

Nurse Helen

By IZOLA FORRESTER

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The first recollection Derrick had of her was very hazy.

There had been the fight outside of Kid Murray's. He remembered that, every detail of it. For nearly a week he had been waiting for it to come off, on a tip from the union secretary. And it had all come true. The very night that Barker had landed from Pittsburgh they had prepared his reception in memory of the speeches he had made before the coal barons. He had been faithful, Barker had. He had dallied and parleyed and dined and hobnobbed and, as Murray said, played the fool generally, and the wine of it all had made him heady, and this while thousands of strikers waited on his word and their children and wives waited for daily bread.

It was not wise of Barker. Even Derrick could see that, and Derrick was merely reporter for what Murray called the "pink sheet." So the night that Barker returned to make his explanatory address in Central hall Derrick was on hand to see the fun. He saw it. Not only that, but he was right down in the middle of it, and when the boys made a dash for Barker as he tried to glide out the back window he went with them, not knowing exactly why, but crazy with the sight of the running fox, like the rest of the bounds.

They caught him outside of Murray's, and those who could not get their hands on him began to throw things. Some of the things went astray, and when the melee was cleared and Barker had been thrown up by the tide into an ambulance Derrick, the "pink sheet" reporter, was beside him with a battered cranium and a faintly riotous sense of victory, as he dropped into unconsciousness, of having got a "beat" on the other papers.

But the "beat" never came out, because for days the "pink sheet" reporter lay up at Bellevue, and the world spun round him in gray circles like a view of the fifth heaven. Then gradually out of the circling grayness the distinguished one shape that came and went with more tangibility than the other dreams. And one morning he opened his eyes and saw two real objects clearly, without the gray film. They were Nurse Helen and Barker.

Barker lay a couple of beds away from him. He could see the face on the pillow. The redness had left it, and some of the untoward mildness. The outline of the profile looked harsh and almost forbidding against the white pillow. And he was asleep.

Derrick glanced up at the nurse. She was dressing the wound on his head swiftly, deftly, easily, impersonally. A ward surgeon in white came by, stopped and bent forward to examine the wound.

"He can leave tomorrow," he said briefly and went on.

And suddenly Derrick changed his mind. He did not want to leave. He wanted to stay there forever and let this girl in gray and white pat him and wrap him up and ease him. Then he thought of Barker.

"Is he badly hurt?" he asked.

"The nurse looked startled for an instant. At least her eyes lost their impersonal look and met those of Derrick. Then she understood.

"Yes. He will not be out for several weeks," she said quietly.

Derrick remembered swiftly. Several weeks! That would carry him past the 10th, and the 10th was the decisive day in Pittsburgh. And if Barker were not on hand to parley and fool around generally something definite might result. There was only one man to send in his place, Strogund, and if Strogund went there would be no parley, no fooling. He would win the strike.

"Have I been here long?" he asked.

"The nurse was clearing the table beside the bed of bandages and bottles. Derrick noticed that her hair was reddish-brown beneath her cap. He could see the little curls around the edges.

"Two weeks ago yesterday you were brought in," she replied. "It is the 9th."

Derrick tried to sit up in bed.

"Two weeks!" he gasped and dropped heavily back on his pillow.

"You must not do that," said the girl severely. "You have had a high fever and are still very weak. Don't you sit up again."

She went on, and Derrick closed his eyes. The grayness swept around him, circling, wheeling, waving, until he could not stop himself and was lost in its void. When he awakened it was night. There were two figures standing beside him, the girl nurse and an older woman.

"He is worse," the girl was saying.

"Dr. Ingraham said he might leave tomorrow. I will be on again at 7. You had better not let them take him before Ingraham sees him again."

"Nurse."

"It was barely above a whisper, but she heard and came to the bedside.

"Will you send a telephone message for me?"

"To your friends?" The nurse was used to such requests, and this particular patient had seemed particularly friendly.

"Yes." Derrick tried to think clearly, to keep his grip on things before the grayness should come again. "Call up 3008 Main, ask for the 'City' room—for Yates. Tell him that Barker is laid up in Bellevue with a smashed head

and can't go to Pittsburgh tomorrow. Tell him—oh, hang it, if I could only get on the wire for half a minute!"

"You must not excite yourself," said the nurse calmly. "You could not possibly travel to Pittsburgh tomorrow. You must be quiet and not worry."

Derrick stared at her. She thought he was Barker. And her eyes were dark blue, almost hazel, and she was young.

