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## SALLY ROSS, PROBATIONER

[By a Trained Nurse]

Note.—The writer of this interesting story in two chapters assures us that the hospital incidents are related exactly as they took place in the institution where she was in training for a nurse.—Ed. Mon.

### CHAPTER I.

Over the finished breakfast in a handsome house on Park Avenue lingered three people in somewhat heated discussion. They were Mr. Edward Ross, his wife, and his niece, Miss Sally Ross of Montreal. The latter, since the loss of her parents some years before, in a marine disaster, had lived with this uncle and aunt, and had come to take the place of a daughter, in their otherwise childless home. Her one other relative, a brother several years her senior was far away in the Northland, at work on the great Transcontinental Railway.

The cause of their discussion had been the announcement of Sally, that she had received notice, to report for duty on the following Monday, at the City Hospital, where much against the wishes of her relatives, she had some time before applied for a position as probationary nurse.

At that time, they had hoped that it was a passing fancy, soon to be replaced by newer interests, but it now appeared that Sally was determined to carry out her intentions and become a nurse.

"Sally dear," said her uncle, "why are you dissatisfied here? You know your aunt and I are only too glad to have you with us, till you leave us for a home of your own, and you can go on with your music as far as you like."

"But I want to join the workers of the world and be among those who are doing things of use," she pleaded.

"Indeed, you will find work enough over there, till you catch some wretched disease and die, or are disgraced for life."

"Yes," said her aunt, "It was only last Summer, that the whole place was quarantined, with small-pox, and one of their most brilliant young doctors died of that loathsome disease, while a nurse escaped, only, with her face pitted almost beyond recognition."

"Aunt, you remember those eleven nuns who left Montreal last Summer to go to the far-off leper colony. Did they think of their probable loss of beauty, or of their long isolation and certain death. You remember, you thought them very heroic."

"That was different Sally, they went in response to a direct call for help and were much needed." But there is no scarcity of nurses over at the hospital, as they have always a long waiting list of those wishing to enter. Besides you are taking the place of some girl, who really needs the training as a means of earning her living, and who would probably do the work much better than one brought up as you have been."

"But, I really want to help the sick and suffering, Auntie."

"Sally, Sally," said her uncle, "You are all wrong. Don't you know that modern medical science is looking to prevention rather than cure? There is no greater prophylactic in the world than happiness. Go on singing to us, laughing with us, as if you will. Give us the contagion of your health and high spirits, and you will do your share towards making hospitals unnecessary."

"But I can still sing if I become a nurse, can't I?" Her uncle shook his head, "Three years' spent in the atmosphere of

illness will take the joyous note out of your song. The poet knew whereof he spoke, when he said that the brightest things of life 'Do take a sober coloring from an eye, that hath kept watch o'er man's mortality.'"

"Come, dear, give it up, for a few years at least, till you are older, and your aunt and I will take you abroad for the winter."

Sally's voice shook a little, as she replied, "Uncle, when Billy chose engineering, rather than being a lawyer as you and papa wished, you remember you said, 'A man must make his own choice.'"

The time has come now, when a woman too, must make her own choice.

I am twenty-two years old and I have chosen, so please, please do not oppose me any longer," and not daring to trust her voice further, Sally rose and left the room. Sally had her way, and at the appointed time went on duty as probationer in the men's medical ward of the general hospital.

It was with a secret sinking of heart that she first entered the ward, with its long line of typhoid patients on the right, faced by an equal line of miscellaneous cases and convalescents on the left and felt herself the target of many curious glances, a new nurse being always an object of interest.

The most perfect system of ventilation could not overcome the sickening odor of fetid breaths, mingled with that of some pungent disinfectant.

The staff of nurses for the ward included the head nurse, Miss Maxwell, her two regular assistants and a junior nurse sent as an extra, on account of the unusual amount of attention required by so many fever patients.

