



**D**URING the latter part of the war, in 1864, and until its close, in 1865, I was connected with the armies under Gen. Sherman, usually designated the Army of the Tennessee, the Army of the Cumberland and the Army of the Ohio, wrote Maj. Gen. O. O. Howard. The campaigns were exceedingly active. From Chattanooga to Atlanta Sherman's soldiers were under fire every day, except the three just before crossing the Etowah, for 113 days. There was not a day or night in which there were no soldiers slain. The screeching shells burst over our heads while we were sleeping, but, wonderful to tell, the soldiers had become so used to this conflict that they lost very little sleep in consequence of the fitful and random firing at night.

In that period of 113 days there were 19 sizable battles fought. In one attack I made at Pickett's Mill I lost 800 killed and three times as many wounded within the space of 15 minutes. At night I sat among the wounded and realized something of the horrors of war. It seems to me today as I think of it like a terrible nightmare, but it was a more terrible reality, which I will not attempt to describe.

When I come to think of the "March to the Sea" and later the "March Through the Carolinas," what occurs to my memory first is the exceeding hardness of the soldiers. They recovered quickly from their wounds. I mean from those that were not too severe, and there were scarcely any illness. But when Columbia was on fire an untold number perished in the flames. Still more perished from accidental explosion of confederate shells at Columbia and Cheraw. We like to turn away from the mangled corpses and distorted faces of the wounded that cannot be described. I feel the same horror and depression in view of these things as I did at Gettysburg, where on both sides upward of 50,000 men were placed hors de combat. For several days poor fellows, union and confederate soldiers, waited in patience, unattended by surgeons, simply because there were not enough of them.

Without further detail, imagine the joy that came over the armies of Sherman as they gathered about Raleigh, N. C., in 1866, and were told that Lee had surrendered and that Grant had sent Lee's soldiers home to begin life anew; that Johnston had surrendered on the same terms as Lee and all that belonged to Stocum's, Schofield's and Howard's armies were to march on the morrow toward Washington, the capital of the nation, soon to be mustered out of service and then to go home. I remember the sudden depression at the news of Lincoln's death; but still this going home produced too great a joy to keep ever this catastrophe of their heavy loss very long before their minds. They marched habitually at 20 miles a day from Raleigh to Richmond, and never seemed weary at the close of any day's march—the camp fire was bright, the old songs were sung over and over again and the comradeship knitted during the war would never cease—it was at its best when the word "peace" filled all the air.

I know that we were proud when we marched past the president of the United States in our last great review; but, as I remember it, it was a tearful pride even then. A regiment

had gone out 1,000 strong; it had been recruited and re-recruited; it had been veteranized and added to in other ways; and now it was bringing home less than 300 of all the men who had gone out from that section of the country from which it had come. The joy of going home for the 300 was great, but it was a tearful joy the instant one thought of the 800 or more who could not go home, who never did go home, who were buried somewhere in the broad land over which the 300 had marched, and too often with a headpiece marked "Unknown."

After the war I stood in the large cemetery near Murfreesboro, Tenn., with Gen. R. B. Hayes (afterward president) and Mrs. Hayes. I remember how Mrs. Hayes, who was an exceedingly handsome woman, looked up into the faces of the general and myself as her large, dark, speaking eyes were flooded with tears, when she said: "Just look there, that plot of ground is covered with headstones marked 'Unknown.' Unknown, unknown," she repeated, "and yet he gave his life that his country might live!"

It was a touching picture, but every time I think of it I say to myself: "Really, that 'unknown' soldier, apparently unknown, recorded unknown, was not really unknown. Somebody knew him. His comrades knew him. A mother, a sister, a wife and children, if he had them, knew him. There is a better record somewhere than that in the soldiers' cemetery." Our faith is so strong that we all believe in the resurrection and in the future life and have a great satisfaction in feeling that no sacrifices and particularly not that of life itself for duty, for what one sincerely believes to be duty, has ever been or ever will be made in vain.

The saddest pictures of all, to my mind, are those connected with a losing battle like that of Fredericksburg, and still more that of Chancellorsville. At Fredericksburg the army of Burnside went straight forward to its own destruction. The lines of Lee, half encircling Burnside's points of attack, were complete. It was like a trap into which an animal deliberately puts his feet. We sprang the trap, and it is a wonder that Lee had not dealt with Burnside's army as the sturdy Thomas dealt with Hood's at Nashville. I can see in my mind's eye those immense plateaus in front of the Marve Heights and other confederate intrenchments and barricades covered with the dead and dying. The plateaus were fairly blue, as they were dotted with the wearers of our uniform.

