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Lorenca

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Among the many interesting personal reminiscences of one of the best known and best loved veterans of the Confederate army is the story of a certain bright night in Kentucky when a little troop of Morgan's intrepid cavalymen, being far from the enemy, took their nocturnal expedition at their expedition at their ease and sang as they rode. And as they passed along the moon-flooded highway, so runs the soldier's tale, a clear, sweet tenor voice, which was the pride of the company, broke softly into the plaintive words and melody of the love song called "Lorena". And as

this trooper sang the verses the whole company took up the chorus, and so singing, they came to the dark walls of a Trappist monastery, rode past those shadowy confines and out again into the brilliant night, still singing the tender and haunting music of "Lorena." Nor was the spell of sadness and melancholy broken when the monastery had been left behind, for the owner of the tenor voice answered the thought in each man's heart and told the story of the song. The author of the words, he said, was a monk and was at that very time immured behind the walls they had just

just passed, vowed to a life of service and of silence on heartbroken memory of his lost Lorena.

The distinguished veteran who paints this poetic picture is Dr. John A. Wyeth himself. He says that he was so touched by the story of the Trappist monk and so haunted by the tender sadness of the song that when the war was over and the opportunity came, he investigated the vague romance and found that source from which he could learn the true history of the song. By his effort and through the knowledge and cordial help of Mr. James Miholland, Mr. John Hoge, and Dr. E. C.

Brush. All of Zanesville,
the following story was
envolved and substantiated:

The song "Lorena" appeared
in 1858. It became popular
over the whole country,
but its romantic sadness
made perhaps, its surest
appeal to the temperament
of Southern people, and thro
through the four years of
the war it was sung constant
ly throughout the South,
at home as well as in camp.

The words of the song
were not written by a Trap-
pist monk, but by a Rev.
H. D. L. Webster, a Presby-
terian minister, who had
been educated in the Colum-
bian Academical and Colle-
giate Institute and who
had been editor of the
college paper.

In 1848, this young man twenty-four years old, became pastor of a church in Zanesville, Ohio. A leading parishioner of his church was a wealthy manufacturer, Henry Blandy of "portable mill" fame. The Blandy home was on a hill made memorable later as "the smoky eminence," spoken of in the song. It happened that a very lovely of this family was a sister-in-law of Mr. Blandy, a Miss Ella Blockson, a girl of nineteen who sang in the young minister's church choir. She was as fair as a lily, her chroniclers say, with blue eyes

and sunny brown hair.
The two young people fell
deeply in love with each
other. But there was
opposition, then a separa-
tion, bitter tears, and
a tragic farewell, and
from the girl a heart-
broken letter, the burden
of whose message was, "If
we try, we may forget"

Eight years after this
the still disconsolate
lover wrote the poem.
Twenty-six years later he
said in a letter to a
friend, "I doubt if all
the dark lines are erased
from my heart yet." In
1856 he met J. R. Webster,
a composer, who asked
him for some words to go
with a new hit of music
he had just written, and

the faithful lover offered his own heart-poem which he had called "Bertha."

The musician accepted the poem, but needed for it a name of three syllables, with the accent on the second syllable, and from this need came the name "Lorena."

"Lorena" herself still lives. She is the widow of the late Judge Johnson of the Supreme Court of Ohio. She lives in Marietta, is almost ninety years of age now, and for some time has been blind. Her family is still honored in Zanesville, where her father was post-master under President Polk.

Lorena.

H. D. L. Webster.

While convalescing from a severe wound received at the battle of Kennesaw Mountain, Georgia, on the 27th of June 1864, I met at the officers' hospital at Louisville, Ky, Adjt. Nicholls, of the 9th Pennsylvania Cavalry, who related to me the pathetic story of the romantic love of Rev. Homer Webster, the author of one of the most beautiful songs ever composed in America.

"Lorena" was composed and published during our late civil war, and was sung around the camp-fires of both the Blue and the Gray alike, music speaking in all languages and love ideals cherished by friends and foes in all lands and climes. "We may forget the singer but we can't forget the song."

Webster, the composer, was a son of the South, where mocking birds, orange blossoms, wild roses, and snowy cotton fields fill up the measure of the fleeting year. He was finely educated; had a peculiarly sensitive mind, destined by nature as well as art to preach the generous and God-given gospel of the meek and lowly Nazarene.

After graduating, his first church was at Pittsburg amid an aristocratic sect of that working and educated commu-

only. His congregation was made up largely of wealthy
miners and manufacturers, who turned out millions
of tons of coal, iron, glass, and machinery. Rev. Homer
Webster was young, handsome, faithful and eloquent,
just such a minister, as the fathers respected, the
mothers adored, & the girls went wild over.

Between prayer-meetings, weddings, baptisms, funerals
and preaching, the young minister was kept busy
performing his sacerdotal duties, placing his soul-like
thoughts on heaven, while his impulsive and loving heart
could not escape the invisible arrows of Cupid -

"Who is ever quick and cunning

With his passion ammunition

Is always going "gunning"

And devoid of all contention."

