods they buy, and they take nothing for granted on receiving the goods, but are exceedingly patient in examining them to find out if they are according to contract. There has been a tendency on the part of American exporters to the empire to ignore that fact. The first thing an occidental merchant needs to get into his head in dealing with the Chinese merchants is that he is dealing with a class of people fully his equal in business astuteness. The Chinaman knows what he wants, and he is no more disposed to take what he does not want than anyone else.—Wool and Cotton Reporter.

His Motto.

The stock broker's motto is: "If at first you don't succeed, buy, buy again."—Philadelphia Record.

BIRDS WITH ODD WAYS.

Burrowing Owls, Ostriches and Mound Builders.

Of course all birds live in more or less close relation to the earth, but some are peculiarly associated with it, or depend upon it more especially for certain requirements. Not the least interesting of these are the burrowing owls. These, unlike their tree or tower haunting relatives, make their home underground, digging their tunnels together, and laying their eggs at the farther end. Here in the darkness the little owlets are hatched, and here they are fed on fat grasshoppers and mice until they are able to climb up and look upon the world for themselves. It is curious that these owls, which of all their family would seem to have the best practice in their youth for learning to use their eyes in the dark, are not nocturnal, but dig their burrows, catch their food and do their courting in broad daylight.

Ostriches may be mentioned as types of birds which have found it so good for them to spend their life in running that they are without the power of flight, and are never able to rise above the ground—"winged creatures" of the earth, not the "air."

The bird which is preeminently of the earth earthy lives in one of our antipodes—Australia and the Philippine Islands. It is the megapode, or mound builder, and has the curious habit of burying its eggs in the ground or in a mound of leaves and dirt, leaving them—reptile-like—to hatch from the heat generated in the pile of decaying vegetation. It is thought that the parents never see their offspring, which are fully feathered when they leave the egg and able to dig out and fly at once. This unusual development at birth is made possible by the great amount of nourishing yolk in the eggs, which are very large in proportion to the size of the bird. Think of a member of this class of birds, made to spend its life partly in the air, hatching in a tightly packed, damp mound of earth six feet below the surface! We cannot censure the parents for shirking the responsibilities of incubation when we think of the enormous amount of work necessary to collect such masses of rubbish, which measure sometimes 50 feet in circumference and fourteen feet in height. Of course, this is not collected in one year, but it is a great undertaking for birds no larger than our common grouse. Thus we see man cannot take the credit of having first used an artificial incubator to hatch the eggs of birds.—C. William Beebe, Curator of Ornithology, New York Zoological Society.

A Bird That Turned.

For an hour or more Baby Florence had been walking in the woodlands with her mamma; they had gathered many beautifully colored leaves and the floor of the forest beneath their feet glowed richly with a carpet of red foliage. Winter had kissed the trees and the rushes and the weeds and they floated brilliant pinions of rainbow tint.

Baby Florence had said nothing for quite a while, so busy had she been with romping along in advance of her mother, but the change in the forest seemed suddenly to impress her.

"Mamma," she said, "why are all the leaves yellow and red? When we came out last time they were green."

"Winter causes it, Flo," replied the mother; "leaves always turn red at this time of the year."

They had gone a dozen yards further when the child's eyes detected an unusually bright flash of color among the trees. It was a red breasted bird that sat a-tilt amid the branches.

"Look, mamma, look," cried the little girl eagerly, "there is a birdie that is beginning to turn, too."—New York Herald.

The First and the Last.

A curious state of affairs is noted in Franklin College, Indiana, illustrative of the Biblical saying that "the first shall be last and the last shall be first." In the class of '61 of that college the man who stood at the top was William Henry Harrison McCoy, and the man who was at the bottom was William Tecumseh Stott. To-day Mr. Stott is president of the college and Mr. McCoy is the janitor. Dr. Stott was elected president of the college in 1872, in which year Mr. McCoy was made a member of the board of trustees. In 1894 Mr. McCoy obtained the titular position of superintendent of buildings and grounds, but his work is really that of the janitor.

Life is either a comedy or a tragedy, and largely of our own making.