Gen. Couch was standing by my side in the steeple of a church, near the close of that battle, where we together were taking a fresh reconnaissance, when I noticed that his voice trembled as he spoke to me. He said: "Oh, Gen. Howard, look there! Look there! See the ground covered with the boys in blue, and all to no purpose."

After we had returned, all of us who could return, to the other shore of the Rappahannock, the depression of the soldiers was greater than at any other time during the war. We could hardly speak to each other. Now, after years, we can recognize the fact that our grief was balanced by the joy of the confederates over a great victory, and yet not a decisive one, gained by them.

At a moderate calculation there were sent into eternity more than a million of men, who left home in the prime of health and in strength; more than a million of souls by the terrible conflict. For one, I am glad, indeed, that there is an effort on foot to settle difficulties without bloodshed. Of course, the waste of human life is not all of it. There is in every war a waste of possession, a destruction of property and a degradation of character hard to avoid at the best. I know that there are some things worse than death. I know that the union of our states was worth all that it cost, and I know that, humanly speaking, it was necessary that we should be purged as by fire; but is it not wise now to do all that we can to hold up to the world the blessings of a great peace; even the peace that passeth understanding, which never must exclude any of the noblest qualities of a womanly woman or a manly man?

A soul full of memorial greetings to all our sorrowing comrades of the civil war

THE MOTHER'S LAMENT.

My son, and only one, was battle slain,  
And he was all the world, and more, to me;  
I gave him at my country's sacred fane,  
When Sherman marched his legions to the sea.

In danger's threatening cloud, at country's call,  
He left my side, and parting said to me:  
"If in the battle, mother, I should fall,  
My country and her God will care for thee."

And now, throughout the fair and blessed land,  
On love-ordained and sweet Memorial day,  
We go, a flower-laden, faithful band,  
To spread on hero graves the bloom of May.

But for my soldier-boy that solace is not mine;  
Within a southern vale, afar, he sleeps,  
And in my heart is twined the myrtle vine,  
For him, and there rosemary droops and weeps.

AT A PATRIOT'S GRAVE

Grandmother's Memorial Day Speech  
By DORA OLIPHANT COE.

**G**RANDMOTHER ADAMSON had reached into the depths of her rose-sprigged handbox, but just as her fingers touched the stiff ruching in the front of her best bonnet her attention was arrested by a ring at the front door. As though suddenly petrified in her stooping position, grandmother waited while Susan Ann, her daughter, creaked through the passage way leading from the kitchen.

At the first words of greeting grandmother straightened with a snap like a jack-knife, and an angry color flamed on her cheeks.

"Why, Martha Ellen, what lovely roses! Did you ever see the flowers so handsome as they are this year? Come right in. It's dreadful hot, ain't it? Seems like I never knowed it to warm up as early as it has this season, but, then, it's been awful fine for the flowers." "Pears like the roses and laylocks and pinies has just tried themselves to see who could do the most bloomin'." Now, that's a pretty idee, ain't it, Mrs. Rayburn, that laylock wreath?"

"Yes; laylocks was Dick's favorite flower, and he set this bush out hissel, and I thought I'd make a wreath to hang on the cross on his tombstun." The expression on Grandmother Adamson's face would have made a good study. From a blaze of anger it passed through all the stages of horrified scorn to a stony determination.

The development of the conversation beyond the paper-covered board walls collected her nebulous chaotic emotions into a stern resolve.

Susan Ann was stout, and she had grieved all the morning over the long walk to the graveyard. As she sank ponderously into a chair, she lamented:

"I get heavier on my feet every day I live, and the heat to-day is just awful on me. If mother hadn't had her heart so set on it, I wouldn't try to go to the cemetery. I just know I'll be sick."

"Couldn't she walk up with us?" Mrs. Rayburn asked. "We'll not walk fast."

