

THE SCRANTON TRIBUNE-WEDNESDAY MORNING, MAY 30, 1894.

(2 pp.)-2,

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Decoration Day .- 3.

ties.

Mr. Brinton," called Nut.

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from the rest of the world.



ASLEEP AT HIS POST.

BT GILBERT PATTEN.

[Copyright, 1894, by American Press Associa-

tion.] With muffled drums and measured tread the little band of battle marked and time | I never slept at my post." scarred veterans-honored heroes of the noble army that fought to preserve the Union | looked straight at the old soldier, but Uncle -marched through the cemetery that lay Dan't turned his back, still speaking to the sleeping on the southward sloping hillside. girl: The balmy breath of springtime was in the sir, and when they passed onward, after as don't deserve it has been honored like pausing at the last resting place of some them as do, and the decoratin is all over." dead comrade, the sweet perfume of flowers rose from the green grass that grew above down the road together, followed by a longthe departed soldier's breast, while a tiny flag-the dearly loved red, white and blue -fluttered beside the marble tombstone.

At length they halted by a white shaft that hore the name of "John Loring," followed by this strange inscription: Pardon is granted because of his faithful

ice and spiendid record as a brave and loyal soldier. A. LINCOLN.

. With a single exception every head was uncovered and bowed as the flowers and flag were placed on the grave. One there was among them, however, who stood up stiffly, with his cord encircled hat unremoved from his white head, his age lined face grave and emotionless, as if carved from adamant.

Never in all the years since they began decorating that grave had Uncle Dan'l Brinton been known to remove his hat there or in any manner show he mourned for and bonored the sleeping comrade with whom he had fought almost shoulder to shoulder in the same company. Publicly be made no explanation of his singular conduct, and when questioned he simply shook his head and looked grimmer than usual. Any other man of that company would have received the severest censure from his comrades, but Uncle Dan'l was acknowledged to be "a little queer" and "strait laced," so his act was passed over in silence.

There were those, however, who hinted that there had once been a feud between the two men, and that even death had not noftened the heart of stubborn old Uncle

At all the other graves where the veterans paused and uncovered he removed his hat and bowed his head with the rest, his grim features softening and something like while time and constant association led him tender look creeping into his eyes, once so to love her as tenderly as if she were his clear and bright, but now growing dim own child. with advancing age.

watch the solemn memorial ceremonies was a plainly dressed but pretty girl of 18. She with Uncle Dan'l's hermitlike ways, prewar attired in common print, and the shoes venting many of the neighbors from visit on her feet were made for wear instead of ing them. Their lives passed peacefully

grace of her budding figure, the ladylike | contents oven eners numble lot, apparently shapeliness of her almost delicate hands. the pearly whiteness of her small and even teeth and the limpid sparkle of her clear blue eyes.

There was something like a look of mingled pride and pain on her face as she saw Uncle Dan'l stand up so rigidly by John Loring's grave, and she glanced slyly at a manly young fellow a few years older than herself who stood with his hand on the bit of a spirited horse, restlessly tapping the tops of his high boots with the riding whip he carried. She saw the young fellow was watching Uncle Dan'l all the while, biting

his lip and occasionally pulling at his light mustache. When all the graves had been visited and the ceremonies had been completed, Uncle the company, immediately coming straight toward the girl, whose face brightened as he approached. "I'm relieved from marchin back to town,

"I'm gettin purty old fur marchin, but I've

alwus done my duty in ev'ry campaign, and

The young man wheeled suddenly and

"Come, Januic, we'll go home now. Them

She took his arm, and they went slowly

ing gaze from the dark eyes of the young

with a golden tinge. little one," he said. Then his eyes fell on the young man in the riding sult, and he abrupt and awkward manner. started a bit, a shadow settling on his face while he went on, lifting his voice a trifle,

an now, Jennie, and I know it ain't long before you'll be thinkin of gettin married. It's natteral-it's natteral. I hope to see ye tied to some good man ere I go to join my comrades who have been mustered out be fore me, which time can't be fur away."

distress. "Please don't talk of that.' ain't so sharp as they used to be, but they saw that young Nat !! ring looking at ye,

"What have you against Nat Loring. uncle?"

record as a brave and loyal soldier." The old man's face darkened and became

he cried: "That sounds very well, but let me tell ous blood in his veins, and why should he-

EVERY HEAD WAS UNCOVERED SAVE ONE. honest!" fellow in the riding suit. Jennie glanced back and saw him looking. The color of

Uncle Dan'l scowled, but spoke no word, only quickening his pace somewhat.

