

09. A Discovery of the Utmost Import

Monday, June 26, 1865

On my way to the manor, I topped at the postal office. "Good morning, Sam. How do you do?"

"Just fine, Miz Patricia. It's a beautiful day."

"Indeed it is! I'm becoming quite fond of Kent and its lovely summer weather."

"Ah, you bring letters. I shall send them out promptly. I have none for you. Tell me, do you know anything about that poet fellow?"

"Mr. Uriah Grimstead? No, very little, actually. Has he done something odd?"

"No, nothing more odd than usual, I suppose. He is always sending strange telegrams. He was in here at half past the last hour and sent this one."

Sam showed me the message.

The warhorse stays lame, I plainly tell.
There is no progress. All is well.

Oh! I knew at once what this telegram meant. I hoped I disguised the expression upon my face. "Oh, my! That is odd. To whom was it sent?"

"As with his other telegrams, I sent it to the general telegraph office at Charing Cross station, with the name "Grosvenor Square," and instructions not to deliver it. The message will be called for. It is always thus."

"Well, sir, our friend is clearly using his so-called poetry to communicate messages. It's a code of some sort."

"Perhaps he's writing the King of Bohemia."

"Yes, maybe so. Well, it is indeed strange, in my view. I shall mention the matter to Mr. Grimstead, if I can avoid letting on that I know the contents."

With that, I left the postal office and continued my walk to the manor. The telegram was very bald. Obviously, it was a message to someone in London on the state of a "warhorse" who stays "lame." That could only be a reference to Sir Reg, amounting to a report on his health.

So, Grimstead was a spy for someone. That certainly accounted for his frequent walks in the vicinity of the manor, and his occasional trespassing. At the moment, I could think of no direct line of questioning for Mr. Grimstead—or for Sir Reg, for that matter—but I resolved to come up with a strategy.

In Oakhurst Lane, I met two men coming my way. Clearly they were hunters, if their guns and game bags were any indication. One of the men was surprisingly large, and the other quite small.

"Good morning, gentlemen! How goes it?"

"Ah, Nurse Goodman, you may know who we are, but we have not yet met formally. I am Jedediah Green, the greengrocer, and my large friend here is Bill Black, the blacksmith."

“Yes, Miss. I’m known as Black Bill at the forge, but Good Will when hunting.”

“Oh, yes! Betty Bourne has praised you both to me. I think she admires you especially, Mr. Black. Have you had a good day for game?”

“A very good day, indeed. We were at Folkestone Manor, and each of us has a brace of fine, fat grouse. We left some for Jack and Meg Bates, too. Red grouse, they are, and they should make a good dinner.”

“Excellent. I know the bird. I have hunted it myself.”

“You?”

“Indeed. When I was married, my husband and I would hunt on his parents’ estate in Chastleton, Oxfordshire. He was a lieutenant, and we were quite poor, but his parents had a fine home. There were birds in abundance.”

“Well then, you know the drill. Get up early and go into the fields. Search the rows in parallel, as ye can’t see the grouse if you search across the rows. Or better yet, try the heather or moorlands. Hit on the first shot, since you won’t get a second chance.”

“Wise words, gentlemen.”

They shared a look and a smile. “But not as wise as one who cautions about spending too much money on ale at The Eagle. A person might have to pawn her weasel.”

Ah! It took me half a moment to connect with what they said. “Oh, my! Me! My solo! Were you at The Black Horse on Saturday evening?”

“No, but such stories get around quite quickly in Hawkinge.”

“I had great fun, but I fear that Tom Collins got a nasty blow to the head after I sang.”

“Oh, you shouldn’t worry about that. Tom gets such a blow from Dan Dover most every Saturday night. And as for your singing, we heard that the crowd loved it, and besides, ‘What happens in Hawkinge...’”

“‘Stays in Hawkinge.’ Yes, I know. Now tell me, please: Did either of you happen to see a young man dressed in black today?”

“You mean that poet fellow?”

“The very same.”

“Yes, he seems to spend a lot of time in the fields near the manor. He carelessly flushes the birds from the woods and moor before we can get a shot. Best he watch himself, or he’ll get shot himself one day.”

“Now, if I may leave you, I must hurry to Folkestone Manor. It’s a pleasure to meet you, and I hope to call upon you soon.”

As I completed my walk to the manor, Mr. Grimstead's *modus operandi* became quite apparent to me. His task was to spy on Sir Reginald and send off telegrams reporting the earl's progress, or lack of it. His secret correspondent, I surmised, must have been a bit distressed when Sir Reginald hired a nurse.

At the manor, I saw Julia's pony cart outside.

"Good morning, Meg. Good morning, Julia."

"Ah! Sit you down and have you some tea."

"Julia, what are you doing here? It's laundry day."

Meg said, "Laundry's light today, Patricia. The girls will clean instead of wash. Besides, today has turned into a roasting day and so it's just as well."

"I know why it's a roasting day."

"Oh, and have ye gone and turned into Nostradamus? Why, pray tell, is it a roasting day?"

"Because you have fresh grouse. I met Mr. Green and Mr. Black in Oakhurst Lane."

"Right you are. The men were here earlier, leaving a bunch of them for the household. Now, being a bachelor, Bill Black won't prepare his birds. They'll all go over to Edna Green, Jedediah's wife, and Bill will have his dinner there. Edna's a fine cook. So's her daughter, Alice, but she's off in America right now."

"Will they have enough?"

"Well, by my count they each have two birds, and that should be plenty. Jedediah and Edna will each have but a breast half. Bill Black can polish off an entire grouse at one sitting. I predict that Edna will put the remaining meat into a confit, and use the carcasses for soup."

"What will you do?"

"I'll roast up four small birds whole; as such a meal looks pretty on the plate. That leaves two others."

Julia asked, "May I roast just the breasts of the two large grouse?"

"Yes, dear, and do take them home for you and your father. I'm sure you'll find a way to use wine and cream and such. Mind you, best to start now with the plucking, and singeing, and gutting."

"Yes, ma'am."

"Save the liver and heart, Julia. They're excellent offal."

"*Mais oui. Je sais que ce.*"

"Now, Miz Patricia, I'll tell ye how the roasting's done. Grouse is lean meat, so we'll season the birds and cover them with bacon and bacon drippings. I'll pour a little chicken stock in the bottom of the pan and put 'em in the oven for just 45 minutes. When they come out, I'll make a gravy with the pan drippings and just a little flour."

“Excellent, Meg! I understand. Now, if I you’ll excuse me, I’ll leave you and prepare to meet Sir Reg.”

I exited a kitchen full of activity and went to my day room. I had important reading to do. I pulled *Anatomy Descriptive and Surgical*, by Henry Gray, from the shelf, and I looked up the spine. The text read:

Within the vertebral column (spine) of vertebrates, including the human spine, each bone has an opening at both its top and bottom, called the foramen, to allow nerves, arteries, veins, etc. to pass through.

