



A Great Net of Mercy drawn through an Ocean of Unspeakable Pain  
The American Red Cross

Out of the Trenches for a Breathing Space



Contributed by James Montgomery Flagg.

"They Are Our Boys; Get Ready, Everyone, for a Rush!"

The long train of freight cars whined and grumbled as it strove to stop. In the doorway of a great low building a white capped and gowned woman released a sunny smile and, turning so her voice carried into the building, called out, "They are ours; get ready for a rush."

Just how she could tell they were "ours" would be hard to explain, for at the moment she spoke hundreds of the dirtiest, grizzliest men a woman ever saw came fairly tumbling out of the freight cars. A moment more she was welcoming this muddy rabble with a laugh and cheering words.

Inside the building there were more women, all spick and span in white, with faces beaming, handing out good "home cooked" food over spotless tiled counters. Some of the boys fairly ran for the food; others went into the long batteries of baths, throwing out their vermin ridden clothes to be sterilized while they scrubbed their bodies back to a healthy glow.

What luxury it all was—food, tables, chairs, things to read, games to play, paper for writing, a barber shop, a movie theater and good, clean beds! No one ever thought that these hap-

py, smiling women might be tired, nor were they tired then, even though all day long they had been serving train after train of French and English troops, literally thousands of them. Yet what did that matter? For these boys that came at the end of a long day—these boys are "ours."

If your boy is in France you may be sure he has a song of praise for the fine women at work in the railway canteens of our own Red Cross, for at every important railway junction there is one of our Red Cross canteens and at each canteen there are 18 women—real, true American women.



Marcel Gets His Barn Mended

Red Cross Helps This 15 Year Old French Boy—and His Family.

Marcel is a man. He is just fifteen years old, but yet he is a man. I say he is a man because in the last four years' time has burned into his child heart marks that should wait for sterner maturity. He is a man because he has the responsibility of a woman. He has no father. The Germans saw to that. Marcel has had to stand by and see his small brothers and baby sister ask in vain for food while he fought off the pressing call from his growing boy's stomach. He has had to see tears from his mother's eyes drop on the plowed ground as she worked the soil his father would have tilled had he not gone away out of the peacefulness of the Marne valley into the iron hall of the Aisne and on into the hereafter.

The boy, who was now a man, worked hard, yes, too hard. With his hairless hands and his boy's strength he fought almost alone the unequal fight against want with what little help his frail mother could give.

Mother Can Keep Children.

One of the 70 or 80 local societies in France, handicapped by lack of funds because deluged by calls for help, tried to relieve the family by taking away the children. But to the torture twisted brain of the woman this seemed like losing all she had.

And then when everything seemed lost and despair came they heard the news: "No, it could not be true. They would help them with food and clothing? They would till the soil? Mend the barns and stay near by to see that things went well?" Yes, and the children could stay, said the Red Cross, as they had said to hundreds of others.

That was two years ago. Today this family is self supporting and has some to spare for the more needy ones, who still are being helped. Little Jean is taller. He looks well fed—and he is well fed. The baby is so roly poly that the dimples have come again. They are in good spirits—on their feet once more.

And Marcel. He has finished the course that the Red Cross gave him in an agricultural school. It is he who has been running the farm so well. He did it all. At least they let him think so, for heaven knows he has seen the bottom of the bitter cup. And I know that the Red Cross will want me to say he did it, for that is the way they work—quietly, earnestly, efficiently, without stint, without waste, without boast.

SPEAKING OF MONEY

Just How the Goodfields—The Stingiest Couple in Town—Helped the Red Cross

By BOOTH TARKINGTON  
Of the Vigilantes.

"Speaking of money," said my seafaring friend of the Maine coast, "we used to have an old man here named Goodfield. When he was young he used to sing in the church choir—that didn't cost nothin'—and married one of the Emberses, but didn't have only one child, and it died, and time he got to be about sixty-eight years old he'd saved up and was hirin' out his money at about as high a p' cent as anybody. Made it all just tradin' and bein' careful what he spent. 'Careful?' He wouldn't buy hisself a pair of britches but once in eight years, and when his old sister that lived with 'em says one day she was bound to see what the inside the pitcher show theater looked like just once before she died, why, old Goodfield and his wife says that was the last straw, and they fixed up and had her hauled off to live on the county. His wife was just the same as him, too."

"Well, along about the middle o' the hard winter, three years ago, Goodfield took sick, and his wife told the neighbors they both thought it was a pretty good thing, comin' on him in the cold weather that way, because fuel was so high and a person in bed don't need to use any. They wouldn't hear of callin' in the doctor, and for two or three weeks the neighbors and old friends, most of 'em, was sure he was goin' to die, but then he begun to look so well there didn't hardly seem to be much hope."

Old Goodfield walks in.

"He got to goin' out and shamblin' around again, and for awhile there wasn't nobody noticed anything much different. I reckon I was the first, and it come about mighty queer. It was like this: I was workin' in my shack one night pretty late, tryin' to spell out what was the matter with a carburetor I'd brought up from my boat, when there come a tap on the door, and old Goodfield walks in. I was kind o' surprised to see him, but I didn't say nothin' 'cept 'Good evenin', and all of a sudden he says, 'Do you know how much money I'm worth?'"