Some of the duties usually falling to the probationer were for the time, given to this junior nurse and when later Sally saw her moving from bed to bed, deftly cleansing fevered mouths with little skewers, wound in cotton, she felt thankful for this division of labor.

However, there was work in plenty for even the unskilled hands of a beginner, and after having assisted the nurse with the general routine of the morning, she was set to dusting the ward. When she had finished this, by no means, short task, she found that one of the others had done the private rooms, and she was glad to be allowed her two hours off duty.

The afternoon passed more quietly. At the nurses' supper hour, the seniors of course went first and the junior nurse and Sally were left in charge of the ward. But the former was called to the superintendent's office and Sally found to her dismay that she was alone and very very ignorant.

As everything seemed quiet she was beginning to feel reassured when a white-coated interne who had been making an examination, peered over a screen, and called out, "Please bring me a basin of corrosive."

"I beg your pardon," faltered Sally, "I asked for some corrosive," he repeated somewhat impatiently. "I don't know what you mean," I am just new here," apologized Sally.

Then he noticed her capless condition and laughed. "I want some corrosive sublimate or bichloride of mercury, or whatever they teach you to call it."

"Oh do you mean the red stuff we have for our hands?"

"Exactly, but the color is not the main feature, but just a danger sig-

nal, though it does make it look somewhat like pink lemonade. Just bring me the basin from the office, and I will settle with Miss Maxwell." That lady just then appeared and was not a little annoyed, that Miss Ross had been thus left alone on her first day.

In one of the private rooms adjoining Ward G., was a young convalescent typhoid patient, Herbert Fraser by name. Eight weeks before while engaged as engineer in the western part of the state, he had been stricken with fever, and knowing the value of skilled treatment, had insisted on being brought in the city and placed in the hospital.

As the private wards were full at that time, he had been given this small emergency room belonging to the general medical ward, and here he had remained, at first because he was considered too ill to be moved, and later because having become used to the nurses and internes here, he refused to leave them in order to secure more exclusive quarters.

During the acute stage of his illness he had been insensible to his surroundings but as he grew better he became much interested, in the sounds which reached him through the open door, and in the various ward happenings, stories of which the attendants sometimes related to him for his amusement.

He knew all about big Dan McKenzie in the next room, whom the abated fever had left still delirious from weakness, and who swore so wildly at the nurses, and at times sang so feelingly in his sweet tenor.

He knew and sympathized with Henson a trother engineer whose epileptic attacks had become so frequent as to have interfered with his work. Here in the hospital, he had submitted to the indignity of aborting a convulsion, only to suffer an unusually severe attack, after which he had gone out discouraged.

Poor Henson had a widowed mother and numerous small brothers and sisters dependent upon him and could ill afford enforced holidays, one of the common tragedies of hospital life.

He came to know the signs when a ward patient would be moved on the stretcher to one of the emergency rooms, to pass through a crisis perhaps to recovery, perhaps to his long sleep.

He sometimes heard the rubber tired buggy slip past along the corridor at night and knew well its purpose.

Then each day he could almost feel the silence which fell, when the great visiting physician made his rounds, internes and nurses in his wake, hanging on his words for orders and passing charts for his inspection.

Only yesterday, this autocrat of their little hospital world, had given permission that he should sit up in bed, with the promise that he should soon be allowed in an easy chair.

This morning while idly wishing for some diversion, a young woman not in uniform came in with a basin of the usual odorous disinfectant, and began dusting the various articles of furniture in his room. "Ah, a new probationer, he said to himself, "and an uncommonly pretty one too."

But she kept her face averted a little self-consciously he thought, and dusted with meticulous care every bit of exposed surface, of bedstead, stand and chair. Having finished she was leaving the room when he called out, "Excuse me, but you have forgotten the last half-inch of the lower round of the back of that chair. Just think of the millions of wicked microbes crowding there rejoicing over their escape and planning an attack on some other unhappy victim. You seem to be new here, so I thought I would tell you, otherwise I should have felt my duty to report you to the head nurse."

