

The soldier groaned. His leg was bleeding again. If they didn't get him to a hospital soon, he would bleed to death. He closed his eyes and waited. . . .

When he opened his eyes, a woman was bending over him. He couldn't believe it. Not on a battlefield of the Civil War! No woman ever came on the field. No woman was *allowed* to.

But a woman was there. Her name was Clara Barton. And she had had a hard time getting to the soldier's side.

From the start of the war, Clara had been worried about the soldiers. So many were dying. The trouble was that the wounded were left on the field. Not till the battle was over were they taken to hospitals.

What's more, the hospitals were far behind the lines. And the roads were rough. Often the bumpy ride opened wounds again. Many men bled to death on the way.

Clara saw one simple answer: give aid right on the field.

First she got a wagon. She filled it with drugs and bandages. Then she went to the general and asked for a pass. Without that, she couldn't get through the lines.

He just stared. "No, Miss Barton," he said. "The battlefield is no place for a woman.

We do all we can for the men. No one could do more."

"I could," said Clara.

The general still refused. But Clara went back time and again. At last he gave her the pass.

She took her wagon out on the field. She bandaged the men's wounds and gave them drugs to kill the pain. Then she drove them to the hospital.

And it worked. The death rate went down.

When the officers saw that, they decided to help her. They gave her wagons and men to drive them. They gave her more drugs and supplies. And Clara kept on with her job till the end of the war.

Even then she did not rest. She went to Europe. There she worked with a group called the Red Cross. This group also helped soldiers—but it worked all over the world. That idea fired Clara. She went back to America and got her country to join the Red Cross. And that was not all. She gave the Red Cross a new idea. It could serve in peace as well as in war. It could help people during floods, fires, and other disasters. Today, thanks to Clara, the International Red Cross aids millions of people all over the world.

CHECK YOUR READING

1. **Clara Barton helped soldiers during**
 - A the Civil War
 - B the Revolution
 - C World War I

2. **The main reason so many soldiers were dying was that they did not**
 - A get help soon enough
 - B know first aid
 - C trust hospitals

3. **The hospitals were usually**
 - A on the battlefield
 - B in the generals' tents
 - C far behind the lines

4. **Clara asked the general for a**
 - A wagon
 - B pass
 - C helper

5. **The general said that the help the army was giving the wounded was**
 - A the best anyone could give
 - B not quite good enough
 - C very bad indeed

6. **Clara got her way at last by**
 - A writing a newspaper story
 - B asking over and over again
 - C giving the general a gift

7. **After Clara was allowed on the battlefield, the**
 - A battles happened less often
 - B soldiers received fewer wounds
 - C death rate went down

8. **When the war was over, Clara went to**
 - A Washington
 - B Canada
 - C Europe

9. **At that time, the Red Cross helped people**
 - A in America only
 - B in very few countries
 - C all over the world

10. **It was Clara's idea that the Red Cross should work**
 - A without pay
 - B in peacetime
 - C for the army