ZONA GALE

PEACE IN FRIENDSHIP VILLAGE


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THE FEAST OF NATIONS[1]

Three-four of us older ones were down winding up Red Cross, and eight-ten of our daughters were helping; not my daughter—I ain't connect'—but Friendship Village daughters in general. Or I don't know but it was us older ones that were helping them. Anyway, Red Cross was being wound up from being active, and the rooms were going to be rented to a sewing-machine man. And that night we were to have our final entertainment in the Friendship Village Opera House, and we were all going to be in it.

There was a sound from the stairs like something walking with six feet, and little Achilles Poulaki came in. He always stumbled even when there was nothing in sight but the floor—he was that age. He was the Sykeses' grocery delivery boy, that Mis' Sykes thinks is her social secretary as well, and he'd been errand boy for us all day.

"Anything else, Mis' Sykes?" he says.

"I wonder," says Mis' Sykes, "if Killy can't take that basket of cotton pieces down to old Mis' Herman, for her woolen rugs?"

We all thought he could, and some of the girls went to work to find the basket for him.

"Killy," I says, "I hear you can speak a nice Greek piece."

He didn't say anything. He hardly ever did say anything.

"Can you?" I pressed him, because somebody had been telling me that he could speak a piece his Greek grandfather had taught him.

"Yes'm," he says.

"Will you?" I took it further.

"No'm," he says, in exactly the same tone.

"You ought to speak it for me," I said. "I'm going to be Greece in the show to-night."

But they brought the basket then, and he went off with it. He was a little thin-legged chap—such awful thin legs he had, and a pale neck, and cropped hair, and high eyebrows and big, chapped hands.

"Don't you drop it, now!" says Mis' Sykes, that always uses a club when a sliver would do it.

Achilles straightened up his thin little shoulders and threw out his thin little chest, and says he:

"My grandfather was in the gover'ment."

"Go *on*!" says Mis' Sykes. "In Greece?"

"Sure," he says—which wasn't Greek talk, though I bet Greek boys have got something like it.

Then Achilles was scared to think he'd spoke, and he run off, still stumbling. His father had been killed in a strike in the Friendship mills, and his mother was sick and tried to sew some; and she hadn't nothing left that wasn't married, only Achilles.

The work went on among us as before, only I always waste a lot of time watching the girls work. I love to see girls working together—they seem to touch at things with the tips of their fingers. They remind me of butterflies washing out their own wings. And yet what a lot they could get done, and how capable they got to be. Ina Clare and Irene Ayres and Ruth Holcomb and some more—they were packing up

and making a regular lark of it. Seemed like they were so big and strong and young they could do 'most anything. Seemed like it was a shame to close down Red Cross and send them back to their separate church choirs and such, to operate in, exclusive.

That was what I was thinking when Mis' Silas Sykes broke in—her that's the leading woman of the Friendship Village caste of folks.

"I don't know," says Mis' Sykes, "I don't know but pride is wicked. But I can*not* help feeling pride that I've lived in Friendship Village for three generations of us, unbroken. And for three generations back of that we were American, on American soil, under the American flag—as soon as ever it got here."

"*Was* you?" I says. "Well, a strain of me is English, and a touch of me way back was Scotch-Irish; and I've got a little Welsh. And I'd like to find some Indian, but I haven't ever done it. And I'm proud of all them, Mis' Sykes."

Mis' Hubbelthwait spoke up—her that's never been able to get a plate really to fit her, and when she talks it bothers out loud.

"I got some of nearly all the Allies in me," she says, complacent.

"*What?*" says Mis' Sykes.

"Yes, sir," says Mis' Hubbelthwait. "I was counting up, and there ain't hardly any of 'em I ain't."

"Japanese?" says Mis' Sykes, withering. "How interesting, Mis' Hubbelthwait," says she.

"Oh, I mean Europe," says Mis' Hubbelthwait, cross. "Of course you can't descend from different continents. There's

English—I've got that. And French—I've got that. And I-talian is in me—I know that by my eyes. And folks that come from County Galway has Spanish—"

"Spain ain't ally," says Mis' Fire Chief Merriman, majestic. "It's neuter."