A wealthy glass manufacturer, belonging to the con-
gregation, had an only daughter - "Lorena", who was the
pride and joy of the family and a devoted worker in
the church. Sunday-school, with a class of poor boys
and girls absorbed her ardent attention on Sabbath
mornings, and the sick and dying in squalid hovels
or humble cots, found her a ministering angel - a walk-
ing benediction. Such a co-worker was at once

a joy and affinity to the young parson, & the
latter with love at first sight! His secret devotion
was reciprocated, if longing eyes, blushing cheek and
feverent hand clasp are indicative signs of affection.

"Lorena" had rich lovers by the score, & there was never
a dinner or tea at the grand mansion on Alleghany
Heights that was not graced by the fashion & manhood
of the Smoky City.

Rich and rare were the gems she wore. She did not seem
to care for the dashing "bloods" who sought her hand and
heart & while her proud father & fashionable mother en-
deavored to match her with a young millionaire iron-
master, their misaiming efforts did not meet with much
success in the first dawnings of love. Modesty & grace
were the handmaids of "Lorena" ever enchanting compan-
ions to truth & virtue. To the outward world, when the
young minister & herself met in home, church or street
she was always the devotee of religion & the polished
benevolent lady, but down deep in her woman's heart
she loved the poet priest, with as much devotion as ever
Heloise bestowed on the lofty Abelard. Eternal promises
passed between them & the lovers patiently waited the hour
when fashion, wealth & parents' consent would crown

then happiness. Fate stepped in & by satisfying ^{pride} her
father and persistent mother she divorced ~~the~~ love of
her soul & tearfully married the miller name, she imag-
ined that her duty to her parents was ~~expressed~~ and this
broke the tie of love & nature, making two hearts miserable
forever. In a few years she pined away & died of a broken
heart, another victim to a false sense of duty & fashionable
pride. The minister soon left the cold chilling blasts of
the North, drifted to Georgia & when the guns at Fort Sum-
ter roared the echoes of the rebellion & death knell of slavery.
Webster enlisted in support of the "Stars & Bars" and tried
to smother the dying embers of his first love amid the
crash of battle & pomp & circumstance of war. The
poet-priest tried to "forget" his sorrow, but that was impos-
sible as is shown in the following beautiful song evolved
from the rippling hills & green vales of remembrance. I
^{have been} trying to secure the song for the past year & at
last found it, in a torn & battered condition - published
by John C. Schreiner, Macon, Georgia, May 1864. The
reader & particularly old soldiers, will be glad to see again
a heart ballad composed in the dark vale of disappointed
love. It will strike a tender chord in every loving soul.
John A. Joyce.

Lorena.

Words by H. D. L. Webster - Music by J. P. Webster.
The years creep slowly by, Lorena,
The sun is on the ground again,
The suns low down the sky, Lorena;

The frost gleams where the flowers have been,
But the heart beats on as warmly now
As when the summer days were nigh
Oh! the sun can never dip so low
Adorn affection's cloudless sky!
~~Oh! the sun can never dip so low
Adorn affection's cloudless sky!~~

A hundred months have passed, Lorena,
Since last I held that hand in mine
And felt the pulse beat fast, Lorena,
Though mine beat faster far than thine;
A hundred months - 'twas flowery May
When up the hilly slope we climbed
To watch the dying of the day
And hear the distant church bells chime.

We loved each other then, Lorena,
More than we ever dared to tell
And what we might have been, Lorena,

Had but our Lorenys prospered well;
But, then, 'tis past, the years are gone;
I'll not call up their shadowy forms
I'll say to them, "Lost years, sleep on!
Sleep on! Nor heed life's pelting storms."

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Yes, these were words of thine, Lorena;
They burn within my memory yet;
They touch some tender chords, Lorena,
Which thrill and tremble with regret.
'Twas not thy woman's heart that spoke—
Thy heart was always true to me.
A duty stern and pressing broke
The tie which linked my soul with thee.

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The story of the past, Lorena,
Alas! I care not to repeat
The hopes that could not last, Lorena
They lived, but only lived to cheat.
I would not cause e'en one regret
To rankle in ^{thy} bosom now.
For "if we lay we may forget,"
Were words of thine long years ago.

This verse
comes before
the one
placed above,
in this copy.

It matters little now, Lorena,
The past is in the eternal past,
Our ~~heads~~^{heads} will soon lie low, Lorena,
Life's tide is ebbing out so fast.
There is a future, O thank God!
Of life this is so small a part.
'Tis dust to dust beneath the sod
But There - up There - 'tis heart to heart!

Copied from newspaper clipping in possession
of Gen Jas H. Williams, Woodstock, Virginia
Monday - April 22^d 1901.

"A Chat with a Confederate Clerk."