The vertebral foramen begins at cervical vertebra #1 and continues inferior to lumbar vertebra #5. Within this foramen the spinal cord and associated meninges are housed.

I then consulted my other medical texts. I was particularly interested in the nerves of the lower back. I located *Lectures on the Diseases of the Nervous System*, by Dr. Jean-Martin Charcot of the Salpêtrière Hospital in Paris. He wrote:

The foramen of the fifth lumbar vertebra contains the cauda equina or (“horse-tail”), a mass of nerves that branches off the lower end of the spinal cord and contains various nerve roots, which travel caudally (toward the feet). Consider, especially, the sciatic nerve.

Any lesion which compresses or disturbs the function of the cauda equina may disable the nerves. Direct trauma from lumbar puncture includes penetrating trauma, such as knife wounds or ballistic trauma.

Of course! *Disabled nerves caused by ballistic trauma*. It is well known that various conditions can produce sciatica. There may be severe pain in the lower back, buttocks, or various parts of the leg and foot. There may be numbness, muscular weakness, pins and needles or tingling, and difficulty in moving or controlling the leg.

I hoped Sir Reg’s spinal cord was compressed, or at worse, nicked. If it were severed, all was lost. This speculation about the fifth lumbar vertebra was based, I recognized, on the assumption that Simon Shepherd’s prognostication had truth in it.

I glanced at the clock. It was necessary to terminate my reading, since by custom I always met with Sir Reg at nine o’clock.

At 9:00 AM precisely I went to the library. I found it empty, but had an idea where Sir Reg might be. I descended the ramp into the conservatory.

“Good morning, Sir Reg. How are you?”

“Excellent! I feel good, as a matter of fact. Perhaps your exercises are returning a dividend.”

“Good. Now, would you consider a wheelchair race tomorrow?”

“Yes, of course. I’m so confident of winning that I will not offer to bet you money or kisses.”

I spent a few moments taking Sir Reg’s vital signs. All was well.

“So, tell me. How have you been spending your time?”

“Help yourself to some tea, please. I have been planning future improvements to the manor and grounds.”

“Indeed! I think that’s an excellent task, and well deserving of your attention.”

But then, there was a pause. Sir Reg grew taciturn. A dark shadow seemed to cover his face.

“What is it, sir? Is something wrong?”

“Also, I have been thinking about congress.”

“Do you mean the legislative branch of the government in the United States of America?”

“Hardly. If I may be blunt with you, as you so often are with me, I mean sexual congress.”

“Oh! A bunk-up, as the Cockneys say.”

“Er, yes. Nurse Goodman, for an educated woman, you have the oddest habit of speaking like a common soldier. In any event, you are exactly correct. I have some experience, but now I seem to lack opportunity or ability.”

“That is currently true, Sir Reg, but I remind you that your condition may very well change. Also, I might mention that I have the ability, but not the opportunity.”

“Why not?”

“Well you know, sir, that in our present age, it is best to be married before doing such things. And, to anticipate your next question, why did I not remarry? Partly because I mourned my husband in the first years after his death. Partly because I did not require wealth or security. Partly because I was inspired to train at the Nightingale School.”

“Well, those are several ‘partlies.’ Is that all?”

“One more thing: I haven’t met a good man. I assure you, sir, it’s not about wealth or looks. I would like something much deeper.”

“Ah, perhaps those deeper elements sum up to love. And what if you should be married to such a man?”

“All would be well. As I say, wealth and looks would be unimportant. Neither would a title. May I speak with more of the bluntness you mention?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Speaking as a soldier?”

“Yes, if you must.”

“If I were married to the right man, I would give him my attention, I would see that his needs were met, and I would—to put it crudely--hump like a bunny.”

Sir Reg was silent. I do believe he turned a shade of crimson.

“Er, yes. That is a powerful statement. Would you have children?”

"I welcome the idea. It is, also, an inevitable result of intercourse."

"Surely that can be prevented?"

"Intercourse?"

"No, I refer to children."

"Yes and no. We seem to live, Sir Reg, in an age where everyone makes decisions about a woman's body *except* for the woman. Now, in 1832, Dr. Charles Knowlton of Massachusetts attempted to inform young people about such things. His book was called '*The Fruits of Philosophy, or the Private Companion of Young Married People.*' It discussed methods of treating infertility and impotence, and explained a method of birth control he had developed: a woman was to wash her insides out after intercourse with certain chemical solutions. For his trouble..."

"Yes?"

"He was tried and imprisoned."

"Later, Charles Goodyear, the American, patented the vulcanization of rubber. That was in 1844. The first rubber sheath, called a condom, was produced in 1855. The condom had a seam and was as thick as a bicycle inner tube."

"Ouch!"

"Indeed! These days we can only hope for a better product from E. Lambert and Son of Dalston. Believe me, I've seen my share of wretched, unhappy women in the workhouses. Their ill fortune often derives from having too many children."

"Didn't Dr. Jonathan Swift write about this?"

"Yes, Sir Reg. You are well read, something I admire very much. In 1729, Swift wrote '*A Modest Proposal for Preventing the Children of Poor People From Being a Burden to Their Parents or Country, and for Making Them Beneficial to the Publick.*'"

"Yes, the proposal suggested that the Irish might ease their economic troubles by selling their children as food for rich gentlemen and ladies."

"You are exactly right. I'm surprised that you know the book."

"In ten years of confinement, Ms. Patricia Goodman, one reads a great deal. Now, if I may change the subject, what about me?"

"You have been shuttered away for ten years, as you point out, and have not yet met a woman to love."

"Who would love me?"

"May I speak freely, ignoring the fact that you are my generous employer?"

"A fact, I observe, that generally doesn't stop you. Please go ahead."

“Very well. Although you are an irritating man in several respects—no, please don’t object at this point—I believe that many a good woman would fall in love with you.”

“I, irritating? Never mind. Look at my paralysis. Nothing can fix it.”

“Dear Sir Reg, there is far more to love than walking, or even being afflicted with what is currently called ‘sexual dysfunction,’ to give you a medical term. You are too narrow. You do not apprehend your value. Consider this: you are educated, handsome, and a war hero. Neither does it harm you that you are quite rich and have numerous titles. Lastly, you are clever, and sometimes charming.”

“Well and good. But tell me, are you familiar with Edgar Allen Poe?”

“The American short story writer? Yes, of course.”

“Then I say to you ‘Nevermore.’”

“I beg your pardon?”

in Poe’s poem, ‘The Raven.’ The author feels sorry over a maiden called Lenore. “The word ‘Nevermore’ appears and is frequently repeated. Well, it’s true. Although I never had a lost Lenore, as did Poe’s character, I should have had one.”