"Well, there's that much more credit—to be allies *and* neuter," says Mis' Hubbelthwait triumphant.

"Well, sir," says Mis' Holcomb-that-was-Mame-Bliss. "I ain't got anything in me but sheer American—you can't beat that."

"How'd you manage that, Mame?" I ask her. "Kind of a trick, wasn't it?"

"I don't know what you mean," she says. And went right on over my head, like she does. "Ain't it nice, ladies," she says, "to be living in the very tip-top nation of this world?"

"Except of course England," says Mis' Jimmy Sturgis.

"Why except England?" snaps Mame Holcomb.

"Oh well, we all know England's the grandest nation," says Mis' Sturgis. "Don't the sun never set on her possessions? Don't she rule the wave? Ain't she got the largest city? And all like that?"

Mame looked mad.

"Well, I'm sure I don't know," she says. "But from the time I studied g'ography I always understood that no nation could touch us Americans."

"Why," says Mis' Sturgis, "I *love* America best. But I never had any doubts that England that my folks came from was the most important country."

Mis' Holcomb made her mouth both tight and firm.

"Their gover'ment beats ours, I s'pose?" she says. "You know very well you can't beat our gover'ment."

Berta, Mis' Sykes's little Switzerland maid, spoke up.

"Oh," she says, "I guess Sweetzerland has got the nicest gover'ment. Everybody speaks so nice of that."

Mame looked over at me, behind Berta. But of course we wouldn't say a word to hurt the poor little thing's feelings.

Up spoke that new Mis' Antonio, whose husband has the fluff rug store.

"Of course," she says, "nothing has Rome but Italy."

We kep' still for a minute. Nobody could contradict that.

"I feel bad," said Mis' Antonio, "for the new countries—America, England—that have not so much old history in them. And no old sceneries."

Berta spoke up again. "Yes, but then who's got part of the Alps?" she wanted to know, kind of self-conscious.

Mame Holcomb looked around, sort of puzzled.

"Rome used to be nice," she admitted, "and of course the Alps is high. But everybody knows they can't hold a candle to the United States, all in all."

After that we worked on without saying anything. It seemed like pretty near everything had been said.

Pretty soon the girls had their part all done. And they stood up, looking like rainbows in their pretty furs and flowers.

"Miss Calliope," Ina Clare said to me, "come on with us to get some things for to-night."

"Go with you and get out of doing any more work?" says I, joyful. "Well, won't I!"

"But we are working," cried Ruth. "We've got oceans of things to collect."

"Well," says I, "come along. Sometimes I can't tell work from play and this is one of the times."

I thought that more than once while I went round with them in Ruth's big car late that afternoon. How do you tell work from play when both are the right kind? How do we know that some day play won't be only just the happiest kind of work, done joyful and together?

"I guess you're going to miss this kind of work when Red Cross stops," I said to them.

Ruth is tall and powerful and sure, and she drives as if it was only one of the things she knows about.

"Miss it?" she said. "We'll be *lost*—simply. What we're going to do I don't know."

"We've been some use in the world," said Clare, "and now we've got to go back to being nothing but happy."

"We'll have to play bridge five nights a week to keep from being bored to tears," says Irene—that is pretty but she thinks with her scalp and no more.

Ruth, that's the prettiest of them all, she shook her head.

"We can't go back to that," she said. "At least, I *won't* go back to that. But what I'm going on to do I don't know."

What were they going on to do? That was what I kept wondering all the while we gathered up the finishing touches of what we wanted for the stage that night.

"Now the Greek flag," said Ruth finally. "Mis' Sykes said we could get that at Mis' Poulaki's."

That was Achilles' mother, and none of us had ever met her. We went in, real interested. And there in the middle of the floor sat Mis' Poulaki looking over the basket of cotton rags that the Red Cross had sent down by Achilles to old Mis' Herman.

"Oh," says little Mis' Poulaki, "you sent me such grand clothes for my rags. Thank you—thank you!"