Jennie Brinton was the daughter of Un-Dan'l; but, if this was true, the facts were not public property. lier, who had not even a meager pension to

They lived alone in the little old cottage Among those gathered at the cemetery to ratch the solemn memorial ceremonies was road," the isolation of the place, together beauty, but nothing could conceal the aud rather monotonously, but they seemed

caring little for things beyond the bounds of their tiny world. 'On the night of this Memorial day Uncle Dan'l sat by the open cottage door and

smoked his pipe, the light of the setting sun showing a troubled look on his face, while Jennie moved briskly about the room, attending to her light household duties and humming a bit of a song. All at once the old man removed his pipe. struck it against the edge of the chair to knock out the ashes, straighted up and cleared his throat, speaking with an effort:

"Come here, little one." She approached, a wondering look on her face, for she saw by his manner he had something serious to say. He took her hand and pulled her down beside him. She sat Dan'l saluted the commander and fell out of on the floor, resting her arm on his knee and her head on her arm, while his once sinewy fingers sought her curls, which the last slanting bars of sunlight made bright

> The man hesitated about beginning, but suddenly plunged into his subject in an

"You're gettin to be purty nigh a wom-

"Oh, Uncle Dan'l!" she cried in genuine "I've got to talk of it," was his stubborn retort. "Something I saw today makes me feel it's needful and right. My old eyes little one, in a way that meant a pile-and them same eyes saw ye blush. That's why I feel it's needful to talk now, for I want to

warn yo ag'in any one with the Loring blood in his or her body. Keep clear of that young man, Jennie."

"He's the son of a man who slept at his post and was condemned to be shot." "But was pardoned by the president 'be

cause of his faithful service and splendid still harsher. His voice was not steady as

ye there was a wonderful influence brought to bear on the president to obtain that pardon, or John Loring would have died the death he deserved. His son is a chip of the old block! Don't let him fool ye, little girl! He has money, but there is treacheras he can have the pick of the young Indies in the village-carefor a poor girl like ye?

Oh, Jennie, you must see his love is not "I think you are prejudiced against him. uncle, as you must be against his father.

Nancy Jones told me you and John Loring had trouble over a woman, and"--ripe berries came to her cheeks. Uncle Dan'l arose quickly to his feet, his face working with the anger he could not

suppress. Clinching his hands, he literally grated "Nance Jones is a busybody-a gossip-4 meddlin woman! She had better mind her business and keep her nose out of other folks 'fairs! Mind what I tell ye, Jennie, and steer clear of Nat Loring. If you don't, yo'll regret it as long as ye live." And then he walked out of the cottage, leaving a dis-

mayed and downcast girl behind. and the second s . Spring slipped into summer, and the long warm days of July and August passed away. September came to turn the forest leaves from green to brown and crimson. The smaller song birds had already depart

ed, and in stubble fields the robins were fastened on the young man all the while, as gathering in flocks preparatory to the flight he continued: they would soon take to a milder clime. In

the long dead grass crickets chirped mournfrom ye. I warned her, but ye found a fully, and there was a brooding sadness in way to sneak around and lead her inter dethe smoke blue air. deceivin the best friend she had in the Uncle Dan'l came to the cottage door world. That's like a Loring-they're de-

shaded his eyes with his band and gazed ceptious." "There was no deception intended, Mr. the winding stream disappeared into a grove that had been touched here and there by the lurid brush of Jack Frest. There her hand when you appeared. I was in earwas a troubled look on the old man's face nest, for I love her." "Love her! Bah, bah, baht I know the as he muttered:

"Wonder why Jennie goes over there so kind of blood there is in yer veins. It's often? She don't seem like herself no more; treacherous. If ye think ye love her toacts like she had a secret from me. I don't day, tomorrow ye may think ye love some like it-I don't like it. She oughter know other girl." I'm the best friend she's got in all the world. I'm jest goin over and see if I kin find her." With something like a look of shame on his wrinkled face he took a stout cane from his face now dark as a stormcloud. behind the dosr. Until that present month

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12 "SAT YOU WILL MARRY ME, JENNIE "

he had never carried a cane, but a severe attack of rheumatism came with the first warning of cold weather and forced him to it at last. Away across the hollow he slowly trudg

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ed, finally reaching the grove. The sound of voices came to his ears, causing him to halt and lift a shaking hand to his heart, while his face grew gray. Then he stum-bled forward with almost frantic haste, saddenly coming upon a young man and a girl, who were standing beside a great tree that grew close by the soft flowing stream.

The young man was holding the girl's hands, speaking carnestly, while her head was howed and her eyes were fastened on the ground. These were the words heard by Uncle Dan'l:

"Say you will marry me, Jennie. You have confessed you love me. Say you will marry me, and I will go to your uncle and ask for you." She shook her head, crying out in a fright-

ened voice: "No, no; you must not do that! You don't know Uncle Dan'l! He has forbidden me ever speaking to you, and he would be very angry if he knew I came here to meet you. I feel guilty and wretched every time I have done so, but I can't help it, Nat-I can't help it!"

