"The One who forgot"

By RUBY M. AYRES ©1923 NEA Service

BEGIN HERE TODAY

PETER LYSTER, seriously injured in battle on the western front, is brought back to London by

LIEUT. JOHN ARNOTT, in an attempt to revive the former's memory, snuffed out when a shell tore through his command, killing 20 men and injuring many more, among them Peter. Before going to France Peter had become engaged to

NAN MARRABY, who refused to believe her lover capable of forgetting his promise of marriage, until brought to face the unrecognizing eyes of the man that had once worshiped her.

Nan has returned to the small apartment shared with her by

JOAN ENDICOTT, whose husband also joined the colors. She is telling her friends about the unhappy visit with her former lover. Joan expresses the wish that she might do something to help.

NOW GO ON WITH THE STORY

"NOBODY can help," Nan said hardily. "Oh, I'm not going to whine and make a fool of myself for ever, don't think that; but just at first—just now—I don't think I can bear it all. To have seen him and heard his voice, and his laugh . . ." She caught her breath hard.

"But he will get better," Joan urged gently. "Of course he will get better. Mr. Arnott himself said that Peter was bound to get well in the end."

"He didn't. He only said that the doctors thought there was a hope, and even if there is, anything may have happened by that time. He never used to like the flappery kind of girl he was with this evening. He always said they bored him, but he didn't look bored when I walked into the room," she added broken-heartedly.

"Nan—I hate to say it, but—but do you think that perhaps he hasn't really forgotten? That he's just like so many other men who care for a girl for a time, and then forget them? I—I hate even to suggest it to you, but—but—one does hear of such things. I've heard of ever so many cases since the war started. There was Mary Melhuish . . ."

Nan started to her feet. There was a burning spot of color in her pale cheeks. "And you dare to compare me with her?" she said fiercely. "You dare to compare Peter with that—that miserable man she thought she cared for. Oh, how dare you! How dare you!"

Joan looked horribly distressed. "I didn't mean to be unkind; but—but you told me yourself you hardly knew anything about Mr. Lyster—"

"I knew him long enough to find out that he was good and honorable. I knew him long enough to be able to trust him and believe in him. And if he had got—tired—if there had been anybody else—" Her voice broke, but she went on again proudly. "He would have told me straight out—he wouldn't have wanted to hide the truth behind a mean trick like this."

There was a little silence. Joan looked up timidly.

"And what—what are you going to do?" she asked. "Are you going to see him again? Oh, Nan, wouldn't it have been the best thing to have told him who you were? To ask him if he didn't remember you? To behave just as if nothing had happened since you saw him last?"

"Throw myself at the head of a man who doesn't care two straws for me? No, I'm afraid that isn't quite my way. But I'm not giving him up—don't think that. I want my happiness as much as you do, and I'm going to fight for it, and then—" But her pluck gave out all at once and she broke down into bitter sobbing.

"Nan," said Joan tearfully; but Nan had rushed away and locked herself in her own room.

John Arnott called in the morning, as he had promised. He had been so sure that he would have to meet a broken woman this morning, but she smiled at him, though there was a look of tragedy in her eyes that hurt him.

"It's kind of you to come," she said. She avoided looking at the little parcel he had laid on the table. She knew well enough what it contained—her letters—the letters she had written to Peter after he went to France; the pages of foolish words and dreams which had been written for Peter's eyes alone.

She wondered how much this man had read of them.

"I've brought your letters," Arnott said simply.

Nan thanked him quietly. "And—and Mr. Lyster?" She asked. "Is he—is he well this morning?"

"Oh, he's A-1," Arnott answered uncomfortably. "He's a lazy beggar and was only just getting up when I came out."

Nan laughed.

"Are you—are you both going to stay in town?" She asked presently. "I mean, for any length of time?"

"I dare say we shall for a few days, but—but I want Lyster to come home with me for a bit to my people. He hasn't any friends of his own, you know—none he cares to go to, at least."

"That is kind of you," she said constrainedly. "He will be pleased to go, I am sure."

"My sister's going to write and ask him," Arnott said. "I've told her all about him . . ." He paused, the color deepened a little in his face. "Miss Marraby," he said hesitatingly, "I—I should so like to do something for you, and—and I wonder if—if you'll think it presumption if—if I make a suggestion?"

Nan smiled.

"I am sure I shall not—I am very grateful to you for all your kindness to me. What is it?"

He twisted his cap nervously.

"Well, it is—just this: my sister's one of the best—I'm sure you'd like her . . . she—she lost her husband the first year of the war, you know—and she's got a ripping little boy—I make my home with her—always did even before the war—and she—she'd be so jolly sympathetic if she knew—about you, don'tcherknow: so I wondered if—if you'd care to come and stay with her—with us—while . . . while Lyster is there. I'd get her to write and ask you, if you'd care about it," he added in eager embarrassment.

"Oh, I couldn't," she said breathlessly. "It's so good of you to think of it—so very kind—but . . ." She laughed ruefully. "It would be so dreadful—so . . . oh, no, I couldn't!" she added.

Arnott looked sorry.

"I thought it was such a ripping idea," he said boyishly. "You—you don't know what a decent sort my sister is."

"I am sure she is," Nan said. In her heart she added: "She must be if she's anything like you."

"But I couldn't," she said again. "It—is . . . oh, it would be such an impossible situation! Besides"—she laughed rather brokenly—"suppose Mr. Lyster took a dislike to me—"

It was a heart-breaking thought, but it seemed to Nan as if she had suffered so much already that whatever happened in the future nothing could be much worse.

"And yet—on the other hand," Arnott said gently, "he might get better—the fact of you being there—might make him remember you." But Nan shook her head.

"Have you got very long leave?" she asked.

Arnott colored.

"I don't know—several weeks, I expect. I had a bit of a knock myself, you see," he explained awkwardly.

Nan's eyes flashed into sudden interest.

"Were you wounded, too? I didn't know—you never told me."

He shook his head.

"Oh, it wasn't anything," he said. "Only a flesh wound in the shoulder, but it's a bit tiresome, and won't heal . . ." he indicated his left shoulder, and now Nan could see that it looked bulky under his coat as if it were much bandaged.

"Why didn't you tell me?" she asked. She felt ashamed of herself for being so wrapped up in her own concerns.

"Why should I tell you?" he said lightly. "It's nothing anyway—" he looked round. "I think I ought to be going. I promised Lyster to be back in half an hour. He wants to look round the shops."

(To Be Continued)

E. W. Huddleston and Perry O. Guy made a trip Saturday to a new silver strike situated between Randsburg and Victorville. They returned Monday evennig.

Her pluck gave out all at once and Nan broke down into bitter sobbing.

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