She had tears in her eyes, and there wasn't one of us would tell her Achilles had just plain stole them for her.

"It is everything," she said to us in her broken talk. "Achilles, he had each week two dollar from Mr. Sykes. But it is not enough. I have hard time. Hard."

Over the lamp shelf I saw, just then, the picture of a big, handsome man; and out of being kind of embarrassed, I asked who he was.

"Oh," says Mis' Poulaki, "he's Achilles' grandfather—the father of my boy's father. He was officer of the Greek gover'ment," she added, proud. "He taught my boy a piece to speak—something all the Greek boys learn."

I told her I'd heard about that piece; and then we asked for the Greek flag, and Mis' Poulaki got it for us, but she said:

"Would you leave Achilles carry it for you? He like that."

We said "yes," and got out as soon as possible—it seemed so sad, love of a country and stealing all mixed up promiscuous in one little boy.

Out by the car there was a whole band of little folks hanging round examining it. They were all going to be in the drill at

the entertainment that night, and they all came running to Ruth that had trained them.

"Listen," she said to us, and then she held up her hand to them. "All say 'God bless you' in your own language."

They shouted it—a Bedlam, a Babylon. It seems there were about fourteen different nations of them, more or less, living around down there—it wasn't a neighborhood we'd known much about. They were cute little bits, all of them; and I felt better about taking part in the performance, at my age, for the children were so cute nobody would need to look at us.

Just as we got in the car, Achilles Poulaki came running home to his supper—one of the kind of suppers, I suppose, that would be all right, what there was of it; and enough of it, such as it was. When he see us, his eyes got wide and dark and scared—it was terrible to see that look in that little boy's face, that had stole to help his mother. We told him about the Greek flag, and his face lit, and he said he'd bring it. But he stood there staring at us, when we drove away.

His look was haunting me still when I went into the Friendship Village Opera House that night for the Red Cross final entertainment. "The Feast of Nations," it was going to be, and us ladies had worked at it hard and long, and using recipes we were not accustomed to using.

There's many different kinds of excitement in this vale of tears, but for the sheer, top-notch variety give me the last few minutes before the curtain goes up on a home-talent entertainment in a little town. All the different kinds of anxiety, apprehension and amateur agony are there together, and gasping for utterance.

For instance, Mis' Fire Chief Merriman was booked to represent a Jugo-Slav. None of us ladies knew how it ought to be done, so we had fixed up kind of a neutral costume of

red, white and blue that couldn't be so very far out of the way. But the last minute Mis' Merriman got nervous for fear there'd be a Jugo-Slav in the audience, and she balked out on going on, and it took all we could do to persuade her. And then the Balkans got nervous—we weren't any of us real clear about the Balkans. And we didn't know whether the Dolomites was states or mountains, so we left them out altogether. But we'd been bound the little nations were going to be represented whether anybody else was or not—and there we were, nations of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, the Americas and the provinces, and somebody for every one of them. And for a curtain we'd sewed all the flags of every nation together because we were so sick and tired of the advertisements and the pink lady on the old Opera House curtain.

It's no part of my purpose, as the orators say, to tell about the Friendship Village "Feast of Nations" entire. It would take sheets. To mention the mere mistakes and misadventures of that evening would be Arabian Nights long. Us ladies were the nations, and the young girls were the spirits—Liberty, Democracy, To-morrow, Humanity, Raw Materials, Trade Routes, the High Seas, Disputed Territory, Commerce, Peace, and like that. There ought to have been one more, and she did come all dressed up and ready, in white with gold and silver on her; and then she sat flat down on a scaffold, and she says:

"I *can* not do it. I *can* not pronounce me. I shall get," she says wild, "nothing said out loud but a whisper. And what *is* the use?"

We gathered round her, and we understood. None of us could pronounce her easy, especially when scared. She was Reciprocity.

"Make a sign," says somebody, "make a sign with her name on it, and hold it over her head."

But that was no better, because nobody could spell her, either, including her herself. So we give it up, and she went down in the audience and looked on.

"It's all right," says Mis' Sykes. "Nobody knows what it means, anyway."

