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## GEN. GRANT'S GREATEST BATTLE.

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HE true story of General Grant's greatest battle has never been published. It was not fought during the bloody years between 1861 and 1865. It was not

waged during his stormy administration in the White House, but it came during the last few months of his life, when bankrupted and made penniless by the villain Ward, when racked with pain and enfeebled by disease, he shook his fist in the face of death, and wrote the book which made his widow and his family wealthy. No other good book has ever been written under such circumstances. Few books have ever been written which read so well. The language is as simple as that of *Pilgrim's Progress* or *Robinson Crusoe*, and the story is of thrilling interest from beginning to end. To read it you would not think that much of it was dictated in a voice not above a whisper, and that the thought came forth from a brain surrounded by nerves which were ever twitching with agonized pain. Few books have had so great a sale as that of Grant's. Hundreds of thousands of copies were sold, and Mrs. Grant, not long ago, told me that her royalties upon it have amounted to more than half a million dollars. The book sells well today, and it will be a standard book for all time to come.

Much of the real story of this great work I am able to tell you today. I give it in the words of the man who, of all others outside of his own family in those last days, General Grant most trusted. His name is N. E. Dawson, and he is now the confidential secretary of General Nelson A. Miles. He has had the confidence of many great men, and today he has the secret history of a score of famous statesmen's lives stored away in his shorthand notes given to him by the men themselves, with the understanding that the matter is not to be published until after their deaths. "General Grant," said he, "never trusted men by halves. When I first met him, all I had with which to win his confidence, were my recommendations. I was employed in the War Department, and was asked by him to come to New York and go with him when he made his trip to Mexico. I was a comparative stranger; but he trusted me implicitly.

He made me the cashier of the party at the start, and put \$20,000 into my hands to pay the running expenses of the trip. I have never seen a man who trusted those he liked so much. He never for a moment thought his friends would not be faithful to him; and, if I had written a note for \$10,000 and presented it to him in the shape of a letter, I have no doubt he would have signed it. He had never had a stenographer with him on a trip before; and he said to me at the time, that he would not object to dictating his reminiscences to me."

"How did the general come to write his book?" I asked.

"I don't think he had any idea of it," replied Mr. Dawson, "until after the failure of Grant and Ward. This left him penniless and he became very anxious to make money. The Century people, you know, began the work of getting him to write. They asked him to write articles for the magazine. But General Grant was not at all sure that he could write. He feared to attempt it. At last he consented to write four articles for them. I think he was to get \$500 apiece for them. They took so well that it became more easy to persuade him to write his book. The Century Company made him the first proposition, but Mark Twain, who had known Grant, having met him at dinners and elsewhere, made him a better offer and got it."

"Did Mark Twain make any money out of it?" I asked.

"I don't see how it could be otherwise," replied Mr. Dawson. "The publishers of subscription books usually make enormous profits. The book sold at first for \$3.50 in cloth, or \$7 for the set. There was an edition in morocco and tree calf which sold for \$25 a set, and the probability is that the publishers made two or three times as much as General Grant out of the sales. It is a question whether C. L. Webster & Co., who represented Mark Twain, were good business men. It was claimed at the time that it was their work which sold Grant's book. The fact that they failed since then shows that it was Grant's book that made their reputation and that helped them, rather than them helping Grant. In other words, he succeeded in spite of them."

"Was General Grant really penniless at the time of his failure?"

"Yes," replied Mr. Dawson. "He lost everything that he had. Everything he owned in the world had been invested or deposited with Grant and Ward."

"How about that money that he got from Vanderbilt?"

"He got nothing from Vanderbilt after the failure. He borrowed \$150,000 of him the day before he failed, but every cent of this went to Ward and was

swallowed up. I understand that all he had left at the time was about \$80 in his pocket and \$130 in cash belonging to Mrs. Grant. His friends at once offered him their help, but it was some time before he accepted anything, and what he did take came from a comparative stranger."

"How was that?"

"The offers of assistance came from all parts of the country," replied Mr. Dawson. "Many poor men wrote that they could loan him money, and among others, he got one very touching letter from Lansingburg, N. Y. This came about four days after the failure of Grant and Ward. It was from a man whom General Grant had never seen. He wrote the general that he had made some money out of his business and that he had saved a few thousand dollars. This he said he would like to lend to the general in his extremity. He inclosed a check for \$500, making it payable on account of his share due Grant for services ending in April, 1865. In his letter he told the general he could draw upon him for more until his surplus was used up, and that he could pay him when he got ready. He told the general he would lend him \$1,000 at once for his note at twelve months without interest, with the option of renewing at the same rate. This affected General Grant very much. He accepted the check and used it. After the government gave him his pension he paid the money back as soon as he could."

General Grant never forgot a favor," Mr. Dawson went on, "and he remembered this man to the day of his death. I was present when he met him some time after this. It was during the last days of Grant's illness. There were many famous men waiting at the hotel there to see Grant, but they had been turned away again and again because he was not well. When this man's card came in Grant ordered that he be admitted at once. He received him kindly and thanked him in person."

"But did not some of Grant's rich friends offer him money at that time, Mr. Dawson?" I asked.

"I don't know that there were many personal offers of assistance," replied Mr. Dawson. "His richest friends were full of suggestions and plans for raising large sums, but I don't know that they made offers to relieve his immediate necessities. Still there were many kind things done and many offers made which were not accepted. I remember one case was that of Senor Romero, the present minister from Mexico. As soon as he heard of the failure he came to New York and called upon General Grant. After he left a check for \$1,000, payable to Grant, was found on the table where he was sitting. Mr. Romero