“Exactly. You have to have one in order to lose one. So your reference is interesting, but hardly applicable. Tell me, Sir Reg, to rephrase something I said to you on Wednesday, June 14th, would you suck your own hope much as a weasel sucks eggs?”

“It has been my practice to avoid contact with strangers.”

“That is well known throughout the county.”

“Tell me, Nurse Goodman, do you find me attractive?”

“Somewhat.”

“Only ‘somewhat?’”

“May I remind you that only three days ago the Earl of Radnor—do you recall who he is?—said to me ‘You are not unattractive. Perhaps even pretty. Perhaps someone will marry you.’”

“Oh, yes. I suppose that was a bit abrupt. I think you are attractive.”

“Well, the attraction is mutual.”

“If we may quit this battlefield, at least for the moment, would you join me for dinner?”

I smiled broadly. “It would be my pleasure. I’ll return at dinner time.”

With that, I took my leave of Sir Reg and returned to my room. There, I continued my reading of anatomy and diseases of the nervous system.

I also filled the time by reviewing my collection of Sir Reg's medications. All was in good order. I proceeded then to record Sir Reg's medical facts in one journal, amounting to entries that were rather dry. Then I "cut loose," as they say, in writing in my personal journal. I was quite taken by the rather intimate subjects and explicit dialogue that had filled the morning conversation.

As dinner time approached, I returned to the kitchen.

"Why, Patricia, I neglected to thank you for the copper stewpot. It's a pip, it is."

"All because of the faire in Canterbury. Here's another small gift. Bars of chocolate—one for you, one for Jack, and one for Simon Shepherd. I've got one for Sir Reg, too.

"Why, thank you kindly."

"By the way, Sir Reg has asked me to join him for dinner."

"Again? It's becoming a regular *tête à tête*, I do believe. You go ahead. I'll be along directly with the cart."

I entered the dining room and seated myself. After the space of a minute, Sir Reg wheeled himself in and took his place at the head of the table. Meg immediately entered the room with her trolley.

"Good day, Meg! What have we?"

"Good day to you, Sir Reg. Today, it's grouse. A whole one for each of you, and neither one too large for a vigorous man or woman to eat entirely. There's a simple cock-a-leekie soup from Scotland. I'll put just a bit in a bowl and leave the tureen in easy reach. There's also tatties, some nice green beans, or *haricots*, as my young assistant Julia calls 'em, and a loaf of the best bread in Kent."

With that, Meg left the room. We proceeded to consume our soup.

The vapors were still rising from the birds. I added potatoes and beans to my plate. I let Sir Reg have the first bite of grouse.

"This is marvelous!"

"I agree, Sir Reg. Have you ever hunted them?"

"Indeed. Formerly, I did my share of hunting for pheasant, grouse, and dove."

"Are you inclined to do so again?"

"The prospect seems quite unlikely, as a wheelchair is not well suited to the moors. But, to be a diplomat, I will say that it is possible."

"Do you have the guns?"

"I do. I get them from William Greener in Birmingham. He made guns for Prince Albert, and there are no finer, in my opinion."

"That opinion was shared by my husband and his parents. I had a gun at their estate, but never sent for it after Michael died."

“Well, if you ever get the urge to hunt, we have the necessary items here.”

“You know, today is June 26th.”

“Yes. What of it?”

“The shooting season for red grouse traditionally starts on August 12. The day is called the Glorious Twelfth.”

“And what of it?”

“Well, in England, Scotland, and Wales, the season runs from August 12th to December 10th, but we are eating grouse today, in June. Didn’t Jedediah Green and Bill Black break the law by shooting these birds?”

“Oh, perhaps. I’ll ask Constable Dover to arrest them. I’ll mention it to him tomorrow, as that’s the day when he usually comes to shoot grouse.”

I laughed. Then I removed an item from my bag.

“This, sir, is a bar of milk chocolate for you. I bought it in Canterbury on Saturday last.”

Reg smiled, and remained silent.

“Is something wrong?”

“Oh, no! Thank you very much. I was reflecting that aside from receiving a present from Jack and Meg at Christmas, no one has given me a gift in a long time.”

“You have a sister in Grosvenor Square. You told me so when I started my employment with you. Does she not celebrate your birthday or Christmas?”

I stopped. *Grosvenor Square!* Of course! Now I was quite certain as to the recipient of Mr. Grimstead’s telegrams.

“Indeed, I have a sister, but as I told you then, we do not speak.”

“Yes, I understand that. Please forgive me for mentioning it. Now, may I recommend a massage for you in about an hour?”

“Excellent, Nurse Goodman. I look forward to it. Thank you for joining me, and I thank you very much for the candy.”

An hour later, I found myself in Sir Reg’s room. I gave him a good, thorough massage. The result was that I left him very relaxed and dropping off for a nap.

It also struck me that at this point we were both growing accustomed to the massage sessions. Sir Reg certainly no longer had “modesty issues,” as they are called. And for me, I had come to welcome the regular contact with the man’s body.

With the little time left to me in the day, I changed into my bloomers and practiced racing my wheelchair up and down the hall. I noted with satisfaction that I was acquiring the rhythm of the operation. I was learning to

“lean in” to the driving wheels and move them with strong thrusts. My arms hurt from the exertion, which I took to be a good thing.

I changed back to my uniform and left the manor, returning to my rooms only a short time before high tea. I put on a conventional frock and sought Betty in the kitchen.

“Hello, Betty.”

“Hello, Patricia. Come in and sit yourself down.”

“Do you need any help?”

“No, everything is close to completion. Except for Meg at the manor, and perhaps Edna Green, no one is more enthusiastic about cooking than I. You can help by pouring yourself a glass of ale and chatting a bit.”

So, I sat, I poured, and I drank. “I had grouse for dinner.”

“Did you, now? Let me see. Were they supplied to Folkestone Manor by Mr. Green or Constable Dover?”

“Mr. Green and Mr. Black, as a matter of fact. I understand Dan Dover will likely hunt tomorrow.”

“Well, mark my words. Before too many days pass, one of those three will show up here with enough birds to feed us all.”

“That’s quite remarkable for a boarding house, since grouse is a bit of a luxury in London. Now tell me, if you will, how long has Mr. Grimstead been among your boarders?”

“I can tell you precisely. It was May 1st of this year.”

“Was that coincident with any other event?”

“No, Hawkinge isn’t known for its dramatic events. Certainly no event that would draw a London poet. It’s of no importance, but that’s when the gossip that Sir Reg was looking for a nurse started. Now, all is ready. You can help by carrying the soup to the dining room.”

And so I did. I then seated myself. “What soup is this?”

“Oxtail, although we don’t really discriminate amongst the bovines. The meat could be ox, steer, or calf, as long as it once had a tail. You’ll find many a vegetable, herb, and spice in this version.”