"No," says I, "but think of the work her mother's put on her dress."

And we all knew what that meant, anyway; and we all felt bad, and thought mebbe the word would be more in use by the next show we give, if any.

About in the middle of the program, just after Commerce and Raw Materials and Disputed Territory tried to raise a row, and had got held in place by Humanity, Mis' Sykes came to me behind the scenes. She was Columbia, of course, and she was dressed in the United States flag, and she carried an armful of all the other flags. We had had all we could do to keep her from wearing a crown—she'd been bound and determined to wear a crown, though we explained to her that crowns was going out of fashion and getting to be very little worn.

"But they're so regal!" she kept saying, grieving.

"Crowns are all right," we had agreed with her. "It's the regal part that we object to. Not on Columbia you don't put no crown!"

And we made her wear a wreath of stars. But the wreath was near over one eye when she came to me there, between the acts.

"Killy Poulaki," she says, "he stole that whole basket of stuff we sent down to old Mis' Herman by him. Mis' Herman found it out."

"For his ma, though," I says pitiful.

"Ma or no ma, stole is stole," says Mis' Sykes. "We're going to make an example of him."

And I thought: "First we starve Achilles on two dollars a week, and then when he steals for his ma, we make an example of him. Ain't there anything else for him.… "

There wasn't time to figure it out, because the flag curtain was parting for the children—the children that came capering up to do their drill, all proud and pleased and important. They didn't represent anything only themselves—the children of all the world. And Ruth Holcomb stood up to drill them, and she was the *Spirit of To-morrow*.

The curtains had parted on the empty stage, and *To-morrow* had stepped out alone and given a short, sharp word. And all over the house, where they were sitting with their families, they hopped up, boys and girls, and flashed into the aisles. And the orchestra started them, and they began to sing and march to the stage, and went through what Ruth had taught them.

Nothing military. Nothing with swords or anything of that. But instead, a little singing dance as they came up to meet *To-morrow*. And she gave them a star, a bird, a little pretend animal, a flower, a lyre, a green branch, a seed, and she told them to go out and make the world more beautiful and glad. They were willing! That was something they knew about already. They lined up at the footlights and held out their gifts to the audience. And it made it by far the more wonderful that we knew the children had really come from

so many different nations, every one with its good gift to give to the world.

You know how they looked—how all children look when you give them something like that to do. Dear and small and themselves, so that you swallow your whole throat while you watch. Because they *are* To-morrow, and they want life to be nice, and they think it's going to be—but we haven't got it fixed up quite right for them yet. We're late.

As they stood there, young and fine and ready, Ruth, that was *To-morrow*, said:

"Now!"

They began speaking together, clear and strong and sweet. My heart did more things to my throat while I looked at them.

"I pledge allegiance to my flag and to the Republic for which it stands, one nation, indivisible, with liberty and justice for all."

Somebody punched at me, violent.

"Ain't it magnificent to hear 'em say it?" says Mis' Sykes. "Ain't it truly magnificent?"

But I was looking at Achilles and thinking of her being willing to make an example of him instead of helping him, and thinking, too, of his two dollars a week.

"It is if it is," says I, cryptic.

To-morrow was speaking again.

"Those of you whose fathers come from Europe, hold up your hands."

Up shot maybe twenty hands—scraggy and plump, and Achilles' little thin arm in the first row among them.

And at the same minute, out came us ladies, marching from the wings—all those of us that represented the different countries of the world; and we formed back of the children, and the stage was full of the nations of Europe, Asia, Africa, Australia, the Americas, the islands and all.

And *To-morrow* asked:

"What is it that your fathers have sworn to, so that you now all belong to one nation?"

Then we all said it with the children—waveringly at first, swelling, mounting to full chorus, the little bodies of the children waving from side to side as we all recited it:

"I absolutely and entirely renounce and adjure all allegiance and fidelity to any foreign prince, potentate, state or sovereignty, and particularly to—"

Here was a blur of sound as all the children named the ruler of the state from which their fathers had come.