"I will send the message tonight," she said and walked away.

And Derrick smiled for the first time in many days and went to sleep without the gray void around him. She would keep her word. Yates would attend to the rest. They would be able to follow up the tip. He wondered vaguely which of the boys would be sent to Pittsburgh to cover the barons' end of the story, and then he smiled again, remembering the little nurse with the close curved lips and dark blue eyes who thought that he was Barker.

The next day Yates came to see him. Yates himself, clean shaven and cold blooded, but with the glimmer of appreciation in his eyes as he saw Barker two beds away.

"It went in this morning," he told Derrick. "There has been a general pickup over Barker's disappearance. Some said he was dead. But they thought he was simply laying low, to turn up high and dry at the meeting. Now they've sent Strogund since the extra came out."

Derrick grinned happily. He had had an idea it would be that way. And Barker was watching them, grimly, understandingly, his face looking oddly incongruous in its halo of white bandages. Yates nodded to him.

"Badly knocked out, Barker?" he asked pleasantly.

"But not done for yet," muttered Barker.

When he rose to go Yates gripped Derrick's hand.

"It was a very decent, timely thing to do, Derry," he said. "The old man will appreciate it."

That was all, but it left Derrick radiantly joyful. When the nurse came around he couldn't help it. He had to tell some one, and he told her while she dressed his head. It was after 8 then. At 7 she went off duty for the night. When he had finished she was smiling, too, and her eyes were bright.

"I am glad for you. Yesterday I thought that you were Barker, and I didn't want to send the message. I am from Pittsburgh, and we know about Barker there," she added seriously.

"But you sent it?"

"I knew it didn't matter so long as he couldn't go."

Derrick laughed. The dear, delicious, foolish denseness of her. Didn't matter! He looked over at Barker and rejoiced over the smashed head that did not matter.

"They had an extra out again tonight," the little nurse was saying. "The strike has been settled by arbitration, but the strikers won."

"God bless Strogund!" said Derrick fervently, and Barker heard him. The nurse added gently:

"You are to leave in the morning, perhaps before I come on. Don't work hard at first and you'll be all right. Goodby."

"What's your name, nurse from Pittsburgh?" asked Derrick, looking up at the dark blue eyes.

She flushed. It is against the rules for nurses to flirt with fellow nurses or doctors in Bellevue, but they have not passed any rule barring patients as yet.

"Helen," she said—"Helen Hayward."

"Mine's Derrick—Wilfred Derrick." He lowered his voice so that Barker could not hear. "I'm going to see you, Nurse Helen, after I get out of this place tomorrow, because you and I broke that strike. You don't know how we did it, but I do, and I think you're a brick. May I, Nurse Helen?"

"Yes," said Nurse Helen under her breath. And Derrick held one of the slim white hands close to his lips and kissed it. There was no one to deny him, for Bellevue had not barred love from the patients yet, and Barker was looking the other way.

The Power of a Ring.

She was lonely and to most persons unattractive, yet as she entered the train a sort of halo seemed to surround her as one set apart from common mortals. There was no indication of exceptional talent, ability or endowment about her, no evidence of superiority, but a certain indefinable distinction. It was not quite an air of conquest, though suggestive of satisfactory achievement. She bore her head high and wore a Buddha-like expression of proud serenity.

Only a moment was she settled in her seat when off came her gloves, and then the key to the problem was evident. The long, joyous look bestowed upon the sparkling ring on the third finger of her left hand told the story.

That left hand had a busy time. It investigated the lingerie hat poised coquettishly over the face of one no longer young, it made sure that her brooch was fastened, it pulled her silken skirts closer about her, it tightened the straps to her traveling bag sitting in the aisle, and so on indefinitely, occasionally pausing for a caressing glance from the tired but beaming eyes.

The gay little scintillations from the diamond flashed out the song, "Engaged, engaged, engaged!"—New York Press.

Things That Happen Only Abroad.

She was an obvious American, and she brought a breath of hominy into the coiffeur's in Hanover street. Said she, "I want you to send a man, right away, down to the Cecil to shingle my daughter's bang."

M. Toupet—Madam, I am a coiffeur, not a building contractor.—Pall Mall Gazette.

BODIES FOUND

Thought That Nearly a Score Were Consumed By White Hot Metal That Burst From Furnace.

Pittsburg, Pa., Jan. 11.—Partial investigation to ascertain the number of fatalities at the Eliza furnaces of the Jones & Laughlin Steel Co., Limited, Wednesday night, when an accumulation of gas exploded, bursting the base of the large furnace and showering tons of molten metal over about forty men, was completed last night, and shows that the bodies of twelve men, horribly mutilated, have been recovered and from fifteen to twenty men are missing.

