

For Every Boy and Girl

THEIR ONE VETERAN

By ALICE MILLER WEEKS

SOFT May breezes showered the pink and white of the apple blossoms gently down from the gnarled old tree at the corner of the side porch. One daintily curled petal floated light as a fairy shell, and came to rest unnoticed on the bowed gray head of Grandpa Jones sitting in his old armchair beside the porch railing.

The old man raised his head. In a moment he was encircled by a pair of loving arms. "Didn't you go with the others, Betty? Why—why—what happened, dearie?" Grandpa Jones wiped his eyes furtively, and slipped his handkerchief hastily into his coat pocket. It was of no use; Betty's loving eyes were too quick for him. "Grandpa Jones, you were crying! Now, tell me this instant, sir, what was the trouble?"

One girlish arm still rested upon his shoulders, and Betty shook a threatening finger in her grandfather's face, on which smiles and tears were struggling for mastery. "Smiles won, of course; who could withstand Betty's laughing eyes? Not Grandpa Jones, who loved her so.

"Twasn't nothing, Betty dear," he protested, but Betty's small hand was promptly laid across his lips. "Now, I know better, Grandpa Jones! I know you wanted to go? I knew it all the while! Why shouldn't you, when it's Memorial Day and you were in the war, your own very self. I should like to know? I told them that, but they said you never cared to go anywhere and you'd be all tired out, and the buggy was crowded anyway, and all that stuff. But I just couldn't stand the thought of you left here all alone, and so when we got to the Crossroads I slipped out and ran all the way home to you. I'd lots rather have my Decoration Day here with you than to see all the parades in the country, or sing in the chorus, either, Grandpa dear.

Betty snuggled closer and laid her rosy cheek against Grandpa's silver hair. She spoke so stoutly that even she forgot how dear to her loyal little heart were the flags and banners, the patriotic songs and spirited band music of Memorial Day; and how momentous had been the making of that very white dress. But that, of course, had been when Betty had expected Grandpa Jones would go with them.

"Now, you'll tell me about it, won't you, Grandpa?" Betty perched herself comfortably on the arm of the old chair, blowing away the pink and white petals, which floated down to join the drift of apple-blossom snow lying across the fresh green grass. "Tell me some of your very best war stories, won't you, dear? I tell you! No, I don't want to see the parade, I tell you! I'm lots happier, right here with a really, truly soldier, don't you see? It's soldiers that Decoration Day is for, Grandpa."

There was no resisting Betty's coaxing ways. Ever since Grandpa Jones had sold the old homestead and come, nearly a year before, to make his home with his son Charles, it was Betty, of all that large, well-ordered household, who had stolen into the man's heart and seemed to understand his loneliness and need for love. A dear and sweet sympathy existed between the imaginative young girl and the broken old soldier.

"Aren't you going?" the stranger asked, looking at Betty's gala dress. Probably he had a daughter in that chorus, she thought. But before she could reply Grandpa was himself again, and explained, briefly how she had left the carriage at the Crossroads and come back to him.

"Well, she'll not be left out either," the committee-man said, with a smile. "Now, have you an old army-coat, Sergeant, or a musket—anything, you know, to make the affair seem more real to the spectators?" In a twinkling Betty was up-stairs, pulling out the faded uniform and battered musket she knew and loved so well. Almost before he knew it Grandpa Jones was arrayed in full regimentals. With the donning of the old uniform all signs of weariness and despondency vanished. He walked with Betty to the waiting carriage with firm, steady tread, holding his head high. They were soon flying down the road toward town behind a pair of handsome bays.

Along the main street of Blankton all sorts of vehicles stood waiting while throngs of expectant people jostled one another on the sidewalks. Memorial Day was a great event and all the country around turned out to witness the parade and listen to the band and the speeches. Some unaccountable delay seemed to have occurred. The parade was late in starting.

"I declare," said Betty's father, turning in the democrat wagon to speak to Mrs. Jones, sitting on the back seat, "I don't feel right about father being left this way. It's too bad Betty's had to give up the singing and all, too. She'd been looking forward to it a long time."

"Well, he'd have been all tired out," Betty's mother began, but a rumor running through the crowd caught their attention.

"There's an old soldier—a veteran—going to be in the parade. That's what's made them so late. They didn't know about him till the last minute."

"Oh, why didn't we bring father!" Mr. Jones exclaimed. "I'm afraid we've been making a mistake, Anna, thinking he's too old for such things. How he would have liked to see another war veteran. I wish we could go back after him. I wonder who the other soldier is, anyway?"

"Hark!" cried the boys. "There's the band! It's coming—oh it's started at last!" Silence settled down over the throngs of people straining their eyes to catch the first glimpse of the shining, glittering instruments of the brass band of Blankton, which from time immemorial had always headed the parades. A new element of expectancy was added by the floating rumors of the coming of a representative of the Civil War soldiers.