Some poet has written that the "Confederate note is good for nothing in God's world"! Aye! good for nothing if we would pay it as "tribute to Caesar" but look at the numbers, and names written upon them and picture if you can the bending figure of three score years, leaning over her desk, and beside her another, who counts not as many years, another and another, younger still younger, whose signatures renders these little scrips of paper the money where-with to provide for the wants of their loved ones, when fathers, brothers, husbands & sons were mid the cannon's roar. Oh! how many anxious thoughts have followed the tracing of these numbers, and names! What a flood of memories the sight of the Confederate notes bring to us of hopes and sorrows that seem never to sleep!

The necessity of soldiers in the field gave the opportunity for our patriotic women to supply their places and in every Department possible, they assisted in running the machinery of the Government. Offices in the Treasury were perhaps the most pleasant to fill. In the Bond

Department especially desirable - for intervals of rest
came to us. Our work was at times suspended as
the issue of "Cotton Bonds" were not taken as foreign
loan to the extent hoped for. This temporary cessation
of work, though restful, was painful for it seemed
prophetic of the success of our cause. We had
to report daily however, and if no work awaited
us, we would help friends whom we might know
in the note department; to one in particular this as-
sistance was most grateful. A refugee turned out of
her home, sixty years of age & depending upon this
office, as the means of livelihood for herself and aged
sister. It was very difficult for her, so late in life to
learn to perform those duties, but - if you will allow it -
"misery likes company" & many were in this same
skiff. As worthless as these notes are now, it was not
then, always easy to get enough of them to meet our e-
mergencies. One by one we parted with our jewels and
trinkets to enable us to stem the tide and keep "the wolf
from the door." Unlike the inimitable Sol Russell in his
jest of "Too proud to beg & too honest to steal,

I belong to the shabby genteel"

For it was plain to be seen - beyond a joke - that with

many the situation became a painful fact.

Let us follow in imagination the footsteps that wind their way around the corners, and down the Main street of Richmond & sympathize, if you can, you who live in these brighter days, with the thoughtful, almost painful expression that came over us, in the past as we walked into the jeweller's establishment & stepping to the counter reluctantly take from a little casket, a set of cameos and offer it for sale. "How much will you give me for this set?" which consisted of ear-rings, breast-pin and bracelet. This inquiry so quietly made did not reveal the inward struggle, nor the courage it required to make it. These cameos had been the gift of a loved relative, as testimony of gratification that the young girl had reached the highest standard of scholarship in her Seminary. As the jeweller scans the delicate white figures on the pinkish back-ground, we catch a glimpse of the golden wreath of leaves that encircles each piece, and they become wreaths of immortells, commemorative of the student's pride and of the affection of the loved one who has long since passed away. Six hundred dollars was the price given for the cameos and then a pair of gold bonds were offered, these

bracelets were scarcely less dear, for they had been almost constant companions of our youthful years. These brought two hundred dollars. Last but not least an opal button surrounded by small diamonds was handed over the glass case. The button belonged to a loved Brother who had died some months before, and it had been given to him by a college friend from the "Jimmy South," and in the Jimmy days. Not only was the button dear for the brother's sake, but Cupid, you know, shot his arrows long before the soldier shot bullets, and this college friend was the fancy of "love's first dream." Seven hundred dollars was paid for the button. Silently the roll of money was accepted and with down cast eyes we leave the store. Within a short distance we have met an intimate friend, (Miss Agnes De Leon), who has lately come to the Confederacy from Egypt, having spent three years there with a brother who was consul, living in Alexandria, Egypt. But like all patriotic South Carolinians, & he was one of them, when his country called, he came to her in her hour of need & his name has been one of the most prominent in Confederate Literature.

Having told this friend of the sale of our treasures, her reply did not pour oil on the troubled waters, for she exclaimed

ed "I would have given you \$800.00 for your career."
Too late! But there came the consolation of being able to
rise above regret at the pecuniary loss in the hope & wish
that the future wearer - whoever it might be - would derive
much pleasure from their possession & ever be unconscious
of the sacrifice that the once happy owner had made.

But we came back to our daily routine. It was a dif-
ficult matter, for some of the old soldiers to become re-
conciled to the idea of having women to discharge the
duties of men; this was the case with our Surgeon General
who was accustomed to the forms and rule of red tape
and to deal with men as "quasi machinis," discipline
expecting no preference. He did not seem exactly to take
in the situation when the Medical Purveyor found it ne-
cessary to put ladies in his office. Ten of us were ap-
pointed, some elderly ladies & some young. The terrors of
war did not dampen these willing hearts or render sloth-
ful the ready hands, for hope kept alive the burning de-
sire, that the Confederacy should be a success, and that
so many precious lives were not being risked for naught.
While in office many pleasant chats filled the few idle
moments & sometimes a beautiful song sung by one of
the sweetest voices ever listened to, floated through the
Miss Sallie Lambert - Mrs Packard of The 1st Sappington