

# The NURSE'S STORY

By ADELE BLENEAU

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At this I suddenly became conscious of the fact that I was listening to a conversation, not intended for my ears. With the blood burning my cheeks I turned away for a moment or two to regain my self possession, then I knocked and entered. Father came at once to me and took me gently in his arms. He looked down into my eyes for a moment before he spoke:

"Adele, dear, Dr. Curtis has been telling me that I am a selfish brute to keep you buried alive in this out of the way place and has asked me to let you go north with them for a visit."

"But, father—"

"My dear, I have felt what he says for a long time, but partly because I have been distracted, occupied partly too, because I have not cared to face it, I have put the thing off, hoping always that we would soon visit France together, and so we shall in the autumn. I will come for you, and we'll go on that long cherished journey. But now I should be far more unhappy to have you stay than I should be, deaf, to have you go." Here he broke off and more in his usual tone added, "The main thing is for you and mademoiselle to be packed and ready to leave with Dr. Curtis and his sister on Saturday."

So I went to New York and enjoyed it as only a young girl from the country can enjoy her first sight of a big fascinating city. Nothing was left undone that could give me pleasure, and I shall never forget those days. But the visit was a short one. I had been there scarcely two weeks when Dr. Curtis called me into his office. I went to him, a little anxious at the gravity of his tone and still more anxious when he put me in his big easy chair and took my hands tenderly in his.

"If you were not a brave girl," he said, "I should scarcely know how to tell you, Adele, but tell you I must, dear. Your father is very ill with fever, and you must go to him at once."

The rest of the day I spent in wondering why I had ever left him. This was in July, 1914, and on my way from New York to New Orleans Germany declared war on France. I had hoped that father might not hear of it, but this, I suppose, was too much to expect, and I reached his side only to find that his whole heart and soul were bound up in the hope of being well again, that he might volunteer for field work in the service of his beloved country. During the weeks that followed, both in his delirious and lucid moments, his constant cry was that he might be permitted to help France, and, for all my anxiety, his fervor of his burning love for his country, fired my blood. In the end his poor fever racked soul went to join the fighting men of older generations—I cannot write of it even now.

My grandmother had died some years before, and I had never known my mother's family. All her near relatives had been dead many years, and so my father's death left me practically alone in the world and as purposeless as a rudderless ship.

After his death I sat day after day in a kind of torpor, bereft of power to think or act. It was my first deep sorrow, and it found me unprepared and defenseless.

Then one night I was sitting alone in his study, for mademoiselle had gone to bed, going over again in a kind of helpless self torture the thousand little kindnesses and tricks of personality that made my father so dear to me. I buried my face in my hands for a moment, and as I did so my father spoke to me. I heard his words as clearly as though he stood beside me.

"Although you are only a woman," he said, "and cannot fight with the brave men who are giving their lives for France, there is still something you can do."

I sat silent for a long time, filled with awe and yet with a kind of comfort, puzzling over what he meant. Then after a time I understood, and I went to bed that night happier than I had been since his death, for at last I had a purpose.

The next day I wrote to Dr. Curtis, who had gone out among the first Americans to establish a hospital near the fighting line. It was a poor little letter, but I knew it carried an appeal that would bring me my desire.

"The letter must have caught one of the few fast boats crossing at that time, for within two weeks I received a cable from Dr. Curtis telling me that he could not have me with him, but that, as a nurse and a Frenchwoman, I should have a place in one of the military hospitals."

The cable ended with the words, "Come at once; you are needed." So it was that in my turn set out in search of the unknown.

in the great struggle that is still, as I write, staggering humanity and in which I found so much tragedy and so much happiness.

## CHAPTER II.

THE boat was crowded and there were many interesting persons on board—at least, interesting to me, as, for the most part, they were people with a mission. Some were on diplomatic errands, others were crossing because of contracts arising out of the war. There were also many nurses and doctors, but far the greater number of the men were reservists, both of the ranks and officers, hurrying to rejoin their colors.

Every morning at 10 o'clock a Dr. T., who was taking out a full hospital corps and equipment, gave lectures to his staff. As soon as I heard this I explained to him my situation and my desire to fit myself to be of better use, and he cordially invited me to attend the lectures.

Miss Curtis had placed me in the care of a charming American woman who had lived for twenty years in England, but in spite of a very calm trip, she managed somehow to be sick most of the way over, and I saw very little of her.

Naturally I was in no mood for forming new acquaintances, so that these talks each morning helped me greatly to banish the past and to keep my mind fixed on the future.

I spent the afternoons reading or dozing in my chair, lulled by the glistening sunlit waves and the soft swish of the water against the steamer's sides.

Dr. T. and his wife were unfailingly kind and often sat with me for hours. One day we were together on deck when a tall athletic young man passed.

