

# MORE CONFESSIONS of a TRAINED NURSE

## THE TERRIBLE VIGIL OF ONE NIGHT

It was my first case and the most horrible night I have ever spent. In my foolish little faith in humanity I had assured myself while looking up the street and number of my patient that Doctor — would be careful to send me among nice people.

"I am the trained nurse," I said to the man who met me in the hall.

"Oh, you are, are you?" he answered in tones I was not used to hearing.

I followed him upstairs into a small back bedroom, where I found my patient, a young woman not much older than myself apparently, pinched and thin and raging in delirium. My professional armor having still many weak places in it, instead of regarding her as merely a "case," a great wave of pity swept over me and I took her straight to my heart. I hurried into my uniform and went to work with a will to try to reduce her temperature.

There were no conveniences in the house. The meals were being sent in from a restaurant, there was no servant, no coal in the bin to provide fires for hot water, and the house, as far as I had seen it, was guileless of carpets and furniture with the exception of two scantily furnished bedrooms.

Having been reared in a wholesome country home, all this was to me only another claim upon my sympathy and I thought almost regretfully of my \$25 a week in the face of this struggle with honest poverty. With the assistance of a coal oil stove and improvised appliances, I finally got my patient into a state between slumber and stupor and sat down a moment to watch her. Then my eye caught the general disorder of the room. Nothing was in place, although there were so few places. Picking up all sorts of articles of clothing from the floor, the backs of chairs and the foot of the bed, I found them very much drabbed and soiled, but to my surprise, exquisitely dainty. The bureau also was full of herbiboned, frilled lingerie, which, to me, was another discrepancy with my homespun idea of an honest struggle with poverty.

The woman's face, now in repose, was harder and less attractive than I had thought it at first, when coming in from the light; and the only words she said during the whole afternoon formed an incoherent appeal, always ending with "Tom, Tom." As I stood over her taking her temperature, she seemed to shrink from me in fear.

It was all very strange, but I was kept so busy every minute carrying out Doctor —'s orders and sustaining my great weight of dignity as a graduated nurse that I had no time to reach an opinion. All the responsibility of the profession had settled upon my shoulders as I realized myself in sole charge of this case, with no head nurse over me and no night nurse to rely upon. This was to be a record case for accuracy and vigilance and I did not care whether I got a minute's rest or sleep during its continuance.

The door opened with a jerk just as my patient was falling into something like a natural sleep.

"Tom!" the woman shrieked and went off into a fit of crying. The man, standing in the doorway without removing his hat or taking the cigar out of his mouth, looked long and hard at me as if I, not he, had been the disturber.

"Come out here a moment," he said in an undertone.

"Closing the door gently behind me, I tried to tell him that I had just got her quiet when he opened the door, explaining carefully the patient's temperature, pulse and respiration.

The man, without having paid the slightest attention to what I had been telling him about the case, said: "You're all right. That — doctor didn't send a night nurse, did he?"

"No," I told him: "he said he thought so"—it had not occurred to me until that moment that I did not know the name of my patient—"might sleep during the night if I could get her quiet this afternoon. But now that she had been aroused," trying to put a severe and reproachful meaning into my words, "there was no telling what might happen."

"Oh give her some dope to put her to sleep," the man said, "she'll be all right and don't you let her monopolize your time, little girl."

"That was the last of my patient's rest. From that hour until midnight I worked over her to get her quiet without the use of the "dope" which I knew to be out of the question. From her state of hysterical weeping she worked herself up into a frenzy of nerves. I tried to get Dr. — on the telephone and found he was out, but left a hurry call for him that would bring him as soon as he returned.

There was no other woman in the house; no one upon whom I could call besides this man, whom I dreaded, and my patient's condition was becoming desperate. From time to time the man came to the door, and, looking across the bed, fixed me with his eye in a horrible way I was beginning to understand. Following a blind impulse I



WHEN I FOUND THE MAN'S ARM AROUND ME—MY BLOOD FROZE WITH TERROR.

had drawn my cap as far over my face as it would go, dampened my hair and straightened out the curl by drawing it flat over my ears trying to look as old and prim as I possibly could.

At last the man called me out into the hall again: "You have had nothing to eat," he said very kindly, "come here and have a bite of something."

I was so faint with hunger and nervousness and I knew I could not get through the night without it. But when I saw it was a tete-a-tete supper he had planned in the front room I declared I could not leave my patient that long and insisted upon having the table brought into the hall at her door. The supper was mostly of bottles—beer and other things I didn't even know the names of. Without the slightest regard for manners, I took the whole plate of crackers and most of the cheese, which was the only substantial thing in sight, and ate them ravenously; and I am bound to admit that after once having given him my opinion on intoxicants he left off urging me to drink something. Although I stood up and ate from hand to mouth, keeping my face turned toward my patient's door, the man seemed to regard this as an admission of friendliness between us. He tried to draw me into conversation until my simple little country soul was torn with compunctions about my bad manners. "Don't you let her wear you

out," he kept urging, nodding his head toward the door, through which groans and sobs could be heard at intervals. He seemed without any apparent interest in her desperate condition.

"But it's desperate," I tried to make him see; "she can't last long at this rate. I can't get her quiet again and the doctor doesn't come. Oh, I wish I could reach him—"

For the moment my nerves were getting the better of me; still I don't think I would have given way under any circumstances; but when I found that man's arms about me and heard him saying all sorts of things, my blood froze with terror.

