

feebly extending a hand to the box at his bedside. "Give it—to some other chap, nurse."

"Hellas!" murmured Madame Loiset who had herself given five sons to France. "So young to die!"

When the English captain's pallid face had settled into the stony lines of death, when the long shuddering sigh told them that he had passed on to join those many other young knights 'clad in shining armor who have gone before,' the kindly Frenchwoman carried the package out to the surgery.

"From his wife, I think," she said softly, to Miss Ellen.

The doctor was taking a well-earned rest on a small cot near. They spoke in whispers, as they reverently undid the cord and removed the covering of the box.

"A woman's writing. It is postmarked 'Salt Cove, England,'" said Miss Ellen, examining the covering.

"Yes. That was his home, I remember."

Miss Ellen found a card inside on the very top, above the tissue-paper wrappings. She turned it about, read the single message it contained and set it down.

"These things," she said, sighing. "Ought we disturb them now? Let us wait till morning. He said to give them to the other boys, but they are all asleep."

"Even that restless one, yes. But he can't live. Not many days before he too, alas—"

Miss Ellen shook her head.

"Against the rules," she said. "But it's only a line. You can see it. Or shall I—"

"Yes. Read what it says."

Miss Ellen took the card and read aloud:

"With best wishes, from Mary."

The boy drew a long long sigh.

"Give it back," he pleaded, and she put the card into his hot hand. "It was for me, all right, wasn't it?"

"I can sleep now," he said. "We can open up the things in the morning. I—I'm tired now,—so tired." And so, smiling contentedly his eyes closed.

They never opened again. At dawn, still sleeping, he died, the remnant of that happy smile on his thin face, the card clasped in his hand. Looking at him Miss Ellen was repaid for her prickings of conscience.

They distributed the contents of the captain's box among the patients. There was candy. There were nuts and raisins, a cake, "smokes," a muffler and handkerchiefs. Apparently the captain had had a birthday recently too, for there were numbers of packages with birthday greetings inscribed thereon, gifts of friends in England. There was even a tiny silken Union Jack and this Miss Ellen kept herself.

She wondered if her white-lie was forgiven. She had always had a sort of George Washington reputation and now—being a person who possessed a deep sense of honor—now she had lost it! But something told her that the Mary in Salt



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But Miss Ellen had picked up the card again. An idea had come to her. She whispered eagerly to the Frenchwoman who in turn smiled and nodded. Together the co-plotters in duplicity carried the box to the bedside of the Canadian boy.

"When he awakens—tell him—" began Miss Ellen.

But he had already awakened. His eager eyes saw the smiles with which the nurses regarded him, even though those eyes were half-closed. Now they opened wide.

"Has it come? A letter or a parcel— which?"

"A parcel, little one," replied Madame Loiset.

"Give it to me—oh nurse!"

"Only a moment," said Miss Ellen hastily. "We—we opened it in the surgery, to save time. We—"

"That's all right. Give it to me. Where—"

"Here. See? It weighs twelve pounds, I should say. It took the two of us to carry it."

He turned his head and gazed at the marvel, then sighed happily.

"You're sure it's for me?" and he put out one weak hand and laid it lovingly on the top. It came into contact with the square of pasteboard.

"Oh, here's a card! Bring the lamp up nurse."

Cove would approve. And she had seen a soul enter the mists of eternity with faith in his kind unshattered. After all what did it matter about her conscience? Things like this were being done each day. She must get over her squeamishness!

At noon Bob the orderly came in with a large mail package. He set it on Miss Ellen's table.

"Fahnd it on the road 'arf a mile dahn," he said.

"What is it? Not medicines I hope? The bottles will be smashed to bits—"

"Hit's haddressed to the Canydian wot went west. Hit must 'ave fallen from the myle van last night w'en they hupset. My word! The roads abaht 'ere, Miss, are enough to—"

Miss Ellen seized it, wondering.

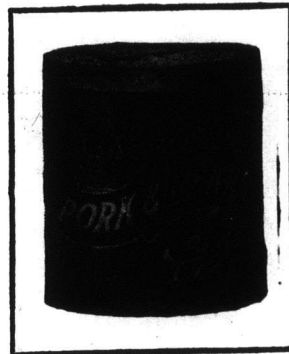
"Yes, that's the one he expected! Its addressed in a woman's hand. And look! Up in this corner it says 'from M. M.' That would be his Mary!"

As Miss Ellen took the temperature of big Ivan she looked intently up at the face of the pictured Mary with her Babe and just then a ray of sunshine stole in and lay athwart those haloed heads.

Down at the other end of the ward the blind Belgian boy was singing. His clear ringing tenor seemed somehow like the sound of angels voices.

A great peace crept into Miss Ellen's heart and wrapped her round about.

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