

THE WIDOW WISE

Verses by Paul West ▽ Drawings by W. H. Loomis

1.—Some people find the German tongue an easy one to learn,
But, strange to say, the Widow Wise its tricks could ne'er discern;
So, in Berlin, some friends of hers resolved a trick to play
To make her learn the language, and they framed it up this way:—

2.—Said they, "You're bound to lose yourself around Berlin, some time,
And your ignorance of German is, to say the least, a crime;
So learn this phrase and, when you're lost, repeat it, plain and quick,
To any one you chance to meet. It's this:—"ICH LIEBE DICH!"

3.—"Thanks," said the Widow, "I shall try," and for a fact she did,
All witless of the cruel joke that in the phrase was hid;
And, just to show what she could do, she sauntered out next day,
Resolved to spring her knowledge if by chance she lost her way.



4.—And lose her way she promptly did. She wandered for a while,
Then chanced to see a tall young man who wore a kindly smile,
And straightway up to him she walked, resolved to speak or die,
"Ich liebe dich!" she said to him, and, oh, he winked his eye!



5.—"The fresh young flirt!" the Widow thought, and turned away. Alack!
Repeating words all Greek to her, he followed at her back.
She sought a handsome officer. "Ich liebe dich!" she cried,
And he, enthusiastically, crept closely to her side.

6.—Another man in uniform she saw and rushed to him.
She spoke her words! On bended knee he fell with sudden vim.
In fear, to others still she moaned those German words so short,
And all fell in and followed her, a fond, admiring court.

7.—At last, dismayed, the Widow found by fortune her hotel.
She tottered in, and at the desk began her tale to tell.
Said she:—"I only spoke three words my good friends told me to.
What could they mean?" And then she learned—the words meant—"I love you!"

8.—The angry Widow sought her room and sent those friends a note,
The page would burn should I repeat the very words she wrote.
"But still I'm glad I know those words," she said, with laughing eyes,
"IN CASE SOME GERMAN SHOULD PROPOSE!" exclaimed the Widow Wise.