

JUST LUCK

BY MARIE B. SCHRADER

How another's misfortune played into the hands of a young doctor, not in the way of business, but in an altogether different direction.

"MR. BARTON to see Miss Grantly." The uniformed guardian of the hallway at the Lynnhurst repeated the names in a mechanical tone, made interesting only by reason of the pronounced foreign accent.

"One moment, ef you please, sir," he added.

Joseph Barton watched him as he consulted the telephone operator, but he felt sure that there would be no difficulty regarding his welcome reception by the Grantlys; therefore he awaited the result of the announcement of his name with a certain air of confidence.

He had become acquainted with Mr. and Mrs. Grantly and their daughter some weeks previous. They had met at a small afternoon reception. When, later on, he became quite accustomed to seeing the young woman at the entertainments given by mutual friends, he had gradually grown to believe that she was the most charming, the most interesting girl he had ever met.

Her aunt, she explained, had been ill for some time past at their apartment, else she would have been pleased to have him call. Finally the mother invited him, asking that he excuse the upset condition of things. The evening was set, and there he stood.

"What name did you say?" asked the telephone girl of the stalwart German.

"Mr. Barton. How many times is it for me to say? Mr. Barton."

The operator gave him a withering glance.

"I told you that Mr. Barton was to be

taken up as soon as he came," she flashed back. "Your memory is very short."

Barton had walked over to where the discussion was taking place.

"Any trouble?" he inquired.

"Oh, no, Mr. Barton. Miss Grantly gave orders that you were to be sent up without waiting. The boy here is so stupid. Please excuse it. She is expecting you. The sixth floor, front. The elevator-man will show you."

Barton moved toward the elevator, where the German was watching expectantly for the descent.

"*Himmel!*" exclaimed the latter, and he added an expression which sounded very much like the name of one of the Wagnerian operas. "*Die* elevator has up been for fifteen *minuten*. I know not what can de matter be! She works not well for some days."

Barton was impatient over the delay.

It was pleasant, however, to know that she had not forgotten that he was to make his first call that evening. The fact that she had instructed the telephone operator that he was not to wait, but was to be sent up immediately, gave him great satisfaction.

It was apparently a small thing, but every detail in his friendship for Miss Grantly assumed unusual proportions.

He didn't permit himself to think of her seriously—at least so seriously as to puzzle out the solution of his constantly increasing regard for her. He knew better. Other men wouldn't have bothered about the outcome. They would have drifted with the tide, and

have accepted the gifts the gods provided with thankfulness.

Barton wasn't that kind. He was young and poor, and handicapped—so his friends thought—by his old-fashioned principles. They all agreed that these were the product of a life spent in a small town where each fellow was entirely too thoughtful of his neighbor.

"Don't worry about the other man," was a bit of advice he often heard after reaching the metropolis. "You will stand still if you do. Think about yourself. Push and keep on pushing, no matter how many you knock out of the way."

The sum and substance of which, he concluded, amounted to the expression he frequently caught: "Do the other fellow before the other fellow does you!"

Somehow Barton hadn't been able to do as the others did, and he himself realized that he was not keeping up with the procession. He was a regularly licensed physician, who, beyond a few scattered cases, had truthfully no occasion to say that he was practicing.

He had been in Philadelphia only two years, during which time he had completed his studies and so fitted himself for his life-work. He was quiet in manner, and made few friends. It was true that he had attended a number of social affairs, but the people he met at such functions all seemed to have physicians of their own. Often somebody would speak of recommending him to some one else, but the promise was apparently nothing more than a mere expression betokening good-will.

Then he met Lillian Grantly. He knew little about her, except the fact that her father was a well-known lawyer and that she was an heiress. She was as pretty as a picture, and always dressed exquisitely, two facts which invariably appealed to the men of his and her acquaintance.

They showered attentions upon her, but Barton felt sure her great wealth had a share in their admiration.

He, on the contrary, purposely kept aloof from her, because he believed that a poor young man with no certain income had no right to aspire to the hand of a young woman of fortune. He never would have requested permission to call if her mother had not so cordially invited him.

He feared that she might think him like the rest. Nevertheless, he was extremely grateful to Mrs. Grantly now for enabling him to stand there waiting for the elevator.

It was a few minutes before it reached the ground floor.

The elevator-man was in a humor unmistakable when Barton entered the car.

"Grantly, sixth floor," he growled as he slammed the door, and the two moved upward.

"Apartment —" and he mumbled a number. "Right over there," he added with a wave of his hand.