"Hail, Columbia!" blared forth in stirring measure as the band drew nearer and nearer, but all eyes were instantly fixed on an open carriage immediately following the big bass drum. The carriage was elaborately draped with folds of red, white and blue. Wreaths and festoons of flowers hung from its sides, and with Old Glory proudly waving above him, an old soldier in faded blue sat enthroned on the cushioned seat. Very straight he sat, an old-time musket on his shoulder and the undying fire of patriotism shining in his eyes, as the inspiring strains from the gleaming instruments fell on his ears. By his side and holding fast to his unoccupied hand, sat a pretty young girl, in a fluffy white dress, decorated with fluttering ribbons of red, white and blue.

Intense silence at first hailed the approach of the carriage—then a voice from the succeeding carriage, where roared the members of the committee, broke the spell:

"Three cheers for Sergeant Jones, veteran of the Civil War!" called the voice. "Now! One! Two! Three!"

Cheer after cheer resounded all along the line. Flags were wildly waved. Betty held closer to her grandfather's hand; but he, unmindful of the battle and excitement, gazed calmly forward, living in memory other days and other scenes, beside which the present was but a dim reality.

"Why, it's father—God bless him!" said a sudden, broken voice, when, through a blur of tears, Betty's father gazed on the glorified figure beneath the floating Stars and Stripes. His wife made no reply, beyond a muffled sob and a vigorous wiping of her eyes. But the two boys climbed to the seat of the democrat wagon and cheered and cheered till they were hoarse.

Wreaths and flags were reverently laid upon the dozen scattered graves in beautiful Oakwood, where rested the soldier boys of whom their people were so proud; and then Grandpa Jones, now "our esteemed fellow-citizen, Sergeant Jones," responded to a request for a speech. Gravely mounting the draped grand-stand, he stood before the people in the old uniform, which had seen such service in defense of his country, and made a personal appeal to every heart in behalf of the country he loved, and eloquent of tribute for the brave sons, his own comrades, who had laid down their lives for her sake. When he finished, men, women and children pressed forward to grasp the old soldier's hand and to thank him with tear-dimmed eyes for his inspiring words. Betty's heart was so thrilled with loving pride that smiles and tears mingled and blended strangely on her rosy face.

The democrat wagon joggled homeward behind the carriage in which Sergeant Jones and Betty were being driven back to the porch and the apple-blossoms. Father and mother were silent, each busy with thought, but in the back-seat the boys were talking it over.

"I tell you what," cried Phil with shining eyes, "I never realized before what a hero Grandpa Jones has been."

"Yes, and is," added Robert. "I tell you, Phil, it's a fine thing to have a hero for your own grandfather. I mean to let them see we appreciate him, and I'm going to try to grow up to be as brave and good as he is, too."

"And so am I," cried Phil. "I'm proud of Grandpa Jones."

"Amen," said the father softly. "It shan't be only Betty who appreciates him now."



PAT-A-CAKE
Pat-a-cake, pat-a-cake, baker's man
Bake me a cake as quick as you can
Put it and prick it, and mark it with B,
And put it in the oven for baby and me.

Hurry it, hurry it, baker's man;
Bring it to us as quick as you can.
I hope it has raisins by way of surprise,
And little black currants that look just
like eyes.

Here it comes, here it comes, baby mine;
Never was cake that was half so fine;
Brown as a berry, and hot from the pan,
Thank you, oh thank you, you good
baker's man!



BRUSHING TEETH

All little boys and little girls,
Remember this, I pray,
To brush your teeth both morn and eve,
And do it every day.

Remember in the morning, please,
To brush your teeth with care,
It's best, I think, to do it just
before you brush your hair.

TANGLED HAIR

When you fix your hair,
Tangles, bear in mind,
Must be combed with care;
And it's best, you'll find,
Not to tug and pull and hurry,
Putting tempers in a flurry,
But a gentle girl to be,
Then they come out easily.



Pussy cat, Pussy cat

Pussy cat, pussy cat, where have you been?
I've been to London, to see the Queen.
Pussy cat, pussy cat, what did you there?
I frightened a little mouse under the chair.

"What did you say when you'd made your best bow?"
I opened my mouth and remarked, "miaow."
"What did the Queen say in answer to that?"
She screamed a little, and then she said, "SCAT!"

