

# Juliana in Service

By Jeanette Cooper

**J**ULIANA was sociologically inclined. That was how it came about that she found herself one December afternoon sitting forlornly on her trunk and homesickly surveying an attic apartment containing a small hard bed, a lopsided washstand, and a mirror that assured her with untruthful persistency that she was not a pleasure to look at.

"Anyway, it isn't a basement," said Juliana, glancing about her. Three promising places—promising from her point of view—had she refused because she could not command her courage to the point of sleeping downstairs. In this old house of a past period there were no basement bedrooms and the two tiny attic rooms were given up to the cook and the housemaid. She reviewed mentally the apartments on the lower floors through which her mistress had conducted her and compared them with this in which she sat; after which she got her notebook out of her bag and made a few hasty notes. Juliana was going to do a series of articles on the Domestic Service Problem and she was getting her material at first hand.

She felt very pleased with her notes. They were lightly satirical. When she had done her hair over before the malicious mirror she made some more notes. These were filled with a yearning cry of gloom. She felt a gratifying certainty that a half-column of pathos could always be secured by a few minutes spent before her trunk, pausing occasionally to add other heart-rending wails of a housemaid cast away on a desert of lopsided furniture, and when a final survey of herself reflected a cross-eyed face under the exaggerated pompadour she had substituted for her usual rather classic coiffure, and a lumpy and grotesque figure in a cheap lace waist, she had really to tear herself from the room, so filled was she with gloomy and satirical literature. Just outside the door she met Mrs. Wentworth.

"Oh, Julia," said that lady, who was a pretty and smartly groomed young person, "I quite forgot to tell you that I have ordered some new furniture for your room. We have just moved to Tarrytown and I have not been able to get it attended to sooner. The new things will be up tomorrow."

Juliana did not write up her notes that evening on the sleeping accommodations offered servants. But she made two notes on different subjects and underscored them. They read as follows:

"The cook has been called home. I am to do her work this week as well as my own—with a dinner party in prospect!"

"Mrs. Wentworth expects her brother tomorrow, making—when Mr. Wentworth arrives—four in the family. It is this uncertainty of the demands on one's time and strength that makes household service so unpopular."

"But perhaps the chief thing," Juliana sharpened her pencil and took a fresh start, "is the line drawn between those who employ servants and those who serve; a line, apparently impossible to cross, that lies between the drawing room and the kitchen."

She glanced that over in the morning before she went down to prepare breakfast. It comforted her for her lost inspiration on the subject of servants' rooms, and she decided to elaborate that line of thought for her first article. Not that it was a new thought, but all one need was a new viewpoint and a feeling style, and surely she, with her experience before her, could count on these. She ran lightly down the back stairs, pushed open the kitchen door and came to a standstill. A young man sat at the kitchen table partaking of a generous piece of apple pie. He looked up at her and smiled. He was a large young man with a handsome mouth and nice eyes. "Good morning," he said. "Don't be frightened. I am Mrs. Wentworth's brother." He surveyed her reassuringly and interestedly as he went on: "The furnace man let me into the basement and I found the stair door unlocked,

so I did not have to choose between waking the family and walking the streets until a respectable hour." He smiled again and again and proceeded to make the most of what little pie was left. "It isn't just the thing for breakfast," he commented, "but it was the first food I saw."

He had his eyes on Juliana, who still stood breathlessly by the door. "I believe I really frightened you," he observed, regretfully. "I'm tremendously sorry." She knew perfectly well that he was trying to place her, doubtful of her being a guest down at that hour, doubtful of her being the cook. He strolled across to the cupboard, evidently with the idea of filling in the period of uncertainty, helped himself to a couple of doughnuts and sat down on a corner of a table. "Can I offer you anything?" he said.

She did not answer. She went over and began to lay the fire in the old-fashioned coal stove.

"Oh! I say," he broke out. "Is—er—hasn't Mrs. Wentworth got a cook?" "I am doing the cooking for a few days," said Juliana. "I am the housemaid." Then by a flash of inspiration she added, "The cook has went."

He devoted himself to his doughnuts after that until, the fire laid, she picked up the coal scuttle and started for the basement. "I'll get the coal for you," he said. He seized the bale of the scuttle, but Juliana did not let go her side of it. "I do not think Mrs. Wentworth would like it." She was too startled to say any-

thing except the first thing that occurred to her.