"What number?" asked Barton as he looked vaguely down the hall after alighting.

But the noise made by the closing of the elevator-door drowned his query. The next moment the car had disappeared, leaving the young man in a state of uncertainty.

"Right over there," was not a very explicit direction, but Barton determined to trust to luck.

If the first door he tried proved to be the wrong one, he would inquire of the maid who answered his ring. She could direct him. If not, then he would be compelled to go down again after more concise information.

The Lynnhurst had the reputation of being an expensive place, and Barton wondered how many years it would be before he could afford an address as fashionable.

He had visions of the luxury by which

Miss Grantly must be surrounded. He knew her to be a young woman of unusual refinement and artistic tastes, and he pictured to himself just how her apartment must look, with its carefully chosen pictures, its handsome carpets and fine furnishings, and he wondered if he would be happier for having come.

In contrast, he could see his own bare little room. But then, he argued, her father had made his success, while his own career was yet to be carved.

By this time he had reached an angle in the hall, and he stood still while he tried to decide which door to try first.

As he pondered the matter, a sound of voices was heard, and the next instant a nearby door opened and Miss Grantly herself appeared. She seemed to be on the point of starting down the hall.

Her father and mother were just behind her, and for a moment Barton was rather confused. He was not prepared to have the entire Grantly family meet him at the door. A second later, however, he mustered up his courage and said:

“Good evening.”

“So glad to see you,” she answered, extending her hand in a cordial greeting, but with a decided show of embarrassment, which impressed itself upon Barton as rather peculiar under the circumstances.

“You—” She hesitated. “You must have had some trouble in finding us,” she added.

“Not at all,” he answered.

“We were expecting you,” continued Miss Grantly; “but I fear I neglected to tell the telephone operator that—”

“Oh, she directed me all right,” answered Barton.

“You must think it rather strange to find us in a place like this,” said Miss Grantly, still standing at the door and without a word of invitation to enter. “I must explain just

how it happens that everything is as it is.”

For the first time, Barton caught a glimpse of the hall and parlor behind her. He could not believe his eyes.

Instead of the luxury he expected to find, the very opposite greeted his eye. The parlor was the most forlorn-looking place he had seen in a long time.

Barton was almost stunned for the moment. An ordinary table, several chairs with threadbare upholstering, a dingy carpet, and a too apparent air telling of lack of funds pervaded the place.

The hall was almost destitute of furnishings. A cheap umbrella-stand and a rickety hat-rack were all it contained.

Barton possessed the faculty of quickly grasping an understanding of unusual situations, and he immediately decided that with the Grantlys things were not exactly as they appeared to the general public.

Miss Grantly was supposed to be an heiress. He had kept away from her on that account. As a matter of fact, her wealth must be mere rumor, as was so often the case with reputedly rich persons. Barton had on more than one occasion discovered that his acquaintances were well-to-do merely in clothes and manners.

So it seemed to be with Miss Grantly. He knew her to be an intensely proud girl, and he thought he understood how it was that she would naturally desire to present a brave front to the world.

The Grantlys no doubt had had money, had lost it, and were now living on in the hope of retrieving their fortunes without hanging out a distress-signal for the information of their friends. Probably they had leased the apartment by the year, and were living on in it only until their lease was up. Perhaps they had sold their fine furniture, and had replaced it by that which he had seen.

A thousand and one reasons for their poor circumstances floated through Barton's brain. Whatever the conditions were, he felt sure that Miss Grantly was innocent of all blame. Perhaps the father was responsible for the false colors, on account of his wish to keep up a certain amount of standing in his business.

In any case, Barton felt an uncontrollable sensation of gladness sweep over him.

Three words kept repeating themselves in his ears until they sang a song of thanksgiving. "She is poor," he told himself, so that at last he and she could stand on an equal footing.

So it was that when she began to explain things, Barton quickly interrupted.

"Now, Miss Grantly, please do nothing of the kind. I understand perfectly."

She had not asked him to remove his coat, so he still stood with it on, hat in hand, when suddenly there was the sound of a terrific crash, followed by a deadly silence. Then there came the loud groans of some human being apparently in great pain.

"It's the elevator!" exclaimed Miss Grantly, her father, and mother simultaneously.

"I was afraid there would be an accident. It has been behaving badly for several days," continued the girl. "Oh, doctor, some one is hurt!"

She clasped both hands around his arm and gazed up into his face with an appealing expression which, somehow, told of her belief and confidence in him. She was white with anxiety for the injured.

