

**IN "GOD'S COUNTRY".
A
SOUTHERN ROMANCE**

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649613625

In "God's Country". A Southern Romance by Dora Higbee & Henry Watterson

Except for use in any review, the reproduction or utilisation of this work in whole or in part in any form by any electronic, mechanical or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including xerography, photocopying and recording, or in any information storage or retrieval system, is forbidden without the permission of the publisher, Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd, PO Box 1576 Collingwood, Victoria 3066 Australia.

All rights reserved.

Edited by Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd.
Cover @ 2017

This book is sold subject to the condition that it shall not, by way of trade or otherwise, be lent, re-sold, hired out, or otherwise circulated without the publisher's prior consent in any form or binding or cover other than that in which it is published and without a similar condition including this condition being imposed on the subsequent purchaser.

www.triestepublishing.com

DORA HIGBEE & HENRY WATTERSON

**IN "GOD'S COUNTRY".
A
SOUTHERN ROMANCE**

IN
"GOD'S COUNTRY"

A ❁ ❁ ❁
Southern
Romance

by
DORA ❁
HIGBEE.

With introduction by
Henry Watterson.

New York:
AMERICAN PUBLISHERS CORPORATION,
310-318 Sixth Avenue.

PREFATORY NOTE.

THIS tragic story of "the dark and bloody ground" made a deep impression when it appeared as a completed novelette in *Belford's Magazine*; and, in its present form, it is believed that it will receive, as it deserves to receive, a wider and more serious attention than is commonly bestowed upon our ever-multiplying stock of literary effusions.

It is a romance of Kentucky, racy of the soil, redolent of the barn-yard and the stable, rich with the tints of bluegrass in the landscape, yet so subtle in structure, and so filled with the spirit of tragedy, as to rise above the latter-day common-

place of our uninspired life into the atmosphere of the idyllic, and to be at one and the same time a current chronicle, an antique and a classic.

What but the vision of true genius could see success in a task so original and daring as the creation of a throbbing heart-interest out of materials so simple, so slight, and so trite? and whose but the hand of an artist could have given to this task execution so powerful and brilliant?

"In 'God's Country'" is the plain and circumstantial narrative of a woman's struggle with that great passion which has wrecked and brightened so many lives. It is the old, old story of love and pride. There are but four characters: a country girl, of the average sort; her father, a country gentleman of the average sort; a horsey lover, of the average sort; and a

tramp, very far indeed from the average sort. The plot-interest turns upon the development of the heart-interest. There is no striving here for effect. The lights and shadows are furnished by the idiosyncrasies of a situation purely local and natural. Into the tranquil existence of a well-bred but motherless girl, living alone with her father, and the head of his establishment, and betrothed, as a kind of matter-of-course, to a young man with whom she has grown to womanhood—her own and her father's choice—there comes a spell against which she is wholly unable to contend, and beneath whose enchanting death-strokes she ultimately falls.

It is difficult to conceive how the sore travail of Lydia Ransome could have had any other ending. It is the misfortune of women in positions such as hers—the not

uncommon position of an internal battle between conflicting sentiments of honor, duty, and affection—that, unequal in point of intellectual strength to meet the incessant drain upon their nervous energies, and to think clearly, they are also unsupported by the wisdom of worldly experience, and are dashed upon the rocks of conventional usage—often irrelevant to the actual issue involved—by the waves of their own emotion, which, unlike the tides of the ocean, are controlled by no law except that which superstition and passion make unto themselves. A wicked woman in Lydia's place would have known precisely what to do. A good woman, with a sufficiency of moral courage and knowledge of life, would have been equally sure of her course. But there is a woman between the two, not bad enough to be a

schemer, not strong enough to be a heroine—truly feminine and lovely—who, when left alone upon the sea of human passion, is as a frail boat tossed by every wind. Of this type was Lydia Ransome; having a noble, aspiring nature; perceptions and susceptibilities divinely born; of ready personal courage and social tact; but half-made upon the spiritual side, and a slave to the abridgments and prejudices of the provincial code under which her lot had been cast. There was nothing for it but anguish, despair, and death. She could not rise high enough, nor sink low enough, to escape. How she fell, like a martyr, if not like a heroine, is told with a power rare to modern fiction; and the lesson that issues thence, sweet as the flowers that sprang from her grave, is full of a woman's appeal and protest against the

limitations with which custom hedges her about, whilst giving the man remission and license.

Of the male characters little need be said. Colonel Ransome, the father, is a good type of the country gentleman of Central Kentucky, well-drawn and not exaggerated. Horrible as the final catastrophe is, it is possible. The two other males, the horsy lover and the weird tramp, are mere shadows; the identity of the tramp arousing the suspicion of the reader from the opening episode of Schubert's Serenade, and entirely revealing itself in that superb dramatic climax, which makes a new world for Lydia, and fills it with the music of the spheres. The closing chapters are breezy with action and of breathless interest; and the finale is reached with the abrupt force of intense