"—of whom I have heretofore been subject… that I will support and defend the constitution of the United States against all enemies, foreign or domestic, and bear true faith and allegiance to the same, so help me God…. "

Before they had finished, I began to notice something. I stood on the end, and Achilles was just near me. He had looked up and smiled at me, and at his Greek flag that I was carrying. But now, while the children recited together, Achilles stood there with them saying not one word. And then, when the names of the rulers all blurred together, Achilles scared me, for he put up the back of his hand as if to rub tears from his eyes. And when they all stopped speaking, only his sobbing broke the stillness of the hall.

I don't know how it came to me, save that things do come in shafts of light and splendor that no one can name; but in that second I knew what ailed him. Maybe I knew because I remembered the picture of his grandfather on the wall over the lamp shelf. Anyway, the big pang came to me to speak out, like it does sometimes, when you have to say what's in you or die.

"*To-morrow!*" I cried out to Ruth, and I was glad she had her back to the audience so they couldn't see how scared she looked at me speaking what wasn't in my part. "*To-morrow!* I am Greece! I ask that this little Greek boy here say the words that his Greek grandfather taught him!"

Ruth looked at Achilles and nodded, and I saw his face brighten all of a sudden through his tears; and I knew he was going to speak it, right out of his heart.

Achilles began to speak, indistinct at first, then getting clearer, and at last his voice went over the hall loud and strong and like he meant it:

"'We will never bring disgrace to this our city by any act of dishonor or cowardice, nor ever desert our suffering comrades in the ranks. We will revere and obey the city's laws, and do our best to incite a like respect and reverence in those above us who are prone to annul them or set them at naught. We will strive unceasingly to quicken the public sense of civic duty. Thus in all these ways, we will transmit this city not less but greater, better, and more beautiful than it was transmitted to us.'"

It was the Athenian boy's creed of citizenship, that Achilles' father had learned in Greece, and that Achilles' grandfather, that officer in the Greek government, had taught to them both.

The whole hall cheered him—how could they help that? And right out of the fullness of the lump in my throat, I spoke out again. And I says:

"*To-morrow! To-morrow!* You're going to give us a world, please God, where we can be true to our own nation and true to all others, for we shall all belong to the League of the World."

Oh, and they cheered that! They knew—they knew. Just like every hamlet and cross-roads in this country and in this world is getting to know—that a great new idea is waiting, for us to catch the throb of its new life. To-morrow, the League of the World is going to teach us how to be alive. If only we can make it the League of the World indeed.

Right then came beating out the first chords of the piece we were to close with. And as it was playing they brought out the great world flag that us ladies had made from the design that we had thought up and made ourselves: A white world and white stars on a blue field.

It floated over the heads of all of us that were dressed as the nations of the earth, and not one of us ladies was trying to tell which was the best one, like we had that afternoon; and that flag floated over the children, and over *To-morrow* and *Democracy* and *Liberty* and *Humanity* and *Peace* and like that. And then we sang, and the hall sang with us:

> "The crest and crowning of all good,
> Life's common goal is brotherhood."

And when the curtains swept together—the curtains made of everybody's flags—I tell you, it left us all feeling like we ain't felt in I don't know when.

Within about a minute afterward Ruth and Ina and Irene were around me.

"Miss Calliope," they said, "the Red Cross isn't going to stop."

"No?" I said.

"We're going to start in with these foreign-born boys and girls—" Ina said.

"We're going to teach them all the things *To-morrow* was pretending to teach them," Ruth said.

"And we're going to learn a thing or two they can teach us," I says, "beginning with Achilles."

They knew what I meant, and they nodded.

And the flag of the white world and white stars on a blue field was all ready-made to lead us—a kind of picture of God's universe.

FOOTNOTE:

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[1] Copyright, *Red Cross Magazine*, April, 1919.

PEACE IN FRIENDSHIP VILLAGE[2]

Post-office Hall, where the Peace celebration was to be held, was filled with flags, both bought and borrowed, and some made up by us ladies, part guessed at but most of them real accurate out of the back of the dictionary.

Two days before the celebration us ladies were all down working in the hall, and all pretty tired, so that we were liable to take exception, and object, and I don't know but what you might say contradict.

