

Other People's Troubles

An Antidote For Your Own

By Winnifred Reeve (Onoto Watanna)

Author of "A Japanese Nightingale," "Heart of Hyacinth,"
"Wisteria," "Marion," "Me," etc., etc.

SYNOPSIS:—"Other People's Troubles" is the new type of a continued story wherein each episode is a complete story itself, but the whole is connected through the central figure of Dr. Carpenter, a very fine character, who believes that to get interested in other people's troubles is the best cure for your own. His niece, Laura, was jilted on her wedding day by a man who also appropriated her brother's invention. Felix Holt, a lawyer, accused of killing his wife's lover, but acquitted on trial, has consented to handle Laura's court proceedings, although since his own trouble he has lived the life of a recluse, and given up his profession. The doctor's last patient suffers from insomnia brought on by misunderstanding of his wife's interest in up-to-date women's affairs.

"We-el, the fact is, you see I'm to read a paper on—well never mind the subject—and the fact is, I've never spoken before in public and it makes my teeth chatter and my knees feel wobbly just to think of it even. Mrs. Greenlaw said if I just swallowed one big mouthful of whiskey before going on that that would give me all the nerve and brass I want; but I'm dreadfully afraid it—it might have some other effect you know, because Dick's been such a tyrant and never let me take even a sip of any sort of liquor. So I thought maybe you would give me some sort of pill or medicine to take that would serve the same purpose."

"What sort of pill—or medicine?" inquired the doctor suspiciously.

"Why you ought to know. Any sort—some nerve soother, I suppose."

"I'm surprised at you, Mrs. Jones," said the doctor sternly.

She sat up straightly, her babyish face looking very startled and injured.

"A nice, respectable little woman like you, making such an indecent request of your old doctor friend. I'm ashamed of you."

"Why d—doctor, what do you mean?"

"So you want deliberately to cultivate the drug habit as well as the cigarette habit, do you?"

She turned scarlet, and tore the glove from her hand.

"I haven't the habit," said she.

"There, you can see by my hands. Nellie Streeter's are yellow with nicotine, but I just pretend to smoke them. I really hate them. They're horrid and chokey, but it's the thing to-day, just the same, and everybody does it, and anyhow, I'm not going to be laughed at by my friends for being behind the times."

She stopped breathlessly, and bit her underlip. One little shining tear had escaped and hung glistening against the complexion veil. She looked so oddly like a naughty little girl that the doctor unconsciously smiled.

"Gerty," said he gently, "if I didn't know you so well, I wouldn't bother to scold you; but you know, this time, you're in the wrong."

"Of course, you'll say that, being a man yourself. But if you knew how I had my sex's real good at heart! I don't know why Dick is so ugly about it. Other men let their wives do as they wish, and are proud of them too."

"Then what more do you want?"

"To vote" said she crossly. "Now really doctor, just between ourselves, don't you believe in woman's suffrage?"

The doctor straightened up as stiffly as a little manikin, and regarded the lady sternly.

"Certainly not!" said he firmly.

"After that, I'm going," said she, angrily. "No, you needn't trouble about your old prescription. I might've known I'd get no sympathy from a man!"

"But you didn't tell me you wanted sympathy."

"Well, I did," said she pouting charmingly. "All your patients do, and you know it. I want someone to know how hard I've worked, how I've just labored for the cause, and—" she threw out her hands expressively, "and what do I get for it? When I creep home, dead tired out, and in actual need of sympathy, yes, tired out to the teeniest bone in my body, and needing to be cherished and cared for same as he promised to do, when we were married, what do I get? The awfulest black looks and snarls and

sulks and sometimes the most terrible swear words, right in my own—in our own home. Why it's just terrible to be treated like this."

"Ah," said the doctor slyly, "think how much better you fare than women did in the past. Why, if you'd gadded around in this fashion in your grandmother's day, they'd have doused you for a witch or tied you to the switching post."

"I'd like to see them," snorted the little lady indignantly. "And besides we don't live in those unenlightened days anyhow, and men have to know it. You've got to treat us now as—as—well, as—equals!"

"And we've been treating you as—superiors," said the doctor softly. "It's quite a come down, little woman."

Irresolutely she stood a moment, then with a little break in her voice,

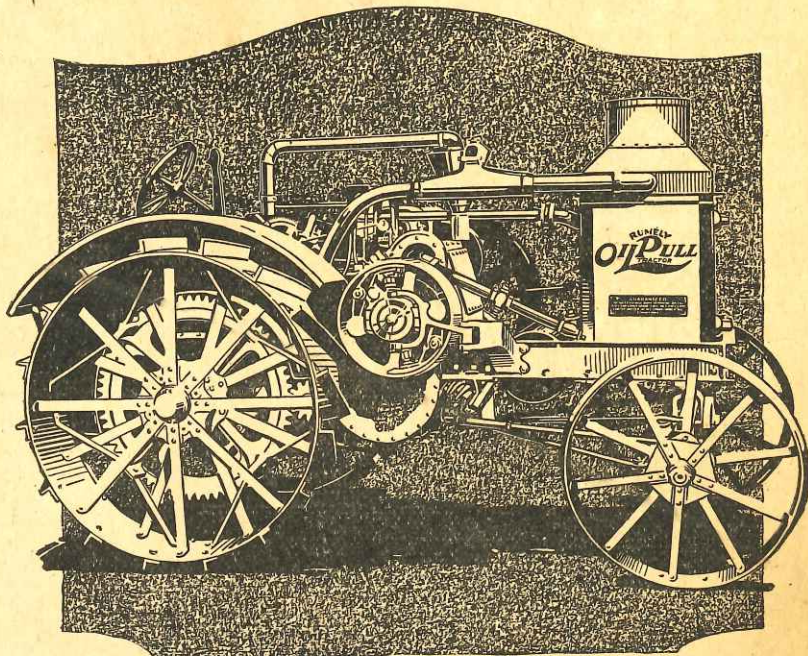
she said: "He used to treat me as if, well, as if I were a queen—an angel, but now—" she sobbed wrathfully.

"Now he's found you out," said the doctor relentlessly. "Console yourself woman. You are better off than others. Mrs. Cuthbert's husband flew from her new ambitious charms into the frail, but wiser arms of a chorus girl, and Pat O'Grady cuffed his Kathleen Mavourneen across the ears when she came home late from her first suffrage meeting and her last. Dick's been pretty patient, all things considered, and I think you'll find he's not such an enemy of your sex as you fancy."

"He's not! Well, you've never heard him talk!"

"—to you! Oh well, men talk for exercise, to provoke argument."

(To be continued)



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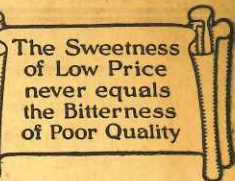
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