"That's an Indian officer," said the doctor, as he strode by.

"Who is it?" asked his wife.

"Oh, I don't know which particular one he is," he replied, smiling. "It's just the type; I would know it anywhere—tall, lean, bronzed, good looking, a certain unconscious air of command, and a military bearing."

Some weeks later, when I was in an ant room prepared to grant all the rest," she replied.

The subject dropped, and a day or so passed with no further allusion to it. And then late one afternoon as we were walking we met this same Englishman again.

"Oh, by the way," Mrs. T. said, speaking to her husband, "you were right, dear. He is an English officer—Captain Ian Fraser—coming home from India. He was out of the harbor from Yokohama when war was declared and had to come on this way."

"You seem to know his history pretty thoroughly," he laughed.

"Oh—General, of course!" and turning to me she said:

"My maid is a perfect ferret. I sometimes think as a maid she's a waste of good timber—that the secret service should have."

"Oh, they are all like that!" the doctor said. "Most of the gossip of a ship comes first and last through such sources." After a moment's reflection he exclaimed: "Oh, that's the chap they were telling me about in the smoking room this morning! He has just been on duty at the Khyber pass—"

"Khyber pass?" That was the last outpost of civilization that father and his party would have passed through before going into Afghanistan. Poor father! He had to give up that long dreamed of trip to come to us.

He had told me so many stories of that picturesque spot I began to be keenly interested in the conversation.

"You know, Myrtice," the doctor said—"I was always so glad to hear him use her quaint name—the Khyber Pass rifles is one of the crack regiments of India, and its officers are chosen from the unmarried fellows of all the Indian army. It takes courage and initiative plus to make good there, and it is considered a great honor to be given that post of that regiment of Germany, when in India several years ago, wished to be made honorable colonel."

"And was he?" I asked quickly.

"No, I believe Sir George Ruse Koppel was elected."

"Why, I wonder, was he not given it?" asked his wife.

"Well, my dear, you will have to ask Captain Fraser. I am sure he could tell you. It does not follow that he will still you could ask," he added good humoredly.

"Nonsense!" she laughed, and stopped suddenly, as at that moment we met the man of whom we had been speaking.

I was interested in seeing him after hearing the story, especially in thinking that it would have been his men who would have picked the pass for them had rather gone there. I looked at him. He was all Dr. T. had said, only his big violet blue eyes were soft, even wistful. How could he be the dazed soldier they had described. I wondered, when suddenly I noticed the firm chin, the determined mouth.

After all, the government that had chosen him for the lonely and dangerous duty at Khyber pass had doubtless chosen well, for with his evident strength of body and will—his eyes indicated humanity, understanding, sympathy—qualities essential to a leader of men.

It was not until two days before the voyage ended that I made his acquaintance and then under very peculiar and unpleasant circumstances. I was sitting in my stateroom chair, rather late, in fact, very late—it was nearly midnight. There was little light on deck—the windows were painted a deep green for fear of attacks from one of the enemy's cruisers—and the deck was deserted.

seir and two men, who appeared to be strangers to each other.

One of these I noticed idly seemed to be frightfully nervous. He kept pacing up and down with the short, jerky tread of a man under intense strain. The other man I observed because of the striking contrast. He was a tall, soldierly looking man of that particular type and figure which, I was to learn later, belongs to no other nation than England. He moved with an easy grace that betokened assurance and bore an unmistakable air of command. After he had passed once or twice I suddenly recognized him—it was Captain Fraser.

The two men were moving up and down on my side of the deck, so that when the Englishman was at the turn nearest the bow the other was at the stern end of the deck, while I was between them.

I was speculating idly on the past lives and future destinies of two such contrasting types when the smaller

man reached the turn, and, instead of facing me again, suddenly swung one arm into the air, gave a half stifled cry and then sprang to the rail.

My own experience in nursing helped me to understand, for his gesture and cry brought me to my feet, and when an instant later he began rather clumsily to climb the rail I found myself, without stopping to think, racing down the deck toward him. Behind me I heard the Englishman call out and then his feet started overtake me, but there was no time to pause, and I raced on, nearer and nearer to the unhappy man, who now stood trembling on the summit of the rail, clinging to the stanchion.

Just as I reached him he released his hold and swayed outward, but I was in time to seize his arms round his legs, and, though his weight almost pulled me over the rail, I managed to retain my hold for an instant. The next moment brought the Englishman to my side, and he, clutching the man's clothes in a vise-like grip, dragged him back to safety.

He lay on the deck between us, where the Englishman had dropped him. A moment later he sat up and begged us pitiously not to tell of what had happened. We promised on condition that he would see the ship's doctor immediately. This he consented to do, and together we helped him, white faced and trembling, below.

