

But he is one of the village crowd. The business needs a head—some one who will check Henri's impulsiveness. Then, there is mother."

"But I should be able to look after mother," interrupted Jean.

"You—you will be going to Ottawa, where life is less monotonous," answered the man firmly, as he turned towards the rear door.

Back to the porch, with its view of serenity, Jean went slowly. But she was conscious only of a heaviness of spirit, and as the night shadows fell, her soul was a living, throbbing conflict of self and sacrifice, reason and emotion.

Then in the starlight, she stole out of doors, seeking her brother in the orchard. "Listen, Norman," she explained. "I have thought it all out. You are to respond to the Empire's call, and I will take your place in the business. Henri Amiro will continue as foreman. You shall teach me much before you leave. Remember, I studied business at college. This fishing business has been familiar to me since babyhood."

The man stared hard, then exclaimed roughly: "You will be sacrificing too much—you with your vivacity will stagnate in the monotony of the village. With Henri Amiro's help, you might eke out a living; but the dividends would doubtless be small."

"I, too, have heard the Empire's call." The girl spoke low in a tone of marked intensity. "It is the call to serve at home—to send you out to fight for those helpless Belgians. What if we do make but a mere living? Are we not all prone to sacrifice these days?"

The man turned to the girl, catching both her hands in a grip within his own. "I understand. God bless you, little sister. I accept your sacrifice. I respond to the Empire's call."

And Norman MacBurney went overseas with the First Canadian Contingent, leaving Jean head of the fishing business and advisor to the French Canadian village.

Relying upon Henri Amiro, whose capable understanding readily assumed the management, she interested herself in studying the business. There were hours of earnest concentration, when she endeavored to grasp details.

Later the duties proved less exacting, and Jean MacBurney was conscious of a dullness. She must find some new purpose to occupy her thoughts.

Always among the villagers, she found the women knitting—knitting. The older women spun and carded the wool that furnished the yarn that the younger knit into socks for the boys overseas.

Jean MacBurney determined to master the art of knitting. But her dilatory progress irritated her. She was anxious to send forth some handiwork.

Ah! now she had it. There was a call for clothing for the Belgian sufferers. She would busy herself in preparing a baby's outfit. She was skilled in the art of fine needlework. With great care she selected the sheerest of materials and day after day labored over the tiny garments. Often when the soft folds of a gown caressed her arms, she buried her cheeks in its depths and hummed a lullaby.

The words of Pauline Johnson's Indian lullaby sang in her heart. She would fain have set these words to music, but the air seemed withheld from her.

"Little brown baby-bird, lapped in your nest,
Wrapped in your nest,
Strapped in your nest;
Your straight little cradle board rocks
You to rest;
Its hands are your nest,
Its bands are your nest;
It swings from the down-bending branch
Of the oak;
You watch the camp flame, and the curling
grey smoke;
But, oh, for your pretty black eyes sleep
is best;—
Little brown baby of mine, go to rest."

Then the little outfit, perfect in every particular, was finished and packed between sheet of baby-blue papers. Impulsively the girl sat down at her desk and wrote breathlessly the letter that revealed her soul:

"Dear Little Mother of the Wonder Babe: My heart goes over seas with this little bundle. Into each tiny garment, my fingers have woven love, heart lullabies and tender thoughts. I have named your

child the 'Wonder Babe.' Is it not true that in the midst of your nation's great conflict and sorrow, the birth of a babe is still wonderful? Perhaps when you first crush him in your arms, the anxiety and sorrow may over-weight the joy of his coming. Will you not remember one, whose privilege of motherhood may be forever denied because of the same terrible war, that in one hour crushed all her hopes of love and motherhood.

"Your Canadian sister,
"Jean MacBurney."

She tucked the note inside the bundle, which she despatched to a Red Cross shipping office. Afterwards, when her enthusiasm had cooled, she wondered that she had written the letter. The little Belgian mother, to whom might fall the bundle of clothing, would have no knowledge of English, and could not read the letter.

Then in the stress of duty, which overcrowded the days and the months following, Jean MacBurney forgot the bundle of clothing and the note. She organized a Red Cross society, systematizing the knitting of the energetic French Canadian women. She emptied the drawing room of the Grande House, converting it into a sewing room, where the village met

weekly and prepared boxes to be sent over seas.

"It is the heart of Mademoiselle," commented Julie Boudreau; "much generous is she. Her time—her home, she give it to the cause."

True it was that Jean MacBurney was growing to understand the women of the village—and they were looking to her for advice and organization. Yet, she failed to reach them as her mother reached them. She had not learned the secret of getting down to their level—of being just one of them.

Then one day, when the great war had been in progress over a year, there came to her a letter bearing the censor's mark. Curiously she opened it. But it was written in French. Her meagre knowledge of that language was little help in her attempt to read it, so she carried it to Julie Boudreau, who translated it for her.

"Somewhere in Belgium.
"Dear Mademoiselle of the Generous Heart:

"You would be glad to know the destination of your baby bundle. Yet, to you, I am a stranger. I serve our noble King Albert of Belgium in the fighting ranks. Not always so. Before the great scourge I served the nobility as surgeon.

"All was beautiful—the homes—the gardens. Life all a song! Then the great deluge breaks. Every man grasps a sword—our women trampled down in the crush. And one so dear—so helpless—my heart not withstand the appeal. I marry to protect her. Not the great, throbbing love—the dream of man's soul. But I was glad with her.

"For a little month I kept her hidden. Then all in a night, the hoofs of the enemy trample the village to destruction. That little girl missing. My heart of agony search—search all in vain.

"Then one day—not a month gone since, I am commissioned to escort those who are refugees across to the English country. There I find my little girl—weak and broken. That night, in the English refugee home, did she give birth to our little son. Then her soul goes out. Maybe it is best so—no more pain—all peace.

"But the boy—left a Belgian refugee. Not one alone, but of the thousands. The mother, she worry much because no little garments ready for the baby coming. Your labor would be all repaid could you, dear Mademoiselle, have seen the joy that did radiate her face the hour that the Sister laid in her arms your little

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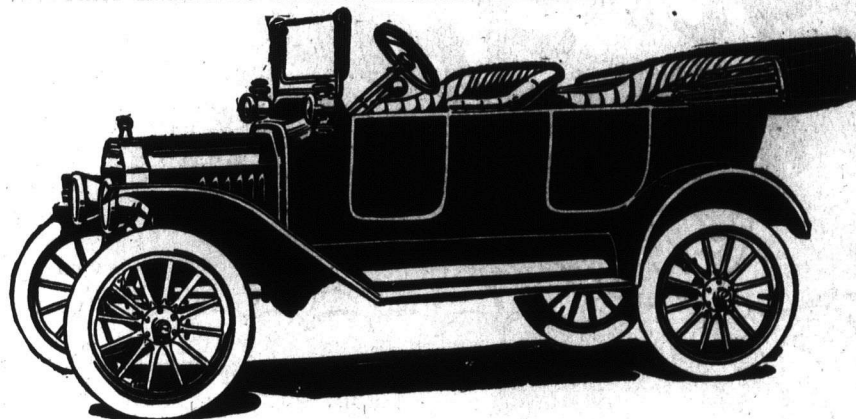
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