"Down!" I screamed, instinctively lapsing into the manner we use to Bingo on the farm when he gets savage, pretending we are not afraid in order to subdue him. "Down, you ugly brute!" His hot breath and glaring eyes were not unlike Bingo's when we set him on a tramp.

The noise excited my patient, who began to shriek and scream so that the man had to let me go. The next hour I was conscious of nothing but my case. Feeling that it would make us late for church, she and I stood around and looked on while Mr. Swift and Tom spread out their tools and things. Joe, the driver at the

### WE GO FOR AN AUTOMOBILE RIDE

By Georgia Bertha

If there is one thing that I am simply screaming about, it is an automobile.

Consequently, when Mr. Swift offered to take three of us to the city and back again last Sunday morning, I could not get ready quickly enough. Fifteen year old Tom was going, of course. He could not be prided away from an automobile with a crowbar—or is it a cold chisel that is used for prying? Anyway, Tom went with us.

I hunted up Cousin Sue and persuaded her to come along. She is afraid of automobiles, as a rule, but she said she would not mind going out in Mr. Swift's car, because he had told us that he was such a careful driver.

"I used to speed," he had said just the evening before, "but I have stopped it. I came very near having a collision one day when I was racing with another machine." Since that time I

at first Cousin Sue said that she could not go, and I could not, either. "The preacher is staying right here in the house, and we should all go to church," she said.

"We will get back in time for that," Mr. Swift said. "I just want to get my mail from the hotel. I did not tell them to forward it when I came up here, and then we can come right straight home."

So Cousin Sue got her hat and veil and came with us. We were going at a lively rate, only a few miles from home, when we heard a sudden hissing sound. It was a puncture in one of the back tires. We all got out of the car and Mr. Swift and Tom took off their coats and went to work.

I had never seen a tire taken off and taken to pieces, which, by the way, Mr. Swift said that he himself had never done before; all of his other accidents having happened near a garage, and Tom never had undertaken anything of the kind, either. So none of us minded it one bit, unless it was Cousin Sue. She was afraid it would make us late for church. She and I stood around and looked on while Mr. Swift and Tom spread out their tools and things. Joe, the driver at the

ranch, happened along just then and stopped his buggy, and got out and helped. Really, we looked just like a magazine illustration.

When they were working like Trojans—Joe and Tom holding the rim while Mr. Swift hammered it into place, Joe suddenly let go.

"Lemme blow my nose," he said. "The whole performance had to stop while he went over to his buggy and hunted around until he found a big, red handkerchief, and proceeded to blow his nose. When he came back they had to begin all over, because the rim had slipped when Joe loosened his hold. Mr. Swift and Tom were provoked, but Cousin Sue and I thought it was funny. We had not been working in the sun for nearly an hour, and they had. At last when they had the tire replaced with a new inner tube and had it blown up, and the tools all put away we started on our way once more.

"We will have to go right fast now," Mr. Swift said, "so we can make up for the time we lost and get back for church."

"I wonder if it would not have been better for me to have gone back with Joe in the buggy?" Cousin Sue asked. "Too late now," I answered. Mr. Swift did not even hear her. He was thinking about making up for that lost time. Cousin Sue and I were on the back seat and were getting bounced about amazingly. When I went up in the air one time I got a glimpse of the speedometer. It registered 20 miles an hour, and it was over a country road. That looked like a good beginning. Even the back of Tom's head looked ecstatic. He was on the front seat, where the jolting was not nearly so bad.

"Hold on tight, now, I am going to show you some speed," Mr. Swift called out over his shoulder. We were already holding on with both hands and Cousin Sue was murmuring to herself that she wished she had gone back with Joe. We were saved, however, for a dog ran out in front of us and we had to slow down a little. Again we heard that hissing sound. I was very much in hopes that it was the dog, but it was the tire instead, the same one that had been punctured before.

Mr. Swift remembered that there were ladies present and did not ex-

press himself, though I am sure he must have felt a great deal. We got out sadly and stood in a row and looked at the wheel—that is, all of us were sad except Tom. Every hair of his head positively bristled with delight. "Two punctures in one morning and no church," was beyond his fondest dreams," Cousin Sue said afterward. "Glendale is nearer than the city," Mr. Swift said. "Is there a garage there?"

"No," I answered. "But there is a man at the blacksmith shop who fixes automobiles."

"He died last week," Cousin Sue added.

Mr. Swift did not deign to notice us further. "Tom," he said, "run over to that house and see if they have a telephone. If I can ring up a garage they can send out a man in a machine to fix us up. I have not another tire to put in, even if I felt like doing it."

Tom came back with a man and a dog and the news that there was not a telephone nearer than a mile away. So Mr. Swift and Tom had to jack the machine up and take off the tire, while the strange man, beyond the automobile, he had when he lived in Colorado, and the dog barked and Cousin Sue said she wished she had gone back with Joe. I felt around my head and counted my puffs and curls. I had not lost quite half of them.

At last the tire was off and we were running on the rim. When we came to the place where they give Spanish dinners Mr. Swift stopped the car and went in to see if they had a telephone. He was back in a moment.

"Sick man in there," he said. "They don't want the phone used."

We stopped next at a grocery that evidently did not realize that it was Sunday. The telephone there was out of order. We started again and before long came to a streetcar line. There was a car coming. Mr. Swift jumped out and said, "Lemme get there!"

I got out hastily and he began a wild search under the seat for his two punctured tires.

"The garage closes at 12," he said while he searched. "I can make better time on the car than in this crippled machine."

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