

**FORGET - ME - NOTS OF  
THE CIVIL WAR**

A ROMANCE,  
CONTAINING REMINISCENCES AND ORIGINAL LETTERS  
OF TWO CONFEDERATE SOLDIERS.

BY

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TO JESSE, THE HUSBAND,  
WHO IS STILL MY BOY LOVER,  
TO HELEN, THE DUTIFUL DAUGHTER,  
WHO HAS BEEN THE LINK TO WELD MORE  
CLOSELY OUR LOVE,  
AND WHOSE LIVES I HAVE WANTED  
TO FILL WITH SUNSHINE,  
BUT WHERE THE SHADOWS HAVE OFTEN CREPT,  
THIS VOLUME IS LOVINGLY DEDICATED.  
MAY ITS PAGES BE ILLUMINATED BY THEIR  
LOVE AND INSPIRATION.

*LAURA ELIZABETH LEE*

## CHAPTER XII.

### SHERMAN'S MARCH TO RALEIGH, NORTH CAROLINA.

The next great epoch in my life was "Sherman's march through Georgia," continued into North Carolina. We were told every day that he would be there in a day or two, the days became weeks, and he did not come; everything was waiting for his coming, for we knew it was inevitable, and then began the hiding of everything of any value, but the children and negroes were kept in ignorance as to the whereabouts of the hidden effects. I am certain my mother and her neighbors would hide the things one night and take them up the next to find a safer place. But her real anxiety was for her girls. Many things like silver plate had been dropped in the well or buried beneath the floor of the horses' stalls. A trunk containing clothing, my mother's wedding dress, especially to be prized, was buried in a pine thicket, a mile or two away from town. Even faithful Aunt Pallas was not told where the things were hidden, lest through fear or threats she turn traitor at the last minute and tell the Yankees the hiding place. Our soldiers had well nigh depleted our county of everything to eat, and it was getting to be the daily wish that the "Yankees would come through," as Aunt Pallas would say. The battle of Averysboro was a vivid reminder to us all of what poor Walter had written about the battle of Spottsylvania Court House, Virginia. All day long we could hear the booming of cannon, which meant death to so many poor fellows.

This battle was fought between Gen. Slocum's army and General Joe Johnston's, one of our Commanders. The confederates, however, were forced to fly, and when they passed our town they were in a mighty big hurry to get away from General Slocum. They tore down fences, railroads, etc., and when the ragged, half starved fellows passed our house, they left orders for all the women and children to get between the chimneys. My mother and sister had been on the porch, waving a last farewell to the poor defeated Confederates who had held out so wonderfully during those days of suffering. They called to them if they heard any skirmishing to be sure and seek a place of safety, for Sherman would reach Clayton by eleven o'clock that morning. I was greatly disturbed on going to my room to find all my frocks hanging in the closets, after begging mother to hide them as Bettie Cox's mother had done her things. I wondered where I could find a safe place, and failing concluded to wear them all. I managed to put on four with a large new homespun for the top dress. Then I went into the dining room and in the drawer where the steel knives and forks were I found a plated fork; thinking it safer too on my person, I tried to find a place about me where I could hide it, but could think of no safe place, only in my stocking, so



placing it with the

prongs turned out, I thought no more about it till later in the day. After a while my mother bade us get indoors between the chimneys as ordered, for now and then a stray minie ball came whizzing through the trees. Then came the rear guard of Johnston's army, and half starved as they were, they still shouted "Hurrah for Jeff Davis" and "We'll hang Abe Lincoln to a sour apple tree." With a wave of their tattered old hats the last of our brave boys passed our house on their way to Raleigh. While the women and children of our little town were left to the mercy of the enemy and Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman. Such horrible stories my mother had heard of what might happen to her daughters gave her so much real pain, that when the last of our boys had gone forever, her features, looked determined like they did when she had a difficult task to do and intended to do it. Such a look came over her face as a bugle blast was heard and then burst upon our vision Sherman's army. Our soldiers had passed ragged, barefooted; words beggar the description of their real condition. Here coming, from every direction, were men in beautiful blue and new looking uniforms, and everything seemed to stand out as silhouettes against the bright April sun, and there mounted on his favorite charger, was Gen. William Tecumseh Sherman, gorgeous in gold and blue; then came the guard that he ordered sent to protect us, and such a sea of faces that we could not look in any direction that the Yankees were not, and soon the porch was filled with them asking if there were any "Johnny Rebs" inside. I chanced to follow the guard to see what he intended doing, when he remarked, "Say, Betty (for I had told him my name as soon as I saw him), why are you so warm?" He was out digging up some buried treasures, I said: "Well, I have on five frocks, Mr. Bunting, and they make me very warm, for one of them is woolen." He replied "will you tell me what you are wearing all those dresses for on such a warm day?" I answered, "Why, to keep the Yankees from getting them." "Oh I see, well, let me tell you, as long as General Sherman sent me here to guard your mother's house and effects, I will see that the Yankees don't get your dresses. Go, child, and take them off." I lifted my homespun skirt to show him that I really did have on five dresses, when he caught sight of something sticking out of my stocking.

