

DEATH AND THE MAIDEN

I WAS nursing in a hospital in one of the backblock areas of New Zealand when an accident case was brought in. A young Maori girl had been thrown from her horse on to a metal road, and when they carried her into the hospital there was nothing to be seen of her face but a mass of mud and blood and clotted hair. Inspection showed that the whole of the top of the head had received such injuries that they turned even the doctor ill. "Get her cleaned up and put her in a private ward," he told the Sister. "No use operating; nothing can save her."

The old man who had followed the stretcher into the ward sat weeping, Maori fashion, by the bedside, and I thought I had never seen anything so tragic as the grief on that stricken old face.

"Nurse," he quavered, "the doctor say she *komate* (die) eh?"

"She—might. But we won't let her die if we can help it."

He shook his head. "She *komate* all right, by and by. The doctor, he know what he talking about." Still shaking his head, sadly, he stumbled blindly out of the ward.

It seemed that the girl had no parents living; the old grandfather had reared her from babyhood.

"Nurse, you're like a youngster with a sick chicken," Sister laughed at me next day, catching me for the hundredth time dribbling drops of, warm milk through the clenched teeth of the unconscious girl. "I'm afraid you are wasting your time, she can't possibly recover."

"She's not going to die," I said stubbornly. "She *must* live, for the sake of that poor old man."

"Well, seeing that you are so wrapped up in the case, you can come off ward duty and 'special' her. We are not busy just now, and it won't be for long, anyway."

Was I Excited!

And did I special her! Day and night, practically, I hung over that bed, coaxing down drops of nourishment, spending my whole will power in forcing her back to life! Gradually, the mess of her head healed a little and she began to look more human. She was a pretty little thing and I could understand the grandfather's apparent adoration.

This went on for nine days or so, then one day as I sat sewing by her bed a voice startled me—a perfectly normal voice, not even unduly weak: "Nurse, I know your name now, I can see you." Well—was I excited! It was hard work to resist ringing the emergency bell and breaking the news to the whole staff.

Grandfather Was Disappointed!

Her grandfather was sent for and next day I met him triumphantly at the door and showed him to the bedside of the rapidly recovering girl.

"By golly," he said, slowly shaking his head. "She die, by and by. The doctor say she die."

"She'll not die," I told him joyously. "Why, she'll be up and about in a few weeks."

He shook his head again, sadly, doubtfully. "I think she die all right, pretty soon now."

"Look here," I said, leading him out of earshot of the bed. "You *must* believe she is getting better. You'll soon have her home, well and sound."

Then the old chap turned on me in a rage.


"By golly, you pakeha fellas no good. Ehoa, you say that girl die. All right, we get te big *tangi* ready, plenty cattle, plenty pigs, all ready to kill for the big *tangi* when she die. By jove, now she not die, no *tangi* — te Maori take te cattle away home again, no feast. By golly, you no good, you cheat te poor old Maori man!"

Was my face red! However, he eventually recovered from his disappointment over the lost feast and was a very proud and happy old man the day he took his granddaughter home. But I have told the tale against myself many a time since!



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FOR MY LADY

The following is the Dominion schedule for the YA Women's Morning sessions for the current week.

1YA: 10.20 a.m. Theme for the week Musical Miniatures.

Monday: Schubert

Tuesday: "Your Cavalier" feature

Wednesday: Amy Woodforde-Finden.

Thursday: Guy D'Hardelot.

Friday: "Your Cavalier" feature

Saturday: Vera Buck.

2YA: 10.40 a.m. Theme for the week: Let's Gossip to Music.

Monday: Interesting news facts, with musical illustrations.

Tuesday: Facts and Music.

Wednesday: "Dombey and Son" Episode 11.

Thursday: Facts and Music.

Friday: Facts and Music.

Saturday: "Dombey and Son" Episode 12.

3YA: 10 a.m. Theme for the week: Queens of Song.

Monday: Kirsten Flagstad.

Tuesday: "Martin's Corner" Episode 11.

Wednesday: Galli-Curci.

Thursday: "Martin's Corner" Episode 12.

Friday: Lucretia Bori.

Saturday: Jeanette MacDonald.

4YA: 11 a.m. Theme for the week: Famous Violinists.

Monday: Menuhin.

Tuesday: Kreisler.

Wednesday: "Ernest Maltravers" Episode 11.

Thursday: Heifetz.

Friday: Huberman.

Saturday: "Ernest Maltravers" Episode 12.



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