I was rather shaken by this revelation of misery, and after thanking the Englishman for his presence of mind, and being congratulated by him in turn, I went at once to my cabin.

Next morning Captain Fraser told me the man's story. He was an Austrian nobleman who had had an unfortunate love affair in the United States and had determined to return to his native land. Then the war had come, and with it knowledge of the misfortunes of his own country and, more particularly, of his own family. Hardly knowing what he did, the man had taken the steamer, without realizing until after the boat sailed that he must inevitably be interned when he reached England. This last misfortune had temporarily unbalanced his reason, and the scene on the deck in which I had assisted was the result. Captain Fraser assured me that he was much calmer now, and that the doctor felt certain he would not repeat his attempt of the night before.

His story finished, he bowed courteously and left me. I did not see him again until we had landed at Liverpool.

While we sat waiting for the examination I heard Captain Fraser, not far away, speak a few words to his valet—a man who looked as if he might be prematurely old, but who today was so beaming with happiness that he seemed rejuvenated.

At something he said Captain Fraser laughed and replied, "Oh, you are generally right, Shipman," in a tone of such friendliness that I felt he must be an old family servant. Then Captain Fraser turned around suddenly, came over to me and said pleasantly:

"Can I do anything for you?"

"No, thanks," I answered warmly, for I was sincerely grateful for what

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My eyes were still following him when I heard a voice say: "Goodby, mi lord! Goodby, mi lady!" I turned and saw the old valet, bareheaded, bowing and smiling in reply to a friendly nod from a lady in a waiting limousine. He seemed suddenly to remember himself and as he did spoke with a little chuckle to a maid standing near:

"I said to my gentleman last night as he was dressing, 'I look to see your mother at the dock tomorrow, sir.' 'Nonsense, Shipman,' he said. 'But I saw all the same that he was hoping to himself. It's been four years since we went out to India. Four years is a long while, especially in war times,' he added soberly."

We had brought over with us, by Dr. Curtis' advice, numerous trunks containing all kinds of things necessary for a field hospital, so our stay at the customs was rather long. Shipman insisted on remaining and closing the last trunk. "It's the captain's orders, miss." And Shipman had served too long with a soldier to allow anything to swerve him.

We left the station at 9 o'clock and rode down to London in the lovely misty sunshine, going through the soft rolling hills, wet with dew and overcast with violet shadows. I found myself drawn with a peculiar indescribable affection for this emerald world. Had my ancestors been English I might have explained the pull at my heartstrings in that way; but being French I gave it up and abandoned myself to watching the hills, the black faced sheep and the picturesque cottages until we reached London.

Some one has said, "After all, since life is a fragment of the brain, built up notions of things are far more impressive, often than the actuality." London to the untitled means a fanfare of names, a swirl of memories, vast reputations, history, poetry, noble ideals, recollections of great deeds.

We were leaving for Paris the next morning, so mademoiselle and I spent the afternoon buying various articles that Dr. T. had suggested, as his report from France was that most hospital supplies were failing. We returned to our hotel late and tired, but mademoiselle insisted we go down to dine. I think she thought I needed the change. But it wasn't a gay experience. The dining room was almost deserted. There were not more than a half dozen tables occupied.

Sitting next to us was a party of four—a mother, father and son, the fourth being a young English girl who, I felt instinctively, was not of the same family. She was tall and slender, with a lovely white and pink coloring, such as I had never seen before. It made her appear to me as unusual as Undine and as beautiful. Masses of shining, blood hair framed her face. She fastidiously and unconsciously my eyes turned again and again to that table. The young man was a soldier. I was beginning already to know the type. Tall, clean cut, he looked the scion of a long race.

Their conversation had the familiarity of a devoted family and was uninteresting to the outsider. We soon knew that the young soldier was going on the morrow to the front and that the lovely girl was his fiancée. The others talked a good deal, but the young girl said little. It was as if she did not trust herself. Her great wide blue eyes were scarcely ever, even for a moment, taken from the young officer. Once I heard her say something about "the great danger," at which the young man leaped toward her, and there was in his voice a note I had never heard. He spoke with deep conviction. I shall never forget his words:

"We are instructed by the shareholders of the Belleville-Prince Edward Bridge Company, the highway connecting the County of Hastings with the County of Prince Edward, to advise you that owing to the large amount of money invested by the company in this enterprise and the small return that is being made thereon and the necessity for expensive repairs upon the bridge that they feel they are unable to longer continue the operation of the bridge and are desirous that the joint municipalities should acquire the property or have an opportunity of doing so before they take any action. It will require a considerable expenditure of money to put some of the piers in the bridge in proper condition, and the company do not feel like making this expenditure and they have concluded that owing to the liability attaching to them if any accident should occur, that the only safe thing for them to do is to close up the bridge until such time as they may be able to dispose of it."

