

A HERO.

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 head lines 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 mother, and with the full intention of asking her again.

She told me, when I 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.

Then she said she had noticed that while everybody else was reading with bated breath the accounts of the yellow fever that year, I was discussing its probable effect upon the Southern trade. I mentioned to her that her father had introduced that phase of the subject, and that I was not interested in the Southern trade, my business being in the North.

"Papa!" she replied in a tone of contempt. "I am not asked to marry papa."

"Your mother was," I ventured to say, "and a very good husband he has made her." But nothing seemed to take her out of her contemptuous mood, and I left her, a rejected man, with a lot of plans I had centered about her in ruins about me.

It was just ten 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 been expecting me.

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

Ransom and I were like partners. He had not a dollar, beyond his salary, in the concern, but he knew as much about the business as I did, and worked in as various ways. I meant that he should actually be a partner, sooner or later, and I already gave his advice the consideration that such a position deserved.

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.

Our city is a small one, where the trains that back into the depot are all regular and well known. We have no formalities of guards and gates; so when the next train came in, I knew that it must be mine. Giving another look at the pass that I always carried in those days, I swung myself aboard.

Everybody in the sleeper seemed to be closely shut in behind the curtains, and I was a little afraid at first that I might not be able to get a berth; but the porter came to me at once, and signified that there was just one left—an upper. I put a dollar in his hand, and clambered up. I knew we should not reach my destination until far into the day, and I meant to sleep late. As I had walked down the aisle of the rocking car, it had seemed to me that somewhere there were peculiar, pungent odors; and as I sank into the first stage of restful unconsciousness, I was wondering if by any chance I could be over that maiden lady whom I once heard of, who sprinkled the bed clothes of sleeping cars and hotels with carbolic acid for fear of possible contagion.

It was ten o'clock when I finally 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.

At my fellow passengers I had given a casual glance. They were serious faced men and women. Somehow they looked a little odd. I wondered, once, if there was a woman's rights convention anywhere up here. There was almost a professional strength and calm in some of those faces.

Then two things struck me simultaneously.

I looked out of the window upon a perfectly strange landscape—a landscape with strange hill formations, and strange foliage in the valleys—and the nearest woman turned enough to show me a red

cross sewed to a white band upon her sleeve.

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, any way?"

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 afterwards 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 was 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 around the corner.

"Ye needn't try to git 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 despatches 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 champagne?" 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 American champagne.

"It's the best medicine thah is fur it. Who's got it? The nusses bring down champagne, 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. After the message was sent, we looked after the champagne, and drank some of it. Then, locking up the office, we went over to the tavern to see what accommodations we could find.

The landlord and his wife were alone in the place, except for the colored servants. Everybody who could get away had gone, and many of the inhabitants had died of the fever.

After supper the girl and I went for a walk. It was like a deserted village. Houses were shut up and dark. There were no street lamps, and it was black under the thick chinaberry trees.

"I want to see the nurses and hear all about everything," Miss Martin said. "There is a house with lights. I am going in. I suppose you are going to join the staff at once?"

"Well, no, I hadn't thought of it."

"Working alone? I think that is the best way, if you can afford it, and I suppose you can."

I waited at the gate while she went into the house. She was gone a long time, and I stood impatient after the first few minutes. The light from the open window showed the square brick pillars topped by round wooden balls, which made the gate posts, and the

dingy, grass grown bricks of the walk. I pondered, too, upon that three thousand dollars that I stood in to lose. I evidently couldn't get an engine here to take me back. I should have to wait upon Ransom, and trust to his cleverness to find some other way of getting the money I had started after.

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, oil clothed hall, and thin, balustraded stairs, which she lightly mounted. In a 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.

I drew a sigh of relief when it was over. The idea did come to me that if there was anything in contagion I was likely to have taken in all that was necessary; but I am a great believer in cleanliness, common sense, and lack of nervousness as preventatives, so I gave myself no uneasiness upon my own account.