"He said it just like that—nothin' before it—and I said, 'For the Lord's sake, Mr. Goodfield, what's the matter?' He looked kind of funny to me."

"I'm worth a hundred and twenty-four thousand three hundred and sixty-three dollars and fifty-one cents," he says.

"Well, by Orry! I says.

"Well, sir, he begun to pant like he'd been runnin' up a hill; he got to heavin' like a winded horse; then he begun to cry and sob like a woman that's all excited when some one's just died. 'Well, by Orry! I says, 'You better set down and quiet yourself,' I says. 'What's the matter?'"

"I got to die," he says. "I been sick," he says. "I been sick and I got to die!"

"Well, I says, 'we all got to die.'"

"He kep' straight on cryin' and pantin' and sobbin'."

"Yes," he says, "but I never knowed I had to! I never knowed it before I was sick. I kind o' thought I wouldn't reely haf to, when it come right down to it."

"We're all fixed that way," I says.

"We all got to have some sickness we won't get over."

"Well, sir, he let out a yell that just about rose my hair. 'The rest of you ain't got a hundred and twenty-four thousand three hundred and sixty-three dollars and fifty-one cents!' he hollers. 'And I got to die!' he says; and he kep' on kind of shoutin' it. 'I got to die! I got to die! I got to die!' And then he pitches over before I could catch him and fell down on a couple o' busted lobster traps."

"Ole Cap. Whitcomb, he woke up in his shack next door and put on some clo'es and come in, lookin' scared to death. Him and me picked Goodfield up off the traps and got him home, half carryin' him, and him kind of whimperin' and slobberin' right on to when we left him doubled up on a rickety chair at his own house."

"Next day he was around, just about the same as ever, and never said nothin' about nothin', and the week after that he took Fred Owens'

boat in for a debt and you couldn't told there was anythin' the matter with him. What I mean, you couldn't told nothin' on him in daytime, but after dark he'd go shamblin' all around the village, and then when it got late, if he see a light somewheres, he'd go in there and have a spell just the same he had with me. Scared people with them spells, he did."

The Last of Goodfield's Money.

"Long about September his wife up and surprised everybody, because she went to all the expense of havin' the old man declared insane and hauled off to the asylum. He cut his throat with a piece of broken bottle up there, and the funniest thing happened—they found the old woman dead the same afternoon in their house here. The court gave the estate to a trust company, and I guess that was the end of old Goodfield's hundred and twenty-four thousand three hundred and sixty-three dollars and fifty-one cents."

"Well, sir, you know all that about old Mr. and Mrs. Goodfield made a kind of a sensation, as you might call it, and there was quite a good deal of thinkin' and talkin' about it here in the village. There was some that claimed they figured out how it all was meant to mean somethin'."

"Anyway, when the call come from Halifax last December we sent off mighty near half a carload of first-rate clothin' right in a few hours, and there was two hundred and seventy odd dollars subscribed just in the village, and you know there wasn't hardly any of us real sure we could see the winter through ourselves."

"Yes, I'll put my name down for the Red Cross, and I'll shell out. I guess you won't have much trouble gettin' subscriptions from the rest, either. We got a good many boys from here over there now, and we wouldn't like to think of 'em shot and layin' out in the fields twistin' around and nobody to tend 'em because us at home hadn't found out yet that it's a mistake to think we're still goin' to have our savin's right nice and with us when we're dead!"

THE LITTLE OLD LADY OF PANSY SQUARE

Timidly she entered the Red Cross Bureau and stood just within the doorway.

Her poor, dimmed old eyes spoke so eloquently: "I'm friendly, ladies, but a little afraid."

Several of us rose, but Mrs. Crawford reached her first and asked her to come in and sit down.

"Oh, thank you so much," quavered the old lady as she sat down. "You see, my boy—my grandson—has gone and"—with Spartan fortitude she restrained the tears that glistened in her eyes—"gone with his regiment. Now I'm all alone in my little cottage in Pansy Square. And, oh, ladies, do any of you know the dreary loneliness when there is no one who comes home at night?"

We almost bugged the dear old lady, so forlorn, yet so brave. We drew up our chairs closer, and she told us her story.

The little old lady owned a vine embowered cottage in Pansy Square. There she kept house for her grandson, who worked in a downtown office. When America took up cudgels for democracy the lad, in patriotic fervor, was among the first to enlist.

"Ah, how I loved him and needed him!" whispered the old lady brokenly. "But my dear country needed him more. So I told him to go. 'But what will you do, granny?' he asked. I told him I had enough, and so he went. Brave, brave heart! My husband was a soldier, and I have his pension. But it is small. After paying the taxes on my cottage there was little left, and now it is gone. I'm old, but I'm willing. All I ask is a chance to earn my bread till—till he returns."

Through the Home Service workers of her community the little old lady of Pansy Square has been provided with simple tasks, such as making preserves and delicious cakes and jellies, a labor of love for her and an unfailing source of revenue.

Some day, please God, her soldier boy will come back to the little old lady of Pansy Square, and he will find her as he left her—happy, comfortable and self reliant.

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