"My feet," says Mis' Toplady, "ache like the headache, and my head aches as if I'd stood on it."

"Do they?" says Mis' Postmaster Sykes, with her little society pucker. "Why, I feel just as fresh. I've got a wonderful constitution."

"Oh, anybody's constitution feels fresh if they don't work it too hard," says Mis' Holcomb-that-was-Mame-Bliss, having been down to the Hall all day long, as Mis' Sykes hadn't.

Then Mis' Toplady, that is always the one to pour oil and balm and myrrh and milk onto any troubled situation, she brought out her question more to reduce down the minute than anything else:

"Ladies," she says, holding up one foot to rest the aching sole of it, "Ladies, what under the sun are we going to do now that our war work's done?"

"What indeed?" says Mis' Holcomb-that-was-Mame-Bliss.

"What indeed?" says I.

"True for you," says Mis' Sykes, that always has to sound different, even though she means the same.

Of course we were all going to do what we could to help all Europe, but saving food is a kind of negative activity, and besides us ladies had always done it. Whereabouts was the novelty of that?

And we'd took over an orphan each and were going to skin it out of the egg-money and such—that is, not the orphan but

its keep—and still these actions weren't quite what we meant, either.

"The mornings," says Mis' Toplady dreamy, "when I use' to wake up crazy to get through with my work and get with you ladies to sew—where's all that gone?"

"The meetings," says Mame Holcomb, "when Baptists and Catholics and young folks and Elks met promiscuous and sung and heard talking—where's them?"

And somebody brought out the thing we'd all thought most about.

"The days," she says, "when we worked next to our old enemies—both church and family enemies—and all bad feelings forgot—where's them times?"

"What we going to do about it?" I says. "And when?"

Mis' Sykes had a suggestion. She always does have a suggestion, being she loves to have folks disciple after her. "Why, ladies," she says, "there's some talking more military preparedness right off, I hear. That means for another war. Why not us start in and knit for it *now*?" And she beamed around triumphant.

"Well," says Mame Holcomb, reasonable, "if the men are going to prepare in any way, it does seem like women had ought to be getting ready too. Why *not* knit? And have a big box all setting ready, all knit up, to match the other preparednesses?"

It was on to this peaceful assemblage that Berta, Mis' Sykes's little Switzerland maid, came rushing. And her face was pale and white. "Oh, Mis' Sykes," she says, "oh, what jew s'pose? I found a little boy setting on the front stoop."

Mis' Sykes is always calm—not so much because calm is Christian as because calm is grand lady, I always think. "On whose stoop, Berta?" she ask' her kind.

"On your own stoop, ma'am," cried Berta excitable.

"And whose little boy is it, Berta?" she ask', still more calm and kind.

"That's what I donno, ma'am," says Berta. "Nor they don't no one seem to know."

We all ask' her then, so that I don't know, I'm sure, how she managed to say a word on her own hook. It seems that she'd come around the house and see him setting there, still as a mouse. When he see her, he looked up and smiled, and got up like he'd been waiting for somebody. Berta had taken him in the kitchen.

"And he's wearing all different clothes than I ever see before in my life," said Berta, "and he don't know who he is, nor nothing. Nor he don't talk right."

Mis' Sykes got up in her grand, deliberate way. "Undoubtedly it's wandered away from its ma," says she, and goes out with the girl that was still talking excitable without getting a great deal said.

The rest of us finished setting the hall in shape. It looked real nice, with the Friendship Village booth on one side and the Foreign booth on the other. Of course the Friendship Village booth was considerably the biggest, being that was the one we knew the most about.

Then us ladies started home, and we were rounding the corner by Mis' Sykes's, when we met her a-running out.

"Ladies," she says, "if this is anybody's child that lives in Friendship Village, I wish you'd tell me whose. Come along

in."

She was awful excited, and I don't blame her. Sitting on the foot of the lounge in her dining-room was the funniest little dud ever I see. He was about four years old, and he had on a little dress that was all gold braid, and animals, and pictures, and biscuits, and shells, looked like. But his face was like any—black eyes he had, and a nice skin, and plain, brown hair, and no hat.