"We may say that we have put the matter before the department at Ottawa and have had the assurance that the company can close up the bridge and are not pledged to operate it and that in so doing their charter will not be affected so long as navigation is not interfered with. We would be glad therefore, if you would bring this matter to the immediate attention of your council as it is vitally interested in keeping this bridge open and in operation for the benefit of the people generally, and advise us as to whether they will take action and if so, what, in the matter at your earliest convenience."

Reciprocity of school privileges between Renfrew and Hastings was given in a notice from a Renfrew school section.

FISHING IN ALGONQUIN PARK.

In the extensive reservation of 1,750,000 acres set aside by the Ontario Government as a playground for the people and known as Algonquin Park, the fishing in the waters of its 1500 lakes and rivers is good. Such gamey species as small-mouthed black bass, speckled trout, salmon trout and lake trout predominate. With the annual increase of anglers and tourists visiting this section the lakes in close contiguity to the hotels and log cabin camps are apt to become depleted, and to avoid any possibility of this the Ontario Government, with the co-operation of the Grand Trunk Railway, are continually re-stocking these waters. They have just forwarded from the Government Hatchery in Wlarton, 200,000 lake trout which reached the park in good condition and 60,000 of them were placed in Smoke Lake on which is situated the log cabin camp known as "Nominigan Camp," and 140,000 placed in Cache Lake, directly opposite the Highland Inn. The fishing in this lake, some miles from the hotel, and reached by innumerable canoe routes, team with the gamiest of the

funny tribe, and the natural propagation of these fish will keep these lakes well stocked indefinitely. Algonquin Park is probably the most delightful region in Canada for a summer outing. It is the highest point in Ontario, 2000 feet above sea level.

LARGE NUMBER AT PARK.

The opening dance at Massasauga last evening attracted a large number of young people to that hospitable place. Mr. W. T. Fleming, the proprietor and his family made the guests feel very much at home. The pavilion was decorated as well as the ice cream parlor with flags. Music for the dancing was furnished by O'Rourke's orchestra. About eleven o'clock the affair was brought to a

conclusion and the happy dancer returned to the city. The dances will be continued on Tuesdays and Fridays.

FINE GROWTH OF WHEAT.

Mr. W. E. Vanderwater has shown at The Ontario office, stalks of fall wheat fifty-two inches in length. These were taken from the farm on the Second Concession of Sidney that he disposed of last year to Mr. Jos. Clapper. There are nineteen acres sown to fall wheat and the outlook for a magnificent crop is very promising. The land is all underdrained, and never has the benefit of thing been so evident as it has this season.

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## SITUATION OF THE BAY BRIDGE

Communication to County Council Regarding that Connecting Highway.

### PUBLIC LIBRARY NEEDS.

C.P.R. and Refuge Committee Talk of Arbitration over Right of Way.

(From Friday's Daily)

The singing of "Rule Britannia" was utilized on Wednesday afternoon to gather a quorum of the County Council. Mr. A. M. Chapman, clerk led and the councillors joined in the chorus. Before it was finished, sufficient recruit had been secured to carry on the business of the meeting, a full council being present.

No action was taken in reference to a water course.

Needs of Library

There is only one public library in Hastings; that is in Stirling. Why should not Hastings encourage this by a small grant, asked Mr. Coulter. Stirling library is free to all that enter. The discussion opened on the reading of a communication in reference to the attitude of other counties to their libraries. He suggested that the letter be referred to Ways and Means.

This is a local matter, stated Mr. Ketcheson, who added his tribute to the value of libraries. Frankford had a sort of public library.

Mr. Vermilyea thought likewise on the question. A grant would open a channel to precedent. The school libraries would profit by such precedent.

No action was taken in the matter. No action was taken by council in reference to the following communication from Messrs Porter & Carney of Belleville, to Warden Nugent, relating to the Bay of Quinte Bridge at Bellville:

Bay Bridge at Belleville

"We are instructed by the shareholders of the Belleville-Prince Edward Bridge Company, the highway connecting the County of Hastings with the County of Prince Edward, to advise you that owing to the large amount of money invested by the company in this enterprise and the small return that is being made thereon and the necessity for expensive repairs upon the bridge that they feel they are unable to longer continue the operation of the bridge and are desirous that the joint municipalities should acquire the property or have an opportunity of doing so before they take any action. It will require a considerable expenditure of money to put some of the piers in the bridge in proper condition, and the company do not feel like making this expenditure and they have concluded that owing to the liability attaching to them if any accident should occur, that the only safe thing for them to do is to close up the bridge until such time as they may be able to dispose of it."

"