“What else are you serving?”

“Cold cutlets of lamb, and something from Signore Zamboni, a preserved meat he calls ‘salame.’ There’s also a dish of cabbage salad, which the Dutch name koolsla. And there’s a special dessert.”

“What is it?”

“Frangipane. It’s made of butter, sugar, eggs, and ground almonds. I beat the butter and sugar together until the mixture is pale and fluffy. I gradually beat in the eggs and then I fold in the ground almonds. It all goes in a tart crust. And, as an extra, I add a layer of chocolate.”

Mr. Grimstead and young Frank arrived a moment later. We ate a pleasant supper. I determined not to probe Mr. Grimstead about his activities. I felt I had pieced together evidence from events, so queries were not needed. I resolved, of course, to say nothing publicly of Sir Reg’s progress.

High tea being over, I said my goodbyes and spent the evening in my rooms.

Tuesday, June 27, 1865

Tuesday started as an extraordinarily pleasant day. The weather was lovely, and my trip to the manor was remarkable only in respect to the growing beauty of the meadows. My morning cup of tea with Meg was uneventful.

“Meg, if you and Jack are available, please come to the hallway at nine o’clock. We shall again require a chalk line and a starter’s pistol. I shall race Sir Reg today.”

“You beat him the last time.”

“Yes, but today, you will see that the race has a different characteristic. I may not do as well.”

“And will you then shoot with Sir Reg, to assuage his ego?”

“Yes, but it may be more the reverse today, as *my* ego may require propping up. Do ask Jack to prepare the pistols, ammunition, and targets.”

“Should I take a few moments to draw a crowd, and then accept wagers?”

I laughed. “Meg, it’s a bit for that, but the day may soon come.”

I went to my day room and immediately changed into my racing togs—my bloomers. At nine, I went to the library to invite Sir Reg to race, and he accepted. Then I returned to my room, sat myself in my wheel chair, and drove to the starting line. Jack was there.

“How now, Miz Pat? What’s this?”

“A small change in perambulation, Jack. I shall meet Sir Reg today on his own terrain, so to speak.”

“Well, now is the moment. Here he comes.”

Sir Reg exited the library and wheeled himself up to our now-established starting line. As frequently happened these days, he seemed to be at a loss for words.

“Good morning, Sir Reg.”

“Good morning, Nurse Goodman. Good morning, Jack. And what is this?”

“Sir Reg, when yesterday I suggested a wheelchair race, I intended that we should both have wheelchairs. How do you like my new model?”

“Er, do you intend to mock me?”

“Not at all, sir. However, I do intend to humiliate you by causing you to lose.”

“To paraphrase Henry II, ‘The day you beat me in a wheelchair race is the day that pigs get wings.’”

“Well, to paraphrase Eleanor of Aquitaine, ‘There’ll be pork in the treetops come morning.’”

“Good luck to you. I have ten years’ experience.”

“Good luck to *you*. I have knobby tires, with pneumatic inner tubes.”

“Stop yer yarping, please. I have a farm to run, so let’s get on with it. On your mark.”

We moved up to the chalk line.

“Get set.”

We grasped the rings around the driving wheels.

Bang!

We were off! At least Sir Reg was. I bore down too hard on the left wheel, and immediately careened into a table in the hallway. A large vase came crashing to the floor.

To my amazement, Sir Reg stopped. He backed up his chair.

“False start, Jack. Let’s do it again.”

I was a bit recovered from my error, and I was certainly impressed that Sir Reg had stopped the race.

“Very well. We’ll do it again.”

Bang! Reg was off like a shot, but I was driving straight and true. I was catching up with him, but I ran out of energy. He crossed the finish line well ahead of me, and I limped across it a few seconds later.

Sir Reg, of course, was exultant. He spun his chair three times, even lifting the front wheels off the ground the third time.

Meg said, “I pronounce the winner to be Sir Reg!”

Panting, I said, “Well, Sir Reg. It appears that you have won.”

“You raced well, Mrs. Goodman. I’m sure you will grow better at the technique.”

“Thank you.”

“I must say, you have big ones.”

I blushed. “Er, do you mean my, er...?”

“No of course not, although they are big. I mean you have big stones.”

“But, Sir Reg, I don’t have... oh yes, I see. Thank you.”

“It requires courage and will to take on a new challenge. And it requires special courage, or foolhardiness, to challenge an expert. Now, I’ll meet you for shooting in an hour.”

“Yes, of course. I’ll be ready.”

Sir Reg turned and wheeled himself down the hallway at a very fast clip. I, on the other hand, rather weakly lifted myself from my chair.

Meg said, “Good race, my girl. Do you know how the ancient Greeks got to the Olympic Games?”

“How, Meg?”

“Practice, practice, practice.”

“I will. I swear that one day I’ll beat the good earl in a race across the estate.”

I pushed my chair back to my day room and returned to my regular tasks. About one hour later, Jack placed the table and chairs for shooting. He set Sir Reg’s pistol on the table.

“There, Miz Pat. All is in readiness. Do you have your revolver?”

I removed my firearm from the drawer of the desk, and handed it to Jack with great care. Jack alerted Sir Reg, and soon our match was underway. I shot as well as ever, but Sir Reg shot better. He was as gracious in victory as I was in defeat.

“Thank you, Sir Reg. You were good today.”

“Thank you, Nurse Goodman. You were, as well. I shot well, perhaps, because I had a comfortable victory in our earlier, er... footrace.”

“I agree. That’s very possible. Confidence builds confidence, I maintain. I should thank you for giving me a do-over at the start. You would have won by a mile had you not done so.”

“I think it only sporting to behave that way. We were taught that at Harrow. Now, to proceed with the day’s agenda, shall I expect you for a massage at two o’clock”

“Yes, of course.”

And with that, Sir Reg wheeled himself from the room. I tidied my workspace, and did nothing of unusual interest for the remainder of the morning.

Well before the dinner hour of one, I went to Meg’s kitchen. To my great surprise, I found Simon Shepherd seated.

“Good morning, Simon. How goes it with you?”

“Very well, Nurse Patricia. Meg has just offered me a cup of tea and an invitation to dinner, both of which I have eagerly accepted. And a bar of milk chocolate, which she says is a gift from you.”

“Yes, and I’m glad to give it to my favorite shepherd. What, sir, brings you to the manor today?”

“A detail you suggested. I have brought a breeding pair of sheep.”

“I think that’s a good thing. Meg, what does Jack think?”

“Well, you can ask him in a minute, but in my own view, I take it as better-most. This estate could use a boost in its meager livestock.”

“Meager?”

“Indeed, Patricia. We have only horses for the vehicles and a few cows. Pigs and chickens do not amount to much. This estate could manage hundreds of sheep. By contrast, at his other estates, Sir Reg has thousands of animals.”