All her humanity was apparent in that look, and the way she had said that one word, "doctor," went straight to Barton's heart.

He answered her unspoken appeal by a wild dash down the stairs to the basement. Miss Grantly and her parents followed, as

did the occupants of other apartments who had heard the crash and the moans.

Quite a crowd gathered around the physician as he made an examination into the results of the wreck, for the elevator had dropped several floors. There was no one in it at the time, except the operator, and he now lay helpless on the floor, unable to move.

Barton, with the assistance of the bystanders, succeeded in getting him out, and placed him on an improvised couch while he examined him carefully.

"A broken leg," he announced briefly, "and suffering from shock. No internal injuries," he added. "You're a lucky fellow to have escaped so easily. That was quite a fall."

When this decision was pronounced, the occupants of the various apartments returned to their rooms.

Mr. and Mrs. Grantly wanted their daughter to go up-stairs with them.

"If you don't mind, mother, I think I will stay here to help the doctor," she said.

"You would better go back with them," suggested Barton, as he set about making the victim of the accident as comfortable as possible under the circumstances.

The man was still groaning pitifully.

"Not unless you insist," said Miss Grantly.

"Suffering is not pleasant to listen to."

"Let me do something," she begged. "I won't go! That's settled."

"You might have the hall-boy ring for the ambulance," Barton suggested.

"Suppose I order a taxicab or a carriage," she said.

"The ambulance would be better, for then he can lie down. Besides," he added thoughtfully, "it's cheaper."

"Just as you say, doctor."

She followed out his instructions and

then joined him again.

"Where are you taking me to, doctor?" faintly asked the injured man.

"I am sending you to the hospital, which is the only place for you," answered Barton.

"Oh, don't send me there!" protested the man. "They'll cut me up, and I'll never get out again."

"Nonsense. Lie still," ordered the doctor."

"I'm afraid, miss," continued the fellow in an appealing voice to Miss Grantly. "I've never been to the hospital, and I hear such awful stories."

"The doctor knows best, James," said Miss Grantly in a quiet voice.

"If you would go with me, doctor?" the man went on.

"Some one will be here with the ambulance. There is nothing to fear," said Barton reassuringly.

But James would not be quieted.

"Please go with me, doctor," he repeated over and over.

Barton looked at Miss Grantly. He had expected to spend the evening with her, and here was something entirely unforeseen taking him away.

"What shall I do?" he asked, although he knew very well what she would tell him to do.

He was not surprised when she answered without hesitation:

"Oh, go with the poor fellow, if it will comfort him."

"I will do as you say," rejoined Barton, "although he would have the best of care without me. Still, if you wish me to do so—"

He looked her full in the eyes.

"You're a brave little woman, do you know it?" he added.

"Dr. Barton!" she exclaimed, and a blush spread over her face.

"Yes. I can't tell you all I would like to

now," Barton went on. "It would take a long time, but—"

"You'll come back after you see him comfortably fixed, won't you?"

Barton looked at his watch.

"I fear it will be too late then," he replied. "You see, it will take some time; and— You will be at Miss Sommers's tea, to-morrow afternoon, won't you?"

"Yes, I shall be there," answered Miss Grantly, shyly looking down as she found his gaze fastened intently upon her.

At this moment the loud clanging of a gong was heard outside, and a physician and attendant from the hospital came in, carrying a stretcher, on which the elevator operator was carefully placed.

"I am interested in this man," said Barton, "and will go along with him."

The hospital men expressed no surprise, but hurried the injured man out to the ambulance.

"Until to-morrow, then?" said Barton with a lingering clasp of the hand.

"Yes, and you will come soon again, won't you?" returned Miss Grantly. "Thank you for all you did for the poor man. You are so good, so kind. Too bad, though, our evening was spoiled in such a way," she added.

"It was regrettable in one sense, but I must say I feel that we know each other much better as a result," he replied.

Barton did all he could for the injured man at the hospital, and left him resting comfortably. He then went home and tried to read, but he couldn't. All he could see on every page was the face of Lillian Grantly.

He recalled her thoughtfulness for the welfare of the elevator-man, her various little looks and expressions which told of the true woman. There was nothing hypocritical or selfish about her, and he knew in his heart that the pretense she was making to the

world was for the sake of some one else other than herself.

"She's a brick to put up such a brave front," he told himself.

