

A STORY OF GRIM WAR APPROPRIATE TO MEMORIAL DAY

By
David Lowry

BEHIND THE SWEET PEAS

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By David Lowry

THE Widow Lucy loved sweet peas, and it is of her great bank, her monster wall, of sweet peas I am thinking now as the locusts' song awells, grows faint, rises again stronger, then suddenly ceases. Just so it rose on that July morning when the earth trembled under the tread of the armed hosts that marched toward Gettysburg.

There was a time when the widow neglected her flowers; when she sat on her porch with her sewing or knitting unnoticed, her hands lying motionless in her lap, while she seemed to be gazing at nothing, unless it was the line where the earth and sky met in the west.

The broad road crossed the hills there. Perhaps she was thinking of her son Jack, who was away somewhere; she never knew exactly where. Jack was marching with the hosts that swelled the ranks of the Union armies. But one day the widow received a letter that brought tears and brightness to her face again.

Jack was promoted. It wasn't the money, he wrote; it was the honor. He was the youngest captain in his division. But above everything else, it was the certainty that he would obtain a few days' furlough. If it was only for one day, he would hasten home to her.

So the widow resumed life again where it had apparently snapped off when Jack marched away. Everything appetizing and healthy grew apace in her garden. Her flowers were the envy of all her neighbors. But her sweet peas! They were the marvel of all who passed that way. In height, thickness and beauty they surpassed all that eyes had ever witnessed.

It was Archie Ray, an old friend of the widow's, who said one day to her: "Dearest, if I ever see anything like them vines, Mrs. Lucy! Must be an uncommon grower you've got. Why, a man coming along the lane back there can't see your house till he gets bang up against 'em. I'd give all I was paid for fighting Mexico just to get behind a screen of sweet peas like that!"

Twenty good yards across the end of her lot the sweet peas stretched. The travelers on the great thoroughfare saw a mass, a blaze of lovely, variegated color. The widow's senses told her that they were as delicate, those flowers, as sweet and as fragile as the babes that had lain in her arms a brief time and

then were recalled by the Giver of all bounty. She rejoiced now that Jack had laughingly put the trellis higher even than she had desired.

When the locusts began to sing that year, the air pulsed quicker with war's alarms. The vast armies under Grant

were stooping, scissors in hand, in front of her sweet peas.

As she looked lovingly on the wall of green dashed with the spray of unfolding buds and full blown flowers, a low rumble fell upon her. It was like the rumble of a dying storm. The widow listened attentively. Yes, the sky looked dull over there where the sound came from; there was a something that foretold a change.

By the time her tables and mantels were adorned with fresh flowers the rumbling sound was more distinct, and so regular and frequent that the widow walked out and looked up and down the valley. The meaning of the sound she heard dawned upon her. The mighty armies had met in battle. The thick sky was only the dust made by countless feet as men marched in battle array. The rumbling sound was the boom, boom of cannon.

A strange hush fell over nature. The cows stood anxious eyed in the brook, the chickens moved about uncertainly in a wary manner, while the geese stood stupidly in the middle of the dusty road with uplifted heads.

Long before noon the rumble of artillery was distinct. The dust rose in clouds; dull red pillars ascended slowly, bulged and swayed, reflecting the sun's rays, warped and twisted themselves, then melted away.

A strange sound like the faint snapping of sticks, was wafted across the hills to groups of listeners gathered on the knoll opposite the widow's house. Then a fringe, the merest fringe, of men appeared on the horizon.

Fifteen minutes later a stream of wounded Federals limped through the village. The villagers were beside themselves with fear when the adjutant of a brigade, a handsome young man in a new uniform, rode through the village ordering the inhabitants to retire or be "caught between two fires."

The widow looked on composedly. She refused to leave her house. No arguments, no remonstrances, no inducements or threats affected her resolve. If the Federals were coming, perhaps she would see her son.

The sun's rays on slanting muskets resolved themselves into shafts of white fire as wave after wave of men passed in undulating billows with muffled tread in dust ankle deep. The sheen of bright buttons, the glitter of scabbards, the glare of bright steel, danced along innumerable waves of infantry and cavalry. It seemed as if the coil steadily rounding the hill would never end.

