

troubled face upturned to him, and answered her as he would a child: "Nora does not mean what she says, for see," pointing to the stars and stripes that waved over the campus, "it is to that flag we owe all we are! Do you not remember the old days on the island when fish were scarce and no one bought our baskets? Ah! sweetheart, rebellious as we were, "Uncle Sam" has made something of us. Our feet bled that last winter, didn't they Nora? O! how cold it was, that last winter. Say, Girlie," he went on, "if America isn't my country and yours, to whom does it belong? We are the original Americans and although I leave you in tears, I'll stand by the stars and stripes 'till death or victory!"

He had drawn himself up proudly and Nora said no more. She saw that words were useless, besides John's enthusiasm was infectious. How soldierly he had looked and how brave he was! She had turned to watch him as he went whistling across the marsh after the cows. Now she walked up the railroad track and crawled through the fence to a quiet spot on the campus.

That evening when the members of the brass band assembled for the concert, for the first time in her life, Nora hated the music. John played with the band, and the girl's heart ached as she singled out the mellow notes of the alto horn from the other instruments. Indirectly, John's playing had been the cause of his enlistment in the hated army. The call for musicians had been especially strong.

"You will be killed, I'm sure," Nora, had sobbed, but John had replied reassuringly:

"Musicians are never targets for the enemy. While the battle rages we will play the National airs to cheer our comrades on to victory, and when the smoke has cleared away we will carry the wounded to cover. See, here is the Red Cross upon my arm, and with such protection I cannot fall, although my life belongs to my country if she needs it!"

Of the hardships through which John passed, he had nothing to write, being always cheerful, but one day there was a terrible battle. The Spaniards were fairly whipped, and hoisted a white flag in token of peaceable surrender. The Americans marched forward to claim their victory. The brass band led them and its notes swelled triumphantly.

Within a few feet of the cowering Spaniards the Americans graciously lowered their arms. At this, a thousand armed devils sprang from ambush and fired upon the unprepared heroes. Musicians and Red Cross suffered the common fate, and when it was all over the Commanding General cabled the names of the missing across to the anxious ones in America.

John's name had been among them and now Nora was lying out in the orchard alone with her great sorrow. The birds above her head sang merrily and shook apple blossoms upon her as they hopped from one branch to another. The band was playing a low, sweet air, but it hurt the girl's heart to listen to the alto horn. How dared anyone play while John lay dead so far away 'neath alien skies!

She was sobbing and did not hear footsteps, but she knew the touch of the hand that uncovered her eyes—it was JOHN!