

haps, at the drug-store they can tell us of an expressman.'

Bertha was off in a minute, and back in another.

'No express on Sunday, mother. Don't you think Kate would take it around? It's so near!'

'She could not carry it alone.'

'Oh! I'll help her.'

Time was short, and no better plan was to be thought of, since father and brother were both away; so together the busy hands folded and packed into a large sheet the cast-off garments of the family, and added many a comfortable and convenient article, which would not have been cast off in any cause less worthy.

'Here, mother,' said Bertha, at last, 'is my brown cashmere. Don't you think I can do without it? I can wear my plaid and my blue all winter, and if the waists give out, I have my jersey.'

'Yes, Bertha, by sacrificing your own pleasure in the matter, and by extreme care of your dresses, you can manage without the brown. But why do you wish to send the very one you like best of all your gowns?'

'Because, mother, I have been thinking of what you said, and I want at least one very nice dress to go; just as if I knew a girl there, and was sending her—O! O! I have it!' and here her voice rose gleefully. 'I shall write a letter and pin it in the pocket; then, when a girl gets my dress, perhaps she will answer, and we can be really friends. What do you think of that?'

'I think of you — that you are a little goosie; but do it, if it gives you pleasure, only don't build too many hopes on an answer. Nothing is likely to come of it.'

Bertha spread out her writing materials and wrote as follows:

'Will the young girl who receives this dress, write to the girl who sends it, and who is so sorry for all the dreadful trouble and pain?

BERTHA TAYLOR.

This, with a blank sheet, she put into an envelope, which she stamped and directed to Miss Bertha Taylor, 382 South Twenty-seventh street, Philadelphia.

Then, putting this into a stout linen envelope, she sealed it up with several blobs of wax—using her cuff-button for the seal—and fastened it with strong thread to the inside of the pocket. It was only the work of a moment to fold her dress and add it to the package, which her mother was tying up in a shape to travel safely.

Once the train had borne it off, Bertha began to count the hours until she should receive an answer, and while she is waiting we will follow the fortunes of the dress.

The precious bundle took its place among hundreds of others, more or less valuable; though I doubt if any one of them held anything more truly acceptable to him who sees the heart. It reached Johnstown in safety, and there, in company with many others, was turned over to Miss Clara Barton, who had asked that very day for clothes for those who were being helped by the Red Cross Society.

Miss Barton stood under a rough shed, receiving the bundles in the midst of a chaos of unpacked boxes, trying with every faculty of mind and body to bring the confusion to order and system. She was tired and heart-sick, the day of hard work was ending, the rain was falling, and nothing was needed to add to the depression and gloom; but she worked bravely on, and had just reached Mrs. Taylor's bundle, when a young woman came up to her hastily, and said:

'Miss Barton, I wish you would let me bring you a girl who has just been sent to me. She is almost naked, and seems really

too ill to speak, even to tell me about herself or her baby.'

'Bring her here, of course, and if she is really ill, I will give her an order for the hospital.'

The young lady soon reappeared and led in a tall, slender girl, clad in a thin night dress; her feet were bare; her hair dishevelled and falling on her shoulders; she was wet and spattered with mud, and in her arms was a tiny babe, closely folded in a dripping blanket; its eyes were shut, its face drawn and waxy, and Miss Barton saw at a glance that it was past all help. The girl was too young to be its mother, but she clutched it tightly to her bosom, looking blankly before her with vacant eyes, whose expression of horror and misery wrung the hearts of the two women by her side.

Miss Barton laid her hand gently on the stooping shoulder; 'My dear, give me the baby. I am sure you will trust me, and let us take care of you.'

With firm authority she unclasped the clenched fingers and took the dead baby. 'Here, Helen, give the baby a bed on that box, and now, my dear child, let me get you something to wear.'

She stooped to the first bundle at her feet—which, as it happened, was the one we know of — and pulling out a package of underwear, found several of Bertha's flannel shirts. 'Here is just what you need. I can not give you more than one, but let us put on this, and oh! see, what a lovely dress for you — it just fits, and how pretty and comfortable.' As she talked her skilful fingers drew off the wet gown and put on the warm clothing. 'Now, I want you to go with this young lady to the hospital tent, where you will have proper food and medicine.'

Under the spell of Miss Barton's sympathetic voice the young girl yielded passively, and, with her eyes still fixed in the same stony stare, she followed Helen to the tent close by.

The young doctor in charge found time to hear her, and to say, 'Why, this child is starving? How long since you have had any food?'

A wistful gleam in the fixed eyes was his only answer, but it was all he needed to make him begin at once to feed her on tiny spoonfuls of soup. Although her eyes followed the bowl of broth with returning intelligence, the doctor gave her but little nourishment, and, wrapping her in his own coat, bade her lie down on the mattress he had spread on the ground.