This coil, this relentless coil, was in, and Lee met in the shock of battle so often, the earth drank men's blood so freely, that the most embittered sick-end of the slaughter.

More men were drafted, more enlisted, and all marched away never to return, save when now and then some wreck wanting a leg stumped through the village or some armless man came back with gaunt, fever stricken companions to gather up strength to begin the world anew.

A crisis sharpened the apprehension of the unlettered. The scented clerk left his desk in the city and stood shoulder to shoulder with the raw and awkward country boy.

One morning (it was about a month after Jack was promoted) his mother

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used the leash, the rapidly loosening leash, that held the dogs of war. They were freed from the mighty strain imposed by long inactivity. Soon they would be at the enemy's throat. The fire that tipped their guns, leaping from file to file, would soon be dimmed by the awful glare of battle.

Suddenly a flash split the air in line with the widow's vision. A shriek that rent the heavens started her. She stood on her feet. Two more flashes—two awful shrieks, followed by a crash that seemed to lift the house from its foundations succeeded so swiftly that the widow shut her eyes. And then—his presence was simultaneous with the flashes—a man with angry eyes and a bearded face pushed her out among the soldiers now rushing past in a trot.

They paid no attention to her. They were looking forward; every man there had his head well up. Their eyes were fixed on something distant. The bursting shell high overhead solved the riddle. They were moving in the direction of the enemy's cannon. The widow cast one look at her house. An immense hole was torn in the gable. The roof yawned over the cavity a shell made in its murderous mission. In terror the widow sped to her low spring house. It was scarcely higher than her

stretched far beyond the village. The line moved, but it remained unbroken. It passed fences, swept through orchards, crossed the run. Its movements reminded the widow of the ripple a strong breeze makes in growing grass. The blue line seemed to bow gracefully here and there as grass dips and lifts its head again. There was a faint shimmer in the blue line. As it came nearer, it too, paused near a road behind a fence. Then it was tipped with fire. The sharp rattle of musketry was borne to the widow's ears.

From that moment on the air was filled, the widow's ears were deafened, with the merciless rain of lead and iron ball that poured steadily, unceasingly, all that afternoon upon the ranks of men swaying, advancing and retreating as they contended over four miles of ground that drank their blood greedily.

Out of the dimness and vagueness of confused masses twisting in tangled lines wherever she looked the widow slowly discerned a stream of wagons returning with the Federal wounded. They moved slowly at first; so slowly that the road became blocked. Then the cries and oaths of the suffering, the awful groans and moans of the dying drove the widow into the farthest part of her spring house in an ecstasy of fear and horror.

But the imagination of a terror stricken woman is greater than contemplation of actual suffering. Soon the widow emerged from the spring house again. God's sunlight, stained as it was, God's beautiful earth, blasted, torn ruthlessly as it was by wicked men, was a blessed relief from the sensations she experienced while seeking refuge in the earth.

So, standing there in the door of her spring house with the never ending chill of fear at her heart, the Widow Lucy looked and listened like one in a day dream more frightful than a nightmare.

She could hear and distinguish voices now as question and answer followed. Vague apprehensions of defeat communicated themselves to the throng of men gathered on the roadway near her house. A single expression aroused her—"Battery B." With strained ear she hung on the response that followed.

"Captain Lacy's battery will be here in an hour. Our orders are to remain here and support him."

"Is Lacy all right?"

The widow clinched her hands. Oh, for the strength to pierce that crowd of men and horses.

"He was all right fifteen minutes ago."

Jack—her son Jack was alive! Suddenly a cannon shot fairly cut its way through the throng, leaving a quivering mass lying on the ground where sturdy, brave men stood a moment before.

The widow was shading her eyes with her hands trying to banish the horrible vision when the earth trembled under the sound of horses' hoofs, and a battery crossed the slope like a whirlwind, to be checked behind her bank of sweet peas.