It is generally believed the bodies of these were consumed by the white hot metal. Ten men are in hospitals terribly burned. Four of them are expected to die. It is doubtful whether the number of men killed will ever be known.

The condition of the injured is pitiful. A number have their eyes burned out, and others were so badly injured that amputation of limbs was necessary.

Last night Deputy-Coroner Laidley said that one foreigner, apparently a youth, became crazed by his injuries, and before he could be prevented, leaped into a pot of molten metal and was incinerated.

W. L. Jones, vice-president of the company, issued a statement last night, that it has been unable to determine what caused the explosion. A rigid investigation has been instituted, however. The damage will amount to over \$50,000.

Coroner Armstrong announced yesterday that he would conduct an investigation into the accident, and if he found that carelessness was responsible prosecution would immediately follow.

Killed By Fire Damp.

Connellsville, Pa., Jan. 11.—Fire, caused by an explosion of gasoline in the mines of the H. C. Frick Coke Co. at McClure station, spread to nearby shafts. Several men overcome by fire damp will die.

Powder Plant Explodes.

Hollidaysburg, Pa., Jan. 11.—The plant and buildings of the Standard Powder Co. of Pittsburgh at Horrell station yesterday, were destroyed by an explosion, caused by a fire. No lives were lost. The damage will exceed \$100,000. Two houses, a mile distant, were wrecked. The explosion was heard 25 miles away. Five thousand kegs of powder went up in the explosion.

LEG PULLED FROM SOCKET.

Horrible Death of Workman in Pulp and Paper Plant.

Chatham, N. B., Jan. 11.—John Burns, an employee of the Miramichi pulp and paper plant here, met a terrible death yesterday morning.

He was clearing away refuse accumulating near the blow pipe, when a rope attached to one of the grapple hooks he was using became entangled in the shaft and the hook was jerked into his right leg, whirling him around the shaft. As the rope was drawn into the machinery his leg was pulled out of the socket and clean away from the body.

He was alone at the time and no one saw how the accident actually occurred.

Body Strawn Along Track.

Fernie, B. C., Jan. 11.—Wm. K. Thomas, aged 34, a brakeman on the Mine Road train here, was thrown under the cars at the high line switch leading to the slack bins at the coke ovens and instantly killed. Wednesday night. The fragments of his body were strawn along the track from the lower end of the switch to the bins at the top.

Killed by Flying Rock.

Ottawa, Jan. 11.—While engaged in blasting in a mica mine at Kingsmore, Que., Wednesday forenoon, William Fleury, a miner, was struck in the head by a flying rock and died from the effects in a few hours. Fleury had put in the blast, ignited the fuse and was retreating.

Painfully Burned.

Hamilton, Jan. 11.—Louis Gill, 159 Cannon street, was painfully burned on his right arm and side yesterday afternoon at the International Harvester Works. He was taken to the city hospital.

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DISTRICT

BEAR LINE.

Our teacher of last year, Mr. F. C. White, visited our school on Friday of last week. Glad to see him.

Mrs. E. W. Wright and daughters, of Chatham, visited friends here last week.

Mr. G. Dyer, of Chatham, spent New Year's at Mr. Mason's.

Mr. and Mrs. Stenton, of Bad Axe, Mich., are visiting her parents, Mr. and Mrs. E. Hind.

Mr. Mason's family spent Christmas with his daughter, Mrs. Oscar Horn, of Raleigh.

Mr. and Mrs. J. Foy, Mr. and Mrs. J. Bishop, Mr. and Mrs. McGregor,

Mr. and Mrs. Mason, Mr. and Mrs. W. Stacey and Mrs. Wright, of River Road, spent New Year's at Mr. John Stacey's.

John Mason is in the General Hospital, suffering from an inflamed eye. Mr. and Mrs. James Sterling, of Smithville, nee Miss Bertie Sterling, visited friends in Dover on New Year's.

Mr. and Mrs. W. Chapple visited friends at Wallaceburg recently.

Master Perry and Alvie McGregor spent Christmas with their cousin, Clifford Pierce, near Florence.

Mr. Mack Smith, foreman for Dr. McFarlane, left for the Old Country last Wednesday.

Our young people held a dance at Mr. W. Ellis' on Christmas night and one at Thomas Harris' on New Year's night.

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