"Why should she object?" he inquired ingenuously. "Surely I am better able to carry coal than a girl like you."

"But I am hired to do it," still clinging to her side of the pail.

He looked down at her hand. "But the point," he explained, "is that you should never have been hired to do it. The fault is in the economic condition that makes such a thing possible. Now, when we reformers get into power—; he took the pail from her relaxed grasp and disappeared into the basement. "Anything else I can do?" He inquired cheerfully as he deposited the filled bucket beside the stove. "Part of our doctrine is to help a comrade, you know."

"That is all," very stiffly. "Thank you."

"Not at all," amiably. He looked at her an instant from the doorway and then went down the hall whistling softly to himself.

Mrs. Wentworth was beaming on her brother when Juliana carried in the breakfast. "And I'll have you all to myself this week, Kane," she said, "before your work begins."



"It is quite unnecessary," returned Juliana, looking very haughty.

Kane's reply was perhaps a little absent minded. At any rate Juliana was not called upon for any further service, and after breakfast Mrs. Wentworth came into the kitchen and said, kindly: "You need not serve the table while you are doing the cooking, Julia. I'll attend to that myself."

And, later, Juliana hearing the lady of the house discoursing in tones reproving, argumentative, satirical, but always too subdued for the words to carry, and the answering laughter from Mr. Kane Farnsworth, guessed that she was under discussion, and went about her work with a growing wrath within her and a paragraph seething in her brain about self-respecting working girls being subjected to the surreptitious and patronizing attentions of supposedly well-bred young men. Not that she was able to discover anything either patronizing or surreptitious in Mr. Farnsworth's behavior. He came out into the kitchen during the afternoon, cheerfully slamming various doors behind him so that all the world might know where he had gone.

"Paring potatoes for dinner, Julia?" he said with great good humor. "I will help you."

"It is quite unnecessary," returned Juliana, looking very haughty, in spite of the overpowering pompadour and lace waist.

"Again you miss the point," he said. "It is not a question of necessity, but of ethics. Here am I idling, and you doing the work of two." He got a large apron and tied it carefully around his neck. Then he got a knife and seized a potato. "You understand, Julia," he said, unheeding the averted face and stony silence of his companion, "that all the work of the world could be done, and well done, if each person devoted four hours to it. Authorities differ somewhat as to the time, but four hours is the maximum. Now, you and I—"

Mrs. Wentworth entered. Her face was flushed and her eyes were bright. Juliana, to her great disgust, felt her own face flushing. Her eyes, after the first glance, she kept on her potato. Mr. Farnsworth spoke up cheerfully: "I was just explaining to Julia," he said, "that if we all worked four hours a day—"

Mrs. Wentworth interrupted. Her voice was quiet, but it was the quiet that is achievement. "Are you thinking of choosing housework as your career?" she asked.

"Do the duty that lies nearest," he quoted, not without an accent of virtue. He finished the potato and selected another.

"I wanted you to help me hang some pictures in the library," said Mrs. Wentworth. Between fear of losing her cook and fear of losing her brother she was really a pathetic sight Juliana felt stirrings of sympathy.

"In a few minutes," he said. "Having put my hand to the plow, in other words to the potato!"

"I would prefer to do the potatoes alone," said Juliana. "You pare them too thick."

He looked at her accusingly and selected two pieces of peeling from the pan. "Exhibit One," he said. "Peeling removed by Miss Julia—" paused inquiringly, and getting no answer, repeated with a closing inflection, "by Miss Julia. Exhibit Two—"

"Kane!" said his sister sharply. He gave her an innocent and inquiring smile.

"There is a great interest in paring potatoes," he observed. "Now notice the way in which Julia holds hers." Juliana, uncomfortably aware of her own lack of skill in the potato paring line, grew scarlet under the two pairs of watching eyes. She knew how Mrs. Wentworth was interpreting the blush and breathed a sigh of rage and relief when Mr. Farnsworth finally drew his athletic figure to a standing position and followed his sister from the room.

"I find it difficult to get started on my articles," wrote Juliana in her notebook the next evening. "I wonder if it is Socialism that makes Mr. Farn-