"What have I ever done to make him feel thus toward me-what has he against me?" cried the young man.

"I'll answer that question!" broke in a hoarse voice as Uncle Dap' suddenly ap-peared before them. "Ye're the son of a man as fergot his duty and alept at his post! That's enough fer Dan'l Brinton. Jumie, come here!"

Pale and trembling, the girl left Nat Lor-ing and advanced to her uncle's side. He took her hand and drew her close, his area

heart. Nat hurried down to the cottage and made his way round to the door, against which the snow had drifted high. He rap-"I hev tried to protec' this little lamb ped again and again, the knock being an-

swered after a time. The door opened, and a white faced ghost of a girl stood there, clinging to the latch for support. She saw him, and her lips moved, but made no sound. He leaped in-Brinton," protested Nat stanchly. "I was wrging her to let me go to you and ask for to the room and caught her in his arms barely in time to keep her from falling.

"Merciful heaven, Jennie!" he gasped. 'What is it? What has happened?" "Uncle Dan'l-he is so ill-I dared not leave him a moment. There are no matches

in the house to build a fire." "And you are nearly perished of cold! This is terrible! Why didn't I come beforef"

"My love is true. It will never change. He disengaged his feet from the snow I will marry her today." "Marry her!" almost shouted Uncle Dan'l, shoes and assisted her to a chair near the bed on which the sick man was lying. In "You a few moments he had a fire built in the marry my little lamb! I'd rather see her dead and buried." Then he almost dragged stove. the girl from the spot, urging her away

"You look hungry, Jennie. I believe you with passionate words and earnest entreaare nearly starved," declared Nat.

"I have not eaten anything for two days," was her confession. "The only food in the house I kept for uncle. We are out of pro-"You may change your mind some day, The old man turned to fling back, "Nev visions, and there was no way of getting more.'

er, sir-never, never!" and the unfortunate lover was left alone by the trysting tree Nat was horrified. On the bed the sick and the murmuring brook. man was muttering deliriously of his army days. He saw the visitor, but did not rec-Winter came, and the little cottage in the

ognize him. hollow was nearly buried beneath the drifts It was late that afternoon when Uncle of snow that blew down from the hills. At Dan'l became himself once more, to find the village doctor by his bed, with Jennie and times the back road was quite abandoned, leaving the old man and the girl shut off Nat close at band. The old soldier looked long and steadily at the young man, and To make matters worse, Uncle Dan'l

then he faintly said: was not very well, for the time was past "I thought it was a dream, but I see ye when he could welcome cold weather and have really come in time to save my poor enjoy it. Still he was brave, and he tried lamb. I've been an old fool, but"-"There, there," broke in the doctor sooth-

ingly; "you must not talk now. It will weaken you."

"I've got to talk now, doctor, or never. I've made my last campaign, and I'm goin to be mustered out right away. The commander in chief will soon give me an hon-orable discharge." Then he turned to Nat and Jennie, motioning them to approach. When they were close by the hed, he went on, his voice growing weaker with each moment:

"I alwus thought the one thing I held against John Loring was that he slept at his post. I thought I had forgot he won the woman who once promised to marry me. But as I lay here I had a vision that told me what a selfish, revengeful old wretch I have been."

The girl's fingers touched his lips, and she whispered entreatingly, "Hush, uncle." "I can't hush-I won't hush," he gasped, a shadow settling on his weary old face. "My strength is goin. Nat, will ye mar-ry my little one? Will ye love and protee' her as if she was yer own life?"

"Heaven knows I will," was the reply. "Then take her. She'll soon need unoth-er to guard her. I've-I've been faithful to-the end-faithful to my duty. I've stood by my post to the last, but now-I'm tired-and I-must-sleep."

With the weeping girl's loving kiss on his lips, Uncle Dan'l closed his eyes in that dreamless slumber that comes when the campaign of life is ended.

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When another Memorial day came around, the fading band of veterans found a new grave on which to place a tiny flag and fragrant flowers. Uncle Dan'l slept not far from where John Loring was buried, and little Jennie, with her husband at ker side, dropped a tear for both. But through the shadows of ther sorrow shone the sunshine of perfect love.

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"I HAD A VISION,"

ward the spot where the winding brooknow icebound and buried by snow-disappeared into the grove, a plaintive sadness in her eyes.

At last the great storm of the winter came on. For four days snow fell steadily, and the wind howled down from the hills. Three days after the storm had ceased Nat Loring came down the back road on snow shoes. He paused where he could see the roof of the cottage in the hollow peeping from a great bank of white. There was no sign of life about the place, not even a trace of smoke rising from the chimney. With a beavy feeling of dread in his