He dreamed all night long of accidents of different kinds. In each and every one of them Miss Grantly figured prominently. Sometimes she was a trained nurse, then again an angel. In one she would appear in a gorgeous gown covered with jewels of monstrous value, and in the next she was merely an ordinary young girl in a simple muslin dress. He woke up with the fancy that he liked her best in the last attire.

"I'll tell her what I think of her today," he decided.

How he ever passed the intervening hours was a thing more difficult to describe than the most intricate of surgery cases. He was thankful, indeed, when five o'clock drew near and he could present himself at the door of Miss Sommers's beautiful home.

Miss Grantly evidently had not arrived, although the spacious rooms were full of laughing and chatting women, with a few men scattered here and there to relieve the monotony.

"Have you seen Miss Grantly, Barton?" asked Pendleton, a young lawyer who made no pretense of having any further ambition beyond marrying some wealthy girl who could ease life for him.

"No," answered Barton coldly.

"Tremendously popular person," continued Pendleton, "though I must confess that her immense fortune has a great deal to do with it. I am keeping my eye very carefully on her."

"The question is," said Barton, with a tinge of sarcasm, "is she keeping her eye carefully on you?"

"I don't know about that, but it won't be long now before I find out."

"Suppose you were to discover that she

is not as wealthy as you think?"

"Oh, well, then, all bets off," laughed Pendleton as he strolled away.

"Here she is now," he called back over his shoulder, and rushed over toward Miss Grantly, who was just entering the room.

She spoke rather indifferently to him and came directly toward Barton?

"And how is the injured man?" she inquired as they shook hands.

"Doing nicely," he answered. "I called up the hospital this morning and learned that he is quite comfortable and not as impatient as such patients usually are. It will be some weeks before he will be able to run your elevator again, however."

"We have another man already," she replied.

"It's strange how one's place in life is so easily filled, isn't it?" he remarked.

"In business matters, you should add," she observed, with a smile.

"I'm glad you said that," he answered, looking at her admiringly. "Do you mind having a little chat over here in the corner, where we can be a little more to ourselves?"

"Is it as confidential as all that?" she inquired, arching her eyebrows and pronouncing the words in a bantering fashion, which was, nevertheless, accompanied by a conscious blush.

"Quite," he replied in low, tense tones, adding: "Let me get you some tea first."

A moment later they were comfortably seated, and as she took occasional sips from her dainty cup he began:

"I have thought of nothing but you ever since last night."

"Really!" she exclaimed in rather a surprised manner, which was merely a bit of acting.

"Yes. I have thought of you ever since the first time I saw you, but you see, the money idea was forever in the way."

“Money is a dreadful nuisance sometimes,” she said. “But why did you bother about it so much?”

“Well, you see, I tried not to let myself think about you, because—well, because I haven’t as much as I might have.”

“Well, what of that?”

“I believed there was such a difference between us in our financial conditions, that I just couldn’t think of you as I wanted to. I felt it would be an injustice to you. Finally it dawned upon me that there was no one else in the world for me, but I meant never to tell you.”

“Well,” she said shyly, “you haven’t told me so.”

This was accompanied by a little glance which emboldened him.

“Miss Grantly,” he went on, almost in a whisper, “I love you. You know it, don’t you?”

“Do you really?” she asked; but when he gazed into her eyes she added: “Don’t look at me like that, for every one can read your thoughts.”

“Somehow last night,” he continued, “I can’t tell what it was, but something you said led me to believe that you—”

“You were right,” she answered softly. “I do.”

“You do?” he exclaimed joyfully, and, regardless of the fact that there were others in the immediate vicinity, he took her hand between both of his and pressed it so hard that she gave a little half-suppressed cry of pain.

Then the two fell into a deep silence, during which each was thinking how wonderful the other was.

“But, tell me,” she broke out presently, “you were saying something about last night, and that you had meant never to tell me that”—she hesitated—“that you care for me. What was it that made you change your

mind?”

“Well, the fact of my having practically nothing stood between us.”

“Because you had heard that I am an heiress?” she inquired.

“Yes,” he answered.

“I thought so,” she said. “How different you are from the others! They like me for my money, while you stayed away on account of it.”

“That was the reason. If I hadn’t found out that you are poor I could never have said what I have just told you. I want you to know that I don’t make much, but we can wait a while, and I believe that my practice will be better in another year’s time. I have the promise of several good families. Of course, I couldn’t think of asking you to marry me now; but I will work hard, and things are bound to come out all right. I want you to know, though, how glad I was to discover that you have lost your money, for now you can believe that I love you for yourself alone.”

Miss Grantly looked at him without speaking.