IN THE NANCY BELL

By FANNY ADAMS WILKES

BACK of the barn, where the cherry-trees threw cool shadows, lay the "Nancy Bell." Propped upon blocks of wood, she pointed her jib-boom toward the haystack, her rudder toward the hen-house, and stood immovable in a sea of weeds. The "Nancy Bell" was a big, broad sailboat that had been used to carry passengers between Dunville and Port Maitland. She was cast aside because people preferred to go to town on the noisy little tug rather than trust themselves to uncertain winds and the stalwart "Nancy Bell." But the useful days of the "Nancy Bell" were by no means over for one summer some children came and stayed at the farmhouse, and when they discovered the big boat, a few days after their arrival, they shrieked with joy, and scrambled into her without further waste of time.

"I'm the captain!" shouted the oldest boy, and the other cried, "I'm first mate—the rest of you can be passengers."

"All aboard!" bawled the captain, and took his place at the rudder.

"Hurry up!" called the first mate. "Can't you get aboard! Climb on to the fence, first, and take hold of the cherry-trees."

"Help me get the baby up," panted a small girl who had grown red in the face in her efforts to lift up a smaller sister.

"Wait a moment, Doris. Now bow her and I'll take hold of her hands and pull her in—there!"

"All on!" inquired the captain. "Let out the sails, Ray."

"Aye, aye, sir." Then a puff of wind rustled in the cherry-trees and the "Nancy Bell" sailed away.

"Fine breeze, Captain," said the first mate.

"Yes, it's all right. If she doesn't lie down, we'll get to Dunville in half an hour. Look out for the center-board, ladies. Reef the sails a bit, Mate."

"How's that? All right, Captain?" asked Ray, pulling at imaginary sails with a great display of energy.

"All right," grunted the captain, and munched a bit of hay in perfect imitation of Mr. Dow, who was captain of the "Lucy," and took the summer boarders out on the lake.

"Aren't we almost there?" asked Doris, swinging her legs over the side of the boat.

"Almost."

"Out now!" said the baby, and climbed kitten-fashion on to the deck.

"Wait a moment," commanded the captain; "we'll be there in a jiffy."

"Out now!" repeated the baby, pounding the deck with both fists.

"Here we are," and with a good deal of swagger the captain made a supposed landing at the supposed Dunville wharf. When the passengers were all out, the captain began preparations for the return trip.

"Ray and Charlie come on," called Doris, suddenly reappearing from behind the hen-house. "Dennis is just going across on the ferry, and he says we can go."

"All right." And the ship's crew swung themselves ashore, and deserted the good bark "Nancy."

The Port Maitland ferry was a large scow, which was worked by hand. The ferryman turned a crank and slowly, laboriously, the scow with its load moved across the river. Dennis was very fond of children, and when they reached the opposite shore he leaned against the railing and opened the conversation engagingly.

"I hear you're sailing the 'Nancy' this season. I used to run her two years ago. Many passengers last trip."

"Why, yes," answered the would-be captain, lounging beside Dennis. "Business good so far this season?"

"Good, Good!" I'm glad to hear it. I guess I'll take a run up on her tomorrow, if you let me know when she starts."

"Have you any little children, Dennis?" asked Doris, coming close.

"They're not very little any more. I've got three strapping big boys. I had a little girl like you, once, and I lost her, and I lost the only picture I ever had of her, too. Well, children, here comes a team, and I guess we'd better be gettin' back quick, or your mother'll be wonderin' where you are."

The next day the children sailed again on the "Nancy Bell."

"There comes Dennis," cried Ray. "He promised to take a trip with us—Oh, Dennis!" and in another moment Dennis was swinging himself aboard. It was a fortunate thing that Dennis arrived when he did, because the captain and first mate presently fell into a very warm dispute.

"You're all right, Captain," said Dennis, soothingly, "and so are you, Mate. The back one is called the main-sail and that front spar the jib-boom. That's the cockpit below, and this is the deck." Thus peace was restored. Soon after, Dennis was obliged to leave, because a wagon-load of people came along and called to him to ferry them across. The game dragged a little after that.

"What are you doing down there, Doris?" asked Charlie, sharply.

"Oh, just poking around in these cracks with a rusty hat-pin I found."

"Well, stop poking, and sit up like a lady if you want to be a passenger on this boat." But just then Doris gave a cry.

"Oh, goody! Look what I found!" and she held up a small gold locket.

"Let's see it," cried the boys, and pressed close to Doris' side.

"Now, don't you keep it, 'cause I found it, and it's for a girl anyhow."

"I won't keep it; I just want to see if it opens." And as Charlie pressed the tiny spring, the locket flew open and disclosed the picture of a little girl about Doris' age on one side of the locket and a little locket of brown hair on the other.

"I believe it's the picture of Dennis' little girl," said Doris solemnly. "There he comes back on the ferry." "Dennis!" she caroled; "Dennis!" and flew to meet him, her face rosy, alight with happy excitement. "Look, look, Dennis! Isn't this your little girl?"