

2/16

THE STORY OF A HEART:

This is Mrs. Kathleen Smith, of Wood Green, London, in her garden with her three sons - opening the mail. And the mail adds up to a miracle - a neighbourly miracle which may save the life of five-year-old Steven. For Steven has a hole in his heart.

A Press story in the Mirror told the world that Steven needed an operation which could only be done in America. So the neighbours have got together. Mrs. Egles and Mrs. Robinson are among the voluntary collectors, who set themselves a target of £2,000 - the cost of the return trip and the operation. Doctors say that without the operation, Steven will die within two years. That's enough to open the purses of the people of Wood Green. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Arthur Partridge, visits the local traders and publicans, and meets with a generous response. Mrs. Budd writes the Deputy Mayor a cheque for 20 guineas - a typical reaction to an appeal whose urgency does not have to be underlined.

Wealthy widow Mrs. Elsie Barratt sees the newspaper story about Steven Smith's plight - and reaches for her cheque-book. Her five hundred pounds gives the Fund a big lift towards its target. Other contributions, big and small, are pouring in within hours of the newspaper appearing; and next day, at Wood Green town hall, Councillor Partridge is able to report the Fund is more than halfway there. Still the money comes - the Borough Treasurer Mr. Elias and the Mayor's secretary Mrs. Irish are working hard to keep pace with it.

Over to Northwood, to meet living evidence of the success of this type of operation - 3 1/2-year-old John Gold. He, too, had a hole in his heart; two years ago he went to America for the operation - now he's fighting fit. He was treated at the famous Mayo Clinic in Minnesota; here, too, Steven will go. For Councillor Partridge and Steven's father, a 49-a-week railwayman, brings Mrs. Smith the wonderful news that the fund has passed the target. Their son's heart can be put in order - thanks to the warm hearts of their kindly neighbours.