"For the land," we all says, "where *did* he come from?"

"Now listen at this," says Mis' Sykes, and she squatted down in front of him that was eating his cracker so pretty, and she says, "What's your name?"

It stumped him. He only stared.

Mis' Sykes rolled her eyes, and she pressed him. "Where d'you live?"

That stumped him too. He only stared on.

"What's your papa's name?"

That was a worse poser. So was everything else we asked him. Pretty soon he begun to cry, and that was a language we could all understand. But when we ask' him, frantic, what it was he wanted, he said words that sounded like soup with the alphabet stirred in.

"Heavens!" says Mis' Sykes. "He ain't English."

And that's what we all concluded. He wore what we'd never seen, he spoke what we couldn't speak, he come from nobody knew where.

But while we were a-staring at each other, the Switzerland maid come a-racing back. Seems she'd been up to the depot, a block away, and Copper, the baggageman, had

noticed a queer-looking kid on the platform when some folks got off Number 16 that had gone through west an hour or so back. Copper thought the kid was with them, but he didn't notice it special. Where the folks went to, nobody knew.

"Down on the Flats somewhere, that's where its folks went," says Mis' Sykes. "Sure to. Well, then, they'll be looking for it. We must get it in the papers."

We raced around and advertised that little boy in the *Daily*. The Friendship Village *Evening Daily* goes to press almost any time, so if you happen to hit it right, you can get things in most up to seven o'clock. Quite often the *Evening Daily* comes after we're all in bed, and we get up and read it to go to sleep by. We told the sheriff, and he come up that evening and clucked at the little boy, without getting a word out of him, no more than we could. The news flew round town, and lots of folks come up to see him. It was more exciting than a night-blooming cereus night.

But not a soul come to claim him. He might have dropped down from inside the air.

"Well," says Mis' Sykes, "if some of them foreigners down on the Flats *has* lost him, it'll be us that'll have to find him. They ain't capable of nothing."

That was how Mis' Sykes, and Mis' Toplady, and Mame Holcomb and I hitched up and went down to the Flats and took the baby with us, right after breakfast next morning, to try our best to locate him.

The Flats are where the Friendship Village ex-foreigners live—ain't it scandalous the way we keep on calling ex-foreigners foreigners? And then, of course, nobody's so very foreign after you get acquainted. Americans, even, ain't so very foreign to Europeans after they get to know us, they say. I'd been down there often enough to see my wash-

woman, or dicker for a load of wood, or buy new garden truck, or get somebody to houseclean, but I didn't know anybody down there to visit—and none of us ladies did. The Flats were like that. The Flats didn't seem ever to count real regular in real Friendship Village doings. For instance, the town was just getting in sewerage, but it wasn't to go in down on the Flats, and nobody seemed surprised. The only share the Flats seemed to have in sewerage was to house the long, red line of bunk cars, where the men lived, drawn up on a spur of track by the gas house.

It was a heavenly day, warm and cool and bright, with a little whiff of wind, like a sachet bag, thrown in. We had the Sykeses' surrey and old white horse, and Mis' Toplady and Mame and me squoze on the back seat so's to let Mis' Sykes, that was driving, have sitting beside her in plain sight that little boy in his blazing red dress.

We went first to see some folks named Amachi—her husband was up in the pineries, she said, and so she run their little home-made rug business. She was a wonderful, motherly soul, and she poored the little boy with her big, thick hand and listened, with her face up and her hair low in her neck like some kind of a picture with big, sad eyes. But she hadn't heard of anybody lost.

"One trouble with these folks," Mis' Sykes says as we drove away, "they never know anything but their own affairs."

Then we went to some folks named Cardell. They tended the bridge and let the gypsies camp in their pasture whenever they wanted. She was cutting the grass with a blunt pair of shears; and she had lots of flowers and vines and the nicest way of talking off the tip of her tongue. She give the little boy a cup of warm milk, but she hadn't heard anything about anybody being lost anywheres.