"Well, please tell me what that is in your stocking that sticks out like knitting needles?"

"That's my fork I have been eating with since the others were hid. I didn't want the Yankees to get anything I had, for I believe my mother forgot to hide these things."

I left him and went into the kitchen and in a few minutes a Yankee came in holding a tin cup in his hand. My mother had just stepped in to speak to Aunt about preparing supper when the Yankee spoke, saying in a very rough way, "What in the h--- is this?" Poor mother looked so surprised, and said, "Why how should I know?" "Well, you have got to tell us." By that time several others came up. "I can't tell you what I don't know," she replied. "Yes, but you do know, and by gosh you've got to tell us," he hissed out. "You've got to drink some of your poison you fixed for us." My mother began to tremble and said "What do you want me to take the poison for, I have never harmed you?" "Well you are trying to poison us, aren't you? Come now, drink hearty." Mother began to shake as he kept holding out the cup; she took it and said, "tell me where you got it." "Out of this jug, we found it in there," he said, pointing to Aunt's room. "Oh if you got it from that place I will tell you that it is French brandy," she answered. "Oh, no, no, it is not the right color, though it smells like it, you have put some poison in it, if it is," said he, "and now you shall drink some of it." Mother, so helpless, stood there, and holding the cup in her hand asked, "have you put anything in it to poison me, I don't object to tasting it if you have not tampered with it." "Not on your life would we put poison in anything that smells as good as this, though it does look queer."

"Well," said my mother, "if you haven't put anything in it, I will taste it," for the jug it was in had only held sorghum, so suiting the action to the word she put the cup to her lips, just as the

guard made his appearance and ran them away. He scolded mother and told her never to have any words with them again, but to call him and he would settle everything.

General Sherman camped near our house that night and early next morning he was on his way to Raleigh, but not before he left a warm spot in the hearts of one Southern family named Lee. God bless him!

"Two knights in armor who fought unto the death of each, because of their reading differently the inscription of a shield. Each was right, but they read the two different sides of the shield."

### **CHAPTER XIII. THE "BUMMERS" AND "RED STRINGS."**

After Sherman's main army reached Raleigh, "the bummers," as they were called, followed in a few days. These were the men who pillaged and caused much annoyance to the neighborhood, by sometimes committing crimes. They visited our town in pairs, and each home of any pretensions. They evidently thought the people had had time to dig up their treasures, therefore it would be easy to find many valuables, which they did. They searched our house thoroughly, even the boxes in my playhouse they ransacked. I shall never forget how we, Nealie and I, kept hiding from room to room, as these brutes would go into another.

After leaving the town they stopped and raided the home of Mr. Urias Baucom, a former slave owner and stock raiser. He had made a great deal of money in the business, and had managed to convert it into gold. It was an open secret that he had buried his treasure. These "bummers" had been told the story by some of the negro slaves that he had formerly owned. Going to his home they demanded his gold; he told them they could not get it, that he had worked hard for it and would not give it up. Whereupon they seized and tied him hand and foot; then putting a gag in his mouth, he was left to reconsider. After searching in vain they returned to demand a second time the hiding place of his gold. He still declared he would never tell them; then binding him again, they took him to a tree and tied him up by his thumbs. His wife, who was cooking and knew nothing of what was going on, hearing groans, ran frantically out, beseeching them to let her husband go free. They demanded of her if she knew where the gold was hidden, and she told them "yes," whereupon Mr. Baucom begged her not to tell, saying he'd as soon die as to lose his hard earned money in his old age.

Some of "the bummers" went with her, where they found a few old socks filled with silver and a little gold, but she must have found enough to satisfy the wretches for they cut the rope and Mr. Baucom was a free man, but not many dollars of his hard earned gold had they found, for he well knew his wife would give away the secret if his life was in jeopardy, and he only told her of a small amount.

He had dug up the county road in front of his house, and taking his canvas bags of gold had deposited them there in the night time, then filled the hole with stone and gravel as if the road had never been touched. This he did weeks before, and Sherman and his whole army marched over more than fifty thousand dollars of buried treasure in gold on the county road to Raleigh.