“Oh! I didn’t know that. Well, this is excellent! Simon, do you see what you may have started?”

“Well, I wish not to cause a disruption, but my flocks are big, and your idea seemed like a good one. In fact, I shall ask Jack Bates about bringing more. The problem is only... only that that more sheep would need tending.”

“Wouldn’t the stable boy and milkmaid be sufficient?”

“I’m afraid not. The task requires a shepherd. But I believe one of the boys or girls in the village would be willing to do it.”

“Very well, I’ll ask the school teacher and the vicar. If they have a candidate, perhaps you should bring more sheep.”

Jack entered the kitchen: “Stop the world. The factum factotum is here!”

Meg said, “Excellent, Sir Factum. Now sit your factotum down, and please give us your views on the ram and the ewe.”

“Well, I’ll say this, Mr. Simon Shepherd. That is a fine pair that you’ve brought today. The male looks to be keen as mustard, and he’ll need more than one ewe to stay in trim, if you catch my drift.”

“I’m prepared to bring you four dozen more when I hear the word from you. Between you and Patricia Goodman, perhaps you can find a Little Bo Peep to look after them.

“Now, you’ll note that I could have brought you Lincoln Longwools. That’s the largest of the British sheep, developed only with an eye toward producing the heaviest, longest, and most lustrous fleece of any breed in the world. But I did not. I could have brought you Border Leicesters, as they are raised primarily for meat. But I did not.”

Meg said, “For heaven’s sake, young man, what *did* you bring?”

“Corriedales. They are a dual-purpose breed, used in the production of both wool and meat. They are very popular in Australia, New Zealand, and the United States of America. You’ll find ready markets for both meat and wool. And the margins, as they say at the Royal Exchange in London, are very good.”

“Excellent. We’ll find a shepherd or shepherdess.”

“There’s another thing: You’ll need a Border Collie to manage the flock via the shepherd’s whistle calls. They are the most intelligent of all dogs. But do not be concerned. When you have a sheeptender, I will lend you Boatswain, one of my dogs. That’s the same name that Lord Byron called his beloved Newfoundland dog in 1808.”

“Simon, how do you know that? Did you read it?”

“No, I dreamed I was there when Byron wrote ‘Epitaph to a Dog.’ It’s inscribed on the dog’s tomb, which is to be found at Newstead Abbey, Byron’s estate.”

Jack nodded. “Now tell me, trooper, how will you be paid?”

“You have paid me very handsomely already, what with feeding me, grooming me, and allowing me to spend time with Sir Reginald Pleydell.”

Meg said, “You are welcome to all that, Simon, but I’ll tell you more. You must supervise this new shepherd, grow the flock, help us to obtain good sheep dogs, and all. We will, of course, provide pasture and pay the shepherd. In exchange, you and Sir Reg will become partners. You and he will split the profits equally.”

“Me? A partner with the Earl of Radnor? Why, Meg, that is far more than I could hope for. I’ve never had more coins in my pocket than I needed to buy some vegetables and a piece of meat for the stewpot.”

“Well, look to your duties, and we shall make you a sheep baron. This is all to the good of Sir Reg, and I should know. I manage his estates.”

I was quiet during this exchange, as Meg, Jack, and Simon had said all important things without my involvement. Then Meg said, “We’re ready. I’ll serve Sir Reg and be back in a trice.”

A few minutes later, she returned. “Now eat, all. For a soup, we have potage Parmentier, as Julia calls it. You may name it potato and onion soup. Here is a hot dish: slices of beef from a steamship round, with plenty of gravy. Jack brought it to me from Folkestone on Saturday. I swear, it must have weighed 60 pounds!”

“My, Meg. That’s a great deal of beef.”

“Yes, it’s perhaps the largest cut available, shy of a whole animal spitted for a village festival. You see, Sir Reg will not admit it, but June 19th was his birthday. Born in 1830, he was. He would not celebrate on Sunday, the 18th, but on Sunday, the 25th, I insisted. So I roasted a giant joint of beef.”

“But sixty pounds?”

“It’s an impressive roast, I must say! The bone is almost too big for even a mastiff to chew. I reserved a good bit of it for corned beef, gave some to Signore Zamboni so his wife can make *bresaola*, and sent some home with Julia.

“Also, I made Sir Reg a small cake and served sparkling wine from the Champagne region of France. Actually, he had little choice about these preparations, and he had to concede that it was all very good. He’s just like my sons when they were at a wayward age. Sir Reg is much older, but often cranky. Yet, he can be persuaded.

“We had the joint on Sunday, as I say. I served grouse on Monday, being taken by surprise by our hunter neighbors, Mr. Green and Mr. Black. Today we have sliced beef in gravy with whole onions, and tomorrow, as you might expect, we will have a hash.

“You are infinitely clever, Meg.”

“Not at all. Any good English cook would do the same. And I’ll send some home with Simon. No, please don’t object, my lad. As I say, I’ve already done so with Julia, although her meat was uncooked. Now, the rest of our meal is exactly as you might expect—greens from the garden and bread as usual.”

We all ate heartily. After my goodbyes, I fairly waddled to my day room. In a fairly short while, I repaired to Sir Reg’s chamber for his massage.

Sir Reg was in an excellent mood, it being enhanced, I was sure, by his victories in competition. I provided him with a simple massage, and also queried him about his use of the dumbbells for exercise. We had no conversation about “Nevermore” or a “Lost Lenore,” nor did we speak further of sexual congress.

There is little to report of the afternoon and evening. The rest of the afternoon at the manor was rather peaceful. I merely read medical literature, wrote in my journals, and inspected the tools of my profession. I made a note to query Jack about his modifications to the wheelchair.

Meg insisted on giving me a large portion of roast to take to Betty, and I was sure Betty would be pleased. I hoisted a sack over my shoulder, and on my walk to Oak Lane I must confess that I felt a bit like an itinerant peddler, the sort often seen in the countryside.

I delivered the meat to Betty and went upstairs to rest. In my rooms, I savored doing little or nothing. I had no need to write letters, having written to Florence Nightingale and my mother on Saturday. Previously, I had written letters to my friend Agnes, and to Mr. Leonard and Mr. Bruce, summering on the Isle of Wight. None of them had as yet responded. I hoped they were well, and merely busy—Agnes with her work and Mssrs. Leonard and Bruce with their holiday.

At high tea, we had the full gathering, which merely comprised Frank Bourne, Uriah Grimstead, Betty Bourne, and me.

“What is tonight’s favored dish, Betty?”

“Steak and kidney pie.”

Frank grinned, and said, “Oh, you mean Kate and Sidney pie?”

Uriah responded, “Oh, you mean snake and kiddy pie?”

And I added, “Oh, you mean snake and pygmy pie?”