Watched by Miss Helen, it was not long before the girl sank into an uneasy slumber, to which the busy people around her left her in peace.

When she awoke the vacant look in her eyes had died away, and the young doctor, who had been touched by her youth and despair—even in the midst of the indescribable misery all about him—came to her side as she stirred. She opened her eyes with a languid smile, but this immediately gave place to a start of surprise and a burst of anguish, which required the doctor's firmest control. He brought her more bread and broth, insisting she should eat just so much and no more; and when Helen returned to inquire after her protegee, she found her sitting up, still the image of despair, but able to tell in fragments, and with many a pause of agony, the story of her escape.

'You see, father had just gone down town to meet the afternoon train, and I was in bed with a sick headache, when suddenly we heard someone galloping past, calling out: 'The dam is broken! Fly for your lives!' We had often talked of what we should do if a flood came, and father always said he would go on the roof. So mother caught up baby, and told me to take the twins by the hand, and we rushed to the garret. When we got there we found the trap-door fastened, so it was impossible to undo it and climb to the roof; but when the awful water came we sat on the windowsills, and then it could not reach us. But presently we felt the house begin to tremble and rock, and we knew, mother and I, that it would soon be off like the others which were floating past

us. So mother took an old table with leaves, and those she tied down tight, so as to make a box, she pushed it out of the window, and put the twins in it, and then shoved it off. Mother told me she did this to save them, for if the house was swept away it would dip on one side like all the others, and that would surely drown us, if we stayed in that room. So she set the twins afloat, and hardly were they off, when a big log hit the table, upset it, and—we—saw—the—boys—drown!

'Then mother said we would stay, perhaps it was safer; but finally the house gave a twist—such an awful twist—and turned, so that the water came rushing in at the window, and mother had only time to give me the baby as she was swept past me. I was washed out too, but—I don't know how,—I grabbed at the shutter and held up the baby, and pretty soon I saw I could climb to the roof. By and by—I can't tell how long—the house stopped floating all of a sudden; it seemed to have been pushed into shallow water at one side — and although lots of things, people and cattle and houses and trees, went past us at a little distance, the things immediately around us stood still like our house. I don't remember much else—I grew cold and hungry, and the baby cried and cried; I think I saw a big fire—it seemed so—after a while I knew the baby was dead—and then I saw men in a boat—and they came to me and wanted to take the baby, but I could not give her up, and that is all.'

Here the poor child broke down completely, and it was many hours before she was able to tell her story more coherently.

When she was once more able to be dressed she was so listless and woe-begone that Helen tried to charm the look of despair from her eyes, by giving her work to do for the many suffering children around them. It was not long before she needed her pocket, and then, as a matter of course, she discovered the letter that had been hiding there all this time.

She drew it out in great surprise, and read it, with a faint flush of pleasure—the first her kind friends had seen. Borrowing a pencil from the doctor, she wrote on the blank sheet:

Dear Bertha Taylor:

I received your letter in the pocket of the dress you sent me. I can never thank you enough, and hope you will be my friend. The flood has carried away my father and mother, my little sister and two brothers. If you want to write to me I shall be glad to write to you. Your friend,

REGA DELISSA NICHOLS.

Care Miss Barton,
Red Cross Society, Johnstown, Pa.

When Bertha Taylor read this letter she was almost too happy to read it, and carried it in triumph to her mother.

What was her surprise to see Mrs. Taylor lean back in her chair, pale and trembling. 'Why, mamma! what is the matter?' she stammered.

'Bertha,' said her mother, 'I once had a very dear and lovely sister whose name was Rega. You never heard of her, because for years her name has never been mentioned in the family—especially since grandpa came to live with us—for in her youth she ran away with her music teacher, and father never forgave her, forbidding us to mention her name. The teacher was a young Frenchman, Victor Delissa, and here you see are the two names, Rega Delissa. Is it not strange? I feel as if something must come of it. Let us go to your father and ask his advice.'

The advice came promptly: 'Telegraph at once to Miss Barton to find out this child's story.'

'You can easily guess the rest. Miss Barton, already interested in Rega, had no difficulty in learning from her that her mother had been married twice, once to Rega's father, and again to Mr. Nichols, whose name the young girl had taken, through her love for him. Sure of these facts, Mrs. Taylor lost no time in bringing Rega to Philadelphia, there introducing her to the stern grandfather, whose heart melted when he heard the child's sad story, and saw in her eyes the look of pathetic woe, which at once attracted every one's attention.

In his home she is now a bright and winsome girl, filling a place in his life none other can occupy.

And, as for Bertha, she claims almost exclusive possession of her heroine, her darling cousin Rega, and she always insists, when reference is made to the old days, that she can also claim the brilliant idea which gave the dear child her proper place.