An officer rode rapidly along the edge of the broad road. The way was now

clear. What exhortations and pleadings and threats had fallen to accomplish was accomplished only too well by the shot that maimed and killed scores. The distance was not great. The widow beheld her son.

While the horses pawed and snorted the battery that had leaped up the hill behind the sweet peas as it sped there

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INSTRUCTION and AMUSEMENT FOR YOUNG AMERICA

THE SEACOAST LIFE SAVING SERVICE

By ELIZA ARCHARD CONNER

WHEN you go to Washington do not fall to visit the headquarters of the United States life saving service, where you may see all the apparatus and ingenuity has as yet devised to rescue people from wrecked ships. This noble life saving service is maintained all



THE BREECHES BUOY.

along the Atlantic and Pacific coasts and also along the great lakes on our northern border.

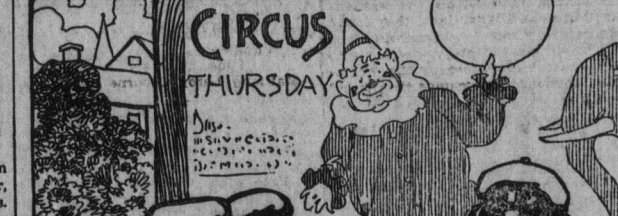
The marine life saving appliances may all be seen in the exhibit at Washington. There is the powerful surf boat mounted upon its carriage, so that it can be drawn easily and rapidly to the water's edge to be launched. There are ropes, rockets, life rafts and breeches buoys. There are olefin suits and cork jackets for the men of the life saving service to jump into quickly when they go out to rescue the wrecked.

In actual service these things are kept at the United States life saving stations dotted all along our coasts. The stations must be maintained in the highest condition of excellence and manned with the full quota of life savers during the autumn, winter and spring. In the summer, when there are not so many storms, the service does not need so many men.

Members of Uncle Sam's marine life guard are chosen usually from the hardy fishermen and coast sailors who have lived most of their lives upon and near the sea. To get into the service a man must be strong, active, healthy and brave and able to row with a

Dickie Dawdle-so Is Invited to the Circus.

By KATE E. JAMIESON.



Little Dickie Dawdle-so wished to go to see the show, for the boys all said 'twas great—Cautioned him not to be late.

upon the ship haul for dear life at the light rope, which has a heavier cable fastened to it. The sailors haul in the heavy cable and fix it to the ship. The breeches buoy is sent out this cable, and one by one the wrecked ones are drawn ashore in it. It is a piece of hooped canvas with holes in the center for the person's legs to pass through. Holding fast the ropes above him, the person from the wreck is hauled to shore by the powerful life saving crew.

Lately a most heroic deed was performed by the women and girls of Padstow, a little port of Cornwall, in the southwest coast of England. It was during the frightful storms on the British shores this spring. The terrifying boom, boom of the cannon telling of a ship in mortal danger suddenly roared over the waters. The men belonging

to the life crew were all at the moment away from the station on another part of the coast.

They heard the signal, however, and hurried as fast as possible to the station. When they reached it the lifeboat was already launched and waiting for them to leap into and row off in without an instant's delay. Their brave, strong wives and sisters living near the station had hurried to the boat room, dragged the craft to the water and launched it, wading knee deep into the waves, and were holding it steady with their hands till the men came.

Her Definition of "Dogma." A teacher is said to have experienced the following: After explaining the meaning of the word "dogma" to her pupils she wrote it on the blackboard and asked her pupils to compose sentences containing the word. One little girl came in too late for the definition, but concluded to take her part in the exercises nevertheless. Her sentence was as follows: "Our dogma has three puppies."

THE HEDGEHOG'S OPINION.

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Thursday was the circus day, but, as was poor Dickie's way, 'Took so long to get quite tidy. Didn't get out there till Friday.

Get a bottle of white glass, and on the bottom of the cork fix a hooked pin. Any kind of a hook will do so long as you can suspend from it a piece of thread. The thread must go inside the bottle, but before dropping it inside attach something heavy to the