“Very well, you Cockneys. You all have promising careers at the music hall, I’m sure. Yes, the dish is all of those things. Now eat or else I’ll take it away.” And ate we did, as Betty had made a very tasty pie.

For my evening, I happily report that I had little to do. This was just as well, since my day had been filled with a race, a shooting competition, a shepherd, and giving a massage. I was grateful to retire early. I read fiction, but only a little, and then slept the sleep of the just.

Wednesday, June 28, 1865

I awoke early, dressed, and promptly went to Folkestone Manor. I wore my uniform, of course. I was now quite accustomed to being greeted in the morning with the beautiful weather of the County of Kent. There were some early morning low clouds, but they were practically guaranteed to dissipate by noon.

I stopped at the postal office and was treated to two letters: one from my mother and one from Florence Nightingale. Sadly, there were still no letters from Agnes or my bookseller friends.

On my walk, I half expected to meet Constable Dan Dover returning to the village with grouse, but that was not to be. I suspected that he was still out in the fields of the manor filling his game bag.

I had a pleasant cup of tea with Meg. She and Julia were quite busy baking, so I repaired to my day room. At nine o'clock, I met with Sir Reginald.

"Good morning, Sir Reg."

"And good morning to you."

"If you don't mind, allow me to determine your body's temperature and the pressure of the blood in your veins."

"Certainly."

I commenced. When the process was completed, Sir Reg spoke.

"Tell me more about the wheelchair you used yesterday."

"At the core, so to speak, is a normal wheelchair. However, I particularly specified to Mr. Bunsen, my purveyor of medical equipment, that it must have a leather seats and back, that it must have the largest available wheels, and that, if possible, it must have the pneumatic tires. The tires, ideally, should have knobs instead of a smooth tread, making it useful for employment both indoors—and out of doors."

"Hmmm. The technology is most fascinating. I must have one at some point."

"Anticipating that, Sir Reg, I had one made for you. It awaits in my day room."

"Oh, Good Lord! Is there nothing you do *not* anticipate?"

"No, sir. Not even the day when you will walk. I have made provision for that, too."

"Indeed! How so?"

"I have an assisting device in my room. Also, Jack Bates is modifying another wheelchair in anticipation of your walking."

"Nurse Goodman, would it do the least bit of good to condemn your folly?"

“No, sir. Not one bit, sir.”

“Very well, then. Let us drink tea. And we’ll toast the new wheelchair. If you will, please bring me a good jolt of Bushmill’s.”

“Gladly. May I join you?”

“Excuse me, nurse, but where did a young woman in the age of Queen Victoria learn to drink? And at nine in the morning!”

“From my mother, Sir Reg.”

Sir Reg sighed. “Very well. Let’s toss off a couple.”

And so we did.

“Sir Reg. Shall I have Jack bring you your new ‘racing’ wheelchair?”

“Yes, let it be done.”

“Then, sir, I will leave you until it is time for your massage.”

I returned to my day room, inspected Sir Reg’s wheelchair, and confirmed that its operation was perfect. After that, I went to the kitchen. Meg and I talked of “this and that,” as they say. Later, Jack arrived, and I asked him to introduce Sir Reg to the new wheelchair.

“By the way, Jack, how are modifications to the third wheelchair coming?”

“Better-most, Miz Pat. I need only two or three fittings from the blacksmith to have it done.”

We then sat down to dinner. “Here it is, me lovelies. A hash made from beef, not corned beef, as many would have it. No, this is the true English hash. Beef from the joint, with potatoes added, all well hashed. If you want to be ‘exotic,’ call this ‘stovies from Scotland.’ I cook the potatoes by stewing them with fat and stock. You know, ‘to stove’ means ‘to stew’ in Scottish.”

“I love it, Meg. But dear me, you must use a great deal of fat.”

“Indeed I do, but Signore Zamboni assures me that his wife, Viola da Gamba Zamboni, will get me a new fat to use—oil made from olives. It’s quite popular in the Mediterranean, he tells me. He claims that olive oil keeps people healthy!”

“Can he prove it?”

“Not exactly. He only cites his large family in Italy and his six children in Folkestone. It seems that everyone in Italy drinks wine and eats noodles. They eat more fish than meat.”

“Well, that’s most curious. I shouldn’t imagine that that sort of diet will ever appeal to many people.”

After dinner, I went to Sir Reg's bedchamber. I began the usual afternoon massage.

I worked first on Sir Reg's neck and shoulders. I took special care with his arms, especially the biceps and forearms. Also, I spent some time in massaging his hands, often an overlooked part of the body.

I then moved to the other extremities. Specifically, that meant massaging his feet and calves. At his thighs, the key muscle was the biceps femoris.

Now, I returned to his neck and proceeded down through the back, vertebra by vertebra. Each area received deep pressure. The bones would sometimes respond with a kind of cracking sound, followed by an encouraging moan from Sir Reg.

I continued from his neck and chest to his lower back. Truly, I was not paying close attention when I came to the end of his spinal column and pressed firmly. WHAT A MISTAKE!

"ARRRRGGGHHH!!! GOD'S WOUNDS!!!"

I had never heard such a loud shout before. The sound rather paralyzed me. I was shocked, amazed, and indeed overpowered by a totally unexpected reaction from Sir Reg.

Sir Reg made several movements I would have thought totally impossible for him. That is, he turned over immediately and rose to a sitting posture. AND HE STOOD!

"GOD! OH, GOD! GOD DAMN IT! THE PAIN!!!"

He extended his arms, and began to flail, his arms going in all directions. The flailing arms found me and he then grasped me so tightly I could scarcely breathe! Together, we fell back on the bed.

In his flailing and grasping, the apron on my uniform parted at its seams, with all the buttons on the bodice of my dress immediately following as casualties. Ditto my camisole. While I couldn't find a breath, Sir Reg made sounds for the two of us, with screams, groans, grunts, and labored breathing. *God! What happened???*

I could not stretch to the bell pull rope. Instead, I gathered what breath I could and I shouted at the top of my lungs, hoping that someone would hear. "MEG! MEG! Come quickly! Sir Reg is in trouble!"

Perhaps Meg was in the hallway. She heard my calls. She rushed in and saw our disarray—Reginald naked and panting and me on top of him with my dress in tatters.

I squeezed out a few words. "Oh, Meg! I'm so glad you're here. It's serious. Sir Reg is spasming. I've done a horrible thing. Hold him tight, while I fetch a hypodermic of morphine."

"CHRIST! I'M DYING! KILL ME NOW, GOD! GOD DAMN THIS PAIN!!!"

Meg's strength pried his arms free of me long enough for me to escape. Then her strong embrace held him close to her. "Hold on, Sir Reg. Patricia will return in a moment." She pinned his arms as tightly as she could, held his head to her, and kissed his forehead.