“Lost my money!” she repeated finally.

“I understand all about it,” he hurried on. “I don’t blame you at all for trying to keep up a good front to the public. It’s perfectly natural that you should do so. I admire you for being so plucky.”

“What are you talking about?” asked Miss Grantly.

“About your aunt’s illness and your reasons for living in an apartment furnished as yours is.”

“Why, you have never been in our apartment!” said Miss Grantly.

“That’s true. I didn’t go inside, but I couldn’t help seeing. I didn’t mean to be inquisitive, but I read the whole story without a word from you. I appreciate your having invited me up under the

circumstances. It somehow proved that instinctively you had some faith in me. None of the others have been there lately, have they?"

"No; for the reason that my aunt—"

"Don't say anything more," he protested. "You can tell me the whole story later."

Suddenly Miss Grantly began to laugh. She laughed until the tears rolled down her cheeks.

"What is there funny about what I have said?" asked Barton, beginning to feel offended.

"I can't explain my thoughts now," she answered, "but you'll find out later. By the way, I must say a few words to several friends, and then we will be going."

"We?"

"Yes, we. Mother has invited you to dinner. I hope you are not engaged elsewhere."

"No. I'm free to come," replied Barton, with a smile of pleasure. But your aunt, and—and—are you sure it is perfectly convenient?"

"Perfectly. My aunt is able to join the family circle at meal-times now, and—as to the apartment, I am sure you will find it in a little better order than it was last evening. You see," she added, "I rather thought that you might be persuaded to go back home with me. It will be great fun to take you in to father and mother and auntie, and say, 'Look, everybody, this is the man I'm going to marry—some day.'"

"And that day will be just as soon as I earn enough money."

She laughed and chatted for a few minutes with different callers, and then called to Barton.

"Take me to the car," she said.

"Which one," he asked—"the one around the corner or the line two blocks off?" he asked.

"The one at the door," she answered, as a footman led the way to a huge automobile.

"Aren't you rather—" he began when he could recover his breath.

"Extravagant?" she asked, with a smile. "Well, perhaps I am. I'm afraid I shall spend money faster than you can make it—although," she added, "I will try to be economical."

"You can spend every cent I make—when I make it," he said seriously.

It was a matter of only a few minutes, and once more Barton stood in the lobby of the Lynnhurst. It was not quite twenty-four hours since his first and last appearance there, but the whole world had changed.

The elevator had been repaired, and the new man ran it quickly to the sixth floor.

Much to Barton's surprise, Miss Grantly passed by the door of the apartment at which he had found her the evening before. However, he asked no questions. She rang the bell at the extreme right.

An immaculately clad butler ushered them into a hall which was a vision of luxury and refinement.

"Forbes will look after your things," said Miss Grantly. "Now come with me into the library, where we will find the family."

Barton's eyes opened wide with amazement as he entered a magnificent room, the contents of which must have cost thousands of dollars. After he had greeted Mr. and Mrs. Grantly and the aunt, who explained that she had just recovered from a serious illness, Barton turned to his fiancée and murmured:

"I don't understand."

"It's very simple," she said. "You called at the wrong apartment last evening. Congratulations, everybody!"

And she put her arms around her mother's neck.

"Mother, father, auntie—I have found a

man who loves me for myself alone, and all by accident, too. He actually thought that we lived in the apartment where he found us last night.”

“What! In the superintendent’s rooms?” inquired the mother.

“Yes, in that awful place. You see,” she explained to Barton, “the apartment has been unrented all season, and he uses the room you saw as a sort of an office where he sees people and attends to everything about the building. Didn’t you notice the rolls of wall-paper lying on the floor, and the moth-eaten chairs that he dragged up from the storage-room where some one had left them ages and ages ago? Father and mother had quite a discussion in regard to the size of the rooms as compared with ours, and we three went over definitely to settle the matter. And, of course, mother won out.”

Barton was silent.

“The doctor here imagined that we had somehow or other lost our money and were trying to keep the fact from all our friends,” went on Miss Grantly in her gayest and most enthusiastic manner.

“So then you are not—” began Barton.

“As I seemed last night? That’s quite true. But I’m very glad you thought so for a while. You see, you have unwittingly committed yourself. We’re engaged now, and you’ve got to take me—money and all.”

Barton could not resist her bewitching smile, so he joined in the general laugh over his mistake.

“If I had expected—” he started to say.

“But you didn’t,” broke in his fiancée, “and you ought to know by this time that it’s the unexpected that invariably happens.”