"Oh, mother's as spry on her feet as you be. I hadn't thought of her goin' with any one else, but I don't see why she couldn't. It'd be a real help. She ain't got nothin' to carry, for she took a big basket of flowers up this morning, before breakfast. She's just that wrapped up in Decoration day I couldn't disappoint her about goin'." She's gettin' ready now. I'll go and see if it'll be all right."

But grandmother, with what was almost one movement, had stooped forward and slipped off her congress gaiters, at the same time taking from its box her bonnet. She slipped a hand through the round handle of a little basket and scurried down the passage-way and out through the back door. On the step she delayed just long enough to put on her shoes; then, with her best bonnet carried more carelessly than ever before in its dozen years of use, she hurried out through the back gate.

The cemetery was being made bright with flowers when grandmother passed through the iron gateway, and her face hardened as she recognized some of the stooping figures and the graves over which they bent.

At a brilliantly-decked mound she stopped and, kneeling, said:

"I hate to do it, Jeremiah, but I know you'd want me to. I won't take them to any one else, though, Jeremiah, though I know you'd say fur me to, if you was here. But dearie, I've keered fur these things ever sence they was buds, jest as tender as if they'd a b'en babies, and jest so's you could have them to-day, and I jest can't see any one else have 'em. How would you like to look over these posies and see that laylock wreath a-hangin' on old Dick Rayburn's tombstun? You fought, bled and died almost fur nothin', Jeremiah, when that old copperhead gits jest as many flowers as you do."

Grandmother had turned up the skirt of her black alpaca dress and, into the receptacle thus formed, had put every flower that had lain on Jeremiah's grave. She carried them all over to a far corner of the cemetery and buried them under a pile of last year's leaves. Then she went back to the bare mound.

Soon the faraway notes of "Cover Them Over with Beautiful Flowers," told that the procession was coming.

Grandmother heard, but she did not once lift her eyes. She sat directly upon the middle of the grave, her skirts spread as far as they would over the flowerless mound, and she was knitting as calmly as if she were seated on a little spint-bottomed chair in her own room. She paid no attention to the astonished group that stopped before her.

"Ahem!" coughed the master of ceremonies, Henry Blake.

Grandmother looked up. "Howdodo, Henry." Then, looking down again, "one, two, three, widen; one, two, three, turn."

"We've come to decorate Comrade Adamson's grave," hesitated the puzzled Blake.

"Comrade Adamson's grave don't need no decoratin'—five, six, narrow; one, two—"

"You hain't forgot it's Decoration day, have you?" questioned the man.

"If I have, I've been the only one that has." A flourish of her needle indicated the flower-decked mounds.

"But Comrade Adamson was a hero, and he—"

"Because he was a hero is why I don't want him decorated. That's the only way to distinguish him from them as ain't heroes."

With a little sweep of her skirts, grandmother rose to her feet.

"It's jest because Jeremiah was a hero that his grave ain't goin' to be strewed with flowers jest like the ones



THERE AIN'T NO MEMORIAL DAY NO MORE!

where the babies and copperheads lies. The babies might a-growed up to be heroes, if they'd had a chanst, but they didn't, and they's three hundred and sixty-four and a quarter other days in the year to decorate their graves in. It's almost a insult to—"

"Well, this day don't mean nothin' no more. It used to be set apart that we might honor the nation's dead, but the day, like me and some of the others here, has outlived our usefulness and our time. Let it be Decoration day, if you want to, but don't call it Memorial day any more. It's just a holiday for the young folks to have ball games and picnics, and the older folks to put flowers on the graves of their dead."

"Jest look through them trees. Can you tell which is the graves of soldiers who fought, bled, and died for this beautiful country? If this day was what it was named fur, there wouldn't be a flower in this hull graveyard exceptin' on a soldier's grave. I reckon it's little enough we do, even when we set aside a whole day out of a year to them as give their hull lives, and mighty promist'n' lives some of 'em was, too."

"Take your flowers. Put 'em on any grave you happen to see. It don't matter. This is jest Decoration day. There ain't no Memorial day no more."—Los Angeles Times.

Memorial Day.

No pages of a nation's history are more interesting to its people than those which record the brave deeds of its soldiery and no nation on the face of the earth has established so beautiful a custom as that which is contemplated by Memorial day, the strewing of spring flowers over the graves of her departed soldiers.

May the full meaning of the day come to us with all its solemnity and all its beauty, and with the patriotic lesson it presents.

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