"ARRRRGGGHHHHH"

I rushed to my day room with all the speed I could muster. Nothing kept my breasts from bouncing this way and that.

With the greatest of speed, I took morphine from the cabinet and quickly reconstituted it with water. I wasted no time with careful measurement, working only from memory. In a few seconds, I had made a solution and filled a syringe.

I had a quick inspiration, worth a pause in my haste. I threw open the French doors and shouted with all my might: "Jack, Jack, Jack! Wherever you are! Come quickly! Sir Reg is in trouble!"

There *is* a God. I saw Jack coming across the pasture. I stepped through the doors and shouted again. Jack stopped, and then began to run toward me.

Regaining a bit of my composure, I quickly slipped into a laboratory coat, and then dashed back to Sir Reg's bedroom. Meg was fighting to hold him. "Hold him just a little longer, Meg. Roll with him so I can see his back."

Meg rolled to put Sir Reg on top of her. Her grip on his arms, I was glad to see, had held firm. Well, not exactly firm, for her apron and dress were also in shreds. At Sir Reg's lower back, I drove in the needle of the syringe with no ceremony, and pressed the plunger all the way down.

"JESUS, JESUS, JESUS!"

I had administered a local anesthetic. I waited for seconds to pass. They passed. Through Reg's panting, screams, sobs, and spasms, I began to see some effect.

Jack entered. He was treated to Sir Reg atop Meg, her thruppenny bits all exposed and mine tumbling out of the laboratory coat. "Oh my God! What mayhem is this?"

"Jack, please come here quickly. Hold Sir Reg so Meg might get free." Jack held Sir Reg, getting his arms around Sir Reg's arms. If Sir Reg demonstrated the strength of two men, Jack exhibited the strength of four. Jack pulled Sir Reg from atop Meg.

Meg was free. I could see that her dress had fared no better than mine. Her apron was gone, her buttons were gone, her bodice was gone, and her breasts hung down to her waist.

Recovering a bit, I panted, "Oh, Meg! We are dressed for a nude exhibition at The Hellfire Club!"

She, too, regained a bit of composure. "Well, Patricia, it's a little bubbie exposed for a good cause."

Jack said, "What happened?"

"I disturbed the shrapnel in his back."

"You did that?"

"Yes, but it was by accident, and I didn't realize it until too late. He turned, stood, and squeezed me like an anaconda."

In Jack's firm grip, Reginald's movements began to calm. We three eased him into bed. He was now supine. And indeed, the extremes of pain seemed to be leaving him.

At the edge of the bed, Jack kneeled. "It's all right, Major. This is just like Balaclava Haro Prii."

“What hit me?”

“Shrapnel. From a Russian gun.”

“Am I dead?”

“No, sir, not by a damned sight. We’ll get you to the field surgery and then to the Selimiye Barracks in Scutari.”

Meg arranged Sir Reg’s covers. I also kneeled. I took a shard of my apron and wiped profuse perspiration from Sir Reg’s face. I turned his head to me, and gave him many kisses.

“Is it... Florence Nightingale?”

“No, it’s me, Patricia Goodman.”

Sir Reg stared at me blearily. Focus for him was growing difficult. I was talking to a man who was fast slipping into the arms of Morpheus. “Nurse Nightingale, Nurse Goodmangale, Nurse Goodman... Oh, I seem to have ripped your bodice, and Meg’s as well.”

“That is unimportant, Sir Reg. You will sleep now, and I’ll check back soon.” Indeed, Sir Reg had lost consciousness. It was time to withdraw. I gestured Jack and Meg toward the door. In the hall, I immediately went to Jack, and hung on to him. I broke into sobs.

“Oh, Jack! Oh, Meg! I did this. I never meant to cause such suffering.”

“There, there, Miz Patricia. Remember, you have been fixing him up.”

“Come have some tea, dear,” said Meg. “You are distraught. I’m distraught. Even Jack is distraught. ”

I assented, and accompanied the two to the kitchen. I stopped at my day room only long enough to remove what was left of my dress. I kept only the laboratory coat. In the kitchen, I saw that Meg had changed clothing as well. “The water’s nearly boiled, dear. I always keep some warm. Just sit. Jack, would you fetch the special medicine?”

“Certainly. We could all use it.”

Meg prepared the tea and poured me a cup. I was about to drink when Jack interrupted.

“Wait, Miz Pat. First, I’ll set out three medicine cups and then the elixir.”

He placed three small glasses and a bottle of Bushmill’s on the table. “This is an old Irish cure. Drink up.”

And so I did. “Thank you, Jack. I feel better. Now, the situation is serious. I’ve put Sir Reg in great pain. My greatest fear is that I’ve worsened his injury. Now I ask you, can any good come of this?”

Jack thought, and then said, “That, Patricia, ain’t known. I’m enough of a scientist to tell ye so.”

Meg replied, “Yes, good may come of this.”

“How so, Meg?”

“For one thing, you have discovered something new and important—an exact report of the location of the shrapnel. For another, Sir Reg cannot remain complacent after such an event.”

I stopped talking. I thought, *I have indulged too much in talking and too little in thinking* “Yes, perhaps you are correct.” I was silent for several minutes, and an idea struck me. “Meg, Jack, I’ve had a thought, perhaps a promising one. Now, you must excuse me. I will go to my room and write the best telegram and letter of my life.”

By the time I reached my room, my thoughts were firmly in place. I would write to Dr. Joseph Lister, the famous surgeon at the University of Glasgow.

I began with a telegram.

Dr. Joseph Lister
Professor of Surgery
University of Glasgow Medical School
Glasgow, Scotland, United Kingdom

Dear Dr. Lister,

You may remember me, but perhaps not. I am Nurse Patricia Goodman, of the Nightingale School. I heard your last lecture in London, regarding the essentials of sterile surgery, and came away mightily impressed. First, you have studied with Dr. James Syme. Secondly, I distinctly recall your describing your use principles of antiseptic surgery with an eleven-year-old boy at Glasgow Infirmary, the one with a compound fracture.

Here is a very serious situation that requires your knowledge, and if I may presume, your surgical skills.

I am attending Sir Reginald Pleydell, 5th Earl of Radnor, in Folkestone, Kent. His title is of no matter. Here we find a man, in the prime of life, confined to a wheelchair due to a shrapnel injury sustained in our late Crimean War. His condition has been adjudged “untreatable,” but that diagnosis has been promulgated by bunglers. I believe he has good prospects of a recovery.

Today, I accidentally located and disturbed the shrapnel, lodged in the foramen of the 5th lumbar vertebra. To my shame, I carelessly induced vast quantities of unneeded pain.

However, I MUST point out, there was an immediate marked difference in Sir Reginald’s behavior. He rose and briefly STOOD before collapsing into wild spasms. This would have been considered impossible one day ago. I sedated him with a massive amount of morphine.