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. I went over to the tavern, and went to bed and to sleep, leaving word that I was to be awakened to receive any answers to my telegrams, but for nothing else on earth. The superintendent of the railroad was an old acquaintance of mine, and I had wired him to send me an engine, and to make it worth the while of men to come after me. Incidentally I ordered a case of good champagne for Fanny Martin. The girl's pluck and bravery had won my admiration.

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 that 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 get your champagne," 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. She had met the nurses. 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—re-

fused 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.

The president of the C. A. & S. is a man of infinite resource. The engine came down, brought Miss Martin her champagne, and took me away. It is not necessary to tell how the engine was side tracked near a town, and we walked through and took another waiting on the other side. I finally went on North, found my man, stayed about the lake for ten days, fishing, and then, brown as a nut, I went back home.

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 or 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.

So it had come to pass. I didn't care how. I enjoyed the goods the gods gave, and waited. I said "yes" to everything. I gathered that somehow there was a misapprehension as to my yellow fever experiences, but I asked no questions. I took Julia home, and then went back to the office and walked into Ransom's room.

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

He put his pen between his teeth, and took down a copy of the New York *World* 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 *World'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! Special trains had brought baskets of costly champagne to the sufferers, all at the instance of 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."

I feared to put the paper down, for I knew that if Ransom was grinning I should knock him down; but he only said in his usual dry tones:

"You got a pretty fair percentage of that money—more than I expected,"

AMERICAN WOMEN PHOTOGRAPHERS.

The remarkable recent development of amateur photography, and the high rank that many American women have taken among its devotees—Some of the leading amateurs of New York, Boston, Chicago, and other cities.

By Frank W. Crane.

AMATEUR photography has ceased to be a fad. It has assumed a more dignified position among the recognized and well established "hobbies." Nay, more—it has become an art, not to say a science.

The great army of snap shot enthusiasts that boldly entered, a few years ago, this comparatively new field of enjoyment, gives no evidence of diminishing in numbers. The true amateur, however, would probably call these novices, who take anything and everything with an exuberance which is refreshing, if nothing else, experimental or mechanical photographers. The genuine amateur is a higher development of the same species. He has learned to regard nature and natural objects with a more artistic eye, and instead of being influenced largely by color has come to regard form as the primary essential for the making of a good picture.

The advance toward what may be called artistic photography has been steadily progressing within the past few years. Those who pursue photography with this idea aim to turn out pictures that shall be something more than mere mechanical outlines. They must mean something; they must illustrate thought and movement.

It is motives such as these that have led many of the best amateurs in Paris and London to organize societies for the higher work. Their exhibitions are known as Photographic Salons. Judging from the marked improvement made by American amateurs, and the closer attention that is being given to the subject, it is not improbable that before

long the Photographic Salon will be established in this country. Indeed, the first attempt to place amateur photography on a recognized artistic basis was made at the recent joint exhibition of the New York, Philadelphia, and Boston societies held in the galleries of the American Fine Arts Society in New York last April. At former displays, nearly everything sent in was allowed to pass; but this year there was a very careful discrimination, with the result that the exhibition was the most artistic and successful ever held in this country. It was open to the world, and among its notable features were the number of foreigners and the number of ladies represented. Of twenty three silver medals awarded, five went to England, two to Spain, one to Austria, and two to ladies—both of them, it is a pleasure to add, American ladies.

One potent means of raising the standard of amateur photography has undoubtedly been the multiplication of camera clubs, during the past few years, throughout the country. The membership in some of these clubs mounts up into the hundreds, and the interchange of ideas thereby rendered possible gives a renewed and effective stimulus to more ambitious work.

Many of the more advanced amateurs are now devoting considerable attention to the making of lantern slides. Recently a system was perfected by some of the leading clubs, whereby each contributes a number of its best slides, and these are sent on from one club to another. Thus a representative collection of the best amateur photographic work can be seen and studied by all actively