"Oh, you are quite mistaken sir," she said, "I dusted that place, during the one-quarter second when you were not watching," and she flashed him a look over her shoulder, which was apparently what he wanted, for he said under his breath, "Her eyes are brown, I thought so."

A little later when one of the nurses, the one he had named "the bitter woman," came in with his medicine, he inquired the name of the new probationer.

"She is a Miss Ross from Montreal, I think." "Montreal," he said, "that is my native town. I wonder how she happens to be so far away from home. Do you know her first name."

"No, I don't know her name, but I believe she has been staying with relatives in the city," and the nurse mindful of others needing her "bitter" ministrations, hurried away.

On Saturday afternoon, a number of the convalescent patients were allowed to go home. Among these, one named Wall, a recovered rheumatic case, while waiting for his discharge, had thrown himself on his bed, and in order to shut out the sounds of the ward, the better to enjoy a nap, had drawn the covers quite over his head. The patient who occupied the bed next his, also able to be up, came from the bathroom clad in hospital uniform. Now this Mr. Elise was very short-sighted and in returning to his bed quite lost his way. Seeing Wall's apparently empty bed, and mistaking it for his own, he threw himself on it with some force, and roughly aroused the sleeper, who sprang up with a startled yell, and recovering himself, volubly thanked the powers above that his particular affliction was not heart trouble. The dazed offender who could speak no English, made most profuse apologies in German, and suffered himself to be led to his own bedside.

Nearly every patient in the ward laughed heartily, and even Connors, the desperately sick typhoid across the way smiled wanly.

Miss Ross was still laughing when she carried in Mr. Fraser's supper, and at his request told him the cause of her amusement.

They were both laughing when Miss Addams, the Superintendent of Nurses passed the door and glanced in.

"One discredit for the probationer," said Miss Ross to herself, as she returned to the pantry for more trays.

Miss Addams passed on to the ward office, where she found Miss Maxwell arranging the day's orders, for the diet of the typhoid patients. The latter was such a skillful ward manager, that she was known as "The General," but today she greeted her chief with a look of comic despair.

"Dear Miss Addams, I shall become a fit subject for a home for the feeble-minded over this diet sheet. Every individual convalescent has a different order. Listen, Smith, half a cup of custard; Murphy, a whole cup; Peters, a cup of custard with half a slice of toast; McKenzie, cream toast, ad lib., and so on to the end, and one little mistake might mean so much."

"But you won't make that one mistake, Miss Maxwell. Dr. Peters told me yesterday, that he was well pleased with your work here."

But I came over to ask you how your probationer is getting along. I just saw her talking with Mr. Fraser. She is a pretty girl, but, I do hope she is not fond of the society of the other sex."

It is a rule in all hospitals that the relations between nurses and doctors shall be professional only, a rule that Miss Addams, like many other superintendents sometimes found difficult of enforcement, hence her fears, concerning the future of Miss Ross. But the head nurse reported her as painstaking in her work and quite reserved in manner, and passed to other matters of business.

Next day being Sunday, the nurses had half-days off duty and the new nurse spent the morning with her uncle and aunt. Her uncle, who was sitting on the porch, saw her as she came blithely through the park gate and called out: "Hello, Sally, how have you enjoyed your week among hospital bugs?"

"Bugs, indeed! You should be more respectful. Professionally speaking, they are pathogenic bacteria."

"So! We are coming on I see."

"Yes I have attended my first lecture and it was very interesting."

A little later, Sally said, "Uncle, you remember hearing Billy speak of Bert Fraser, one of his classmates, at old McGill. Well, he is in a private room over in Ward G. getting well of typhoid, but he has no idea that I am Billy's sister."

"Bert Fraser," said Mrs. Ross, who had joined them on the porch. His mother was a friend of mine. Poor Edward, we must see him. Poor boy, it is sad to be sick among strangers."

Sally privately thought him in rather good spirits, but said nothing and the talk drifted into other channels.

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