I believe that the shrapnel has merely nicked his spinal cord. I do not think the cord is severed. Therefore, I believe the metal can be removed surgically. I beg of you to do a surgery to remove the offending shrapnel. And that, sir, is why I telegraph you today.

I shall send you several addenda by post.

Please telegraph me back at your earliest convenience.

I remain, yours,

Patricia Goodman
Nurse of the Nightingale School
Folkestone Manor
Hawkinge (near Folkestone)
County of Kent

Having prepared the lengthy telegram, I set about to write a letter containing Sir Reginald's history. I proceeded from a description of his initial injuries and treatment in the Crimea to the state in which I found him on June 6th of this year. I further detailed elements of treatment I had provided: medications, diet, exercise, and massage. It was my hope that Doctor Lister would see that the patient was fit for surgery.

I concluded my writing by making brief entries in my journals, a task which helped to settle my mind a little. Now, it was time to check in on Sir Reginald. To my great relief, he was sleeping soundly. This was due, I surmised, to the combination of a powerful opiate with the exhaustion he had incurred. I went to the kitchen.

"Hello, Meg."

"How is Sir Reg?"

"Sir Reg is sleeping soundly, thank goodness! I don't believe he will want to take high tea."

"That's fine, missy. Now, tell me, what do we do next?"

"Is Jack nearby?"

"Yes, he's in the barn."

"Then I'll fetch him."

"No, you sit. I'll bring him."

In a few minutes, Jack and Meg returned.

"Meg, you said 'Yes, good may come of this,' and I agree. In my hand are a telegram and a letter for Dr. Joseph Lister, the greatest surgeon in the United Kingdom. I propose that he come here to perform a surgical procedure on Sir Reginald."

"Isn't that dangerous?"

"It most certainly is. The surgery, actually, is less dangerous than the risk of infection."

"Right! I saw plenty of that in the Crimea. And gangrene, too. A nasty business."

"And that is what we must avoid here."

"But Patricia, what good can come from a surgical operation?"

"I think Sir Reg may walk again."

“But the doctors said that an operation wasn’t possible.”

“Yes. Sir Reg said to me, ‘I’m told it cannot be done. The doctors say they cannot find the shrapnel, and if they could, they wouldn’t dare remove it.’ They were quacks, in my opinion. It *can* be done, unless Dr. Lister disagrees. As for finding the shrapnel, that has been accomplished.

“They also said he wouldn’t walk again.”

“I would believe that if Sir Reg had not *stood* today, reached out, and pinned me to his breast.”

Jack and Meg were silent for a moment. “What do we do next?”

“Henceforth, I want to stay close to Sir Reg. If I may impose, I need a sleeping chamber. Nothing fancy, of course.”

“Impose, Patricia? That’s rot, stuff, and nonsense. There is a very nice unused room next to your day room. We shall make it ready.”

“Secondly, I should like you or Jack to drive me to Mr. Fowler’s telegraph office and then to my boarding house. Well you know that my dress is in pieces, and I should look very silly walking back to Hawkinge wearing a white laboratory coat.

Third, please check on Sir Reg periodically. If he wakes, see that he takes liquids. Especially, you may brew opium tea. We want him to have a pain-free night. In the morning, I shall probably inject him again.”

“Lastly, Jack, may I ask you to come to Betty Bourne’s tomorrow morning? At 7:00 AM precisely, if possible. I will have packed a trunk containing my clothing and effects.”

Jack answered, “All this is simple. Right, Meg? I’ll go hitch the wagon.” In a few minutes, I went to the wagon and mounted it. We drove into the village.

“Jack. I’m scared.”

“Well, trooper, do you want to know what Colour Sergeant Bates would say to a private soldier?”

“Yes, of course.”

“Of course you’re scared. All soldiers are scared before a battle.”

“But Jack, I’m not brave.”

“Yes you are. You showed that today. You’ll see that quality again when you’re called upon to show it.”

We rode in silence for a few minutes. “Thank you, Jack.”

We pulled up at the telegraph office and I dashed in. “Good afternoon, Sam.”

“Why, Nurse Goodman. Good afternoon to you. It’s quite rare to see you at a time other than in the morning. And I see that you are dressed as a scientist.”

"Yes, indeed. I had an unfortunate accident with my dress. Now, I come to you with an urgent telegram that needs immediate despatch."

Mr. Fowler counted the words. "My! This will cost you a fortune."

"That is not a problem. This telegram is vital. *Vital*, Mr. Fowler. Give me the charge, and in addition to the charge, here's a five pound note for you.

"Very well, I shall send it within one minute."

"And of course, please send this letter as soon as you can."

"Anything else, Miz Patricia?"

"No, Sam, but I'm sure you appreciate a bit of fortune-telling now and then. So, I have two predictions for you. First I predict that Mr. Uriah Grimstead will send a poetic telegram not long after you open tomorrow. Second, I predict that soon after dinner, he will rush into here with another quite different telegram."

"Ho! That is quite wild. Do you have a crystal ball? I shall let you know if such events come to pass."

Jack drove me to the boarding house. I thanked him, assured him that I was feeling all right, and waved him goodbye. I quickly changed into a dress and found Betty. I explained all the events, including my communicating with Dr. Joseph Lister.

"So I must leave you and your very comfortable home." I went to her and we hugged for a long time.

"I understand, Patricia. Now, how do you feel? Do you need any help packing?"

"I am calmer than I was a short time ago. I should be fine with the packing. I'll pack only one trunk, principally clothing. I can soon pack the rest in my other trunk."

"Why?"

"So that my rooms might be free for Dr. Lister."

"Nonsense. Just pack what you need. Leave what goods you want. I'll keep your rooms for you."

"But what about Dr. Lister?"

"I have another set of rooms I can prepare for him, if he should come."

"If?"

"My dear, there are many 'ifs.' Recall that he is surely the most famous surgeon in Scotland and England. Perhaps he cannot come, or perhaps he will find the operation to be inadvisable. Just the same, I share your hope that he will come."

We hugged again. "Now, come down for tea when you can."

Very shortly thereafter, I descended the stairs and went to tea. I was distracted by the day's events, and don't even recall what Betty served. Some sort of soup and simple hot dish, I suppose. After tea, I returned to my

room and packed one trunk. In it went all my clothing and books. I reserved only the uniform I would wear in the morning, and a book to read in the evening. Fortunately, all my medical armamentarium was at the manor.

Betty came in. "You know, Patricia, I shall certainly miss your daily company."

"Then please come to visit me. You would be most welcome."

In the fading hours of the day, I left the house to walk through the park. The walk seemed to help my agitation a good deal. When I returned, there was nothing to do but go to bed, although I suppose I could have written letters or read a novel. Instead, I doffed my clothing and climbed into the bed. Tired as I was, I could barely sleep.