

# TOMMY'S GENERALSHIP

by ROBERT V. HOFFMAN

Illustrations by GEORGE W. WOLTZ

THE CHILDREN had just returned from school, and all customary diversions falling to interest them, they took to arguing. There were three of them—Billy and Tommy, who were brothers, and Johnny, who lived next door. Billy started it.

"Tommy, what you goin' to be when you gets to be a man?" he inquired of his younger brother.

"I'm goin' to be a sod'ger," replied Tommy, proudly.

"I'm goin' to be bigger'n you are Tommy," interposed Johnny confidently. "I'm goin' to be a gen'ral."

"Gee! You can't be a gen'ral afore you is a sod'ger," explained Billy.

"You can, too," replied Johnny defiantly.

"No, you can't, neither," retorted Tommy with equal defiance, and grateful for his brother's assistance. "First, you gets to be a sod'ger; then you gets to be a corporal; then, you gets to be somethin' else; and gen'ral comes last."

"No 't don't," said Johnny stubbornly. "If you's a hero, they put you right in to bein' a gen'ral."

"Yes; but you've got to be a hero first!" declared Tommy, clinching the argument.

But Johnny would n't have it. "I say y' don't have to be anything first but a gen'ral, and I can prove it."

This statement caused considerable merriment on the part of the two brothers. "How y' goin' to prove it," asked Billy.

Johnny took off his coat and hat and threw them down upon the grass. "I'll show you, he said, looking his sternest at Tommy, "I'll fight."

Tommy turned up his nose at him. "Huh!" he said. "That don't prove it. My father says that it's only kids what fight."

"You dassent," said Johnny, rolling up his sleeves. "Ha, ha!—you dassent! Goin' to be a sod'ger, an' afeared to fight."

Billy drew his brother to one side.

"Go on 'n' fight him, Tommy," he pleaded. "You can lick him."

"He's a scared cat," said Johnny, overhearing the remark.

"No, I ain't a scared cat; but I won't fight you. 'Tain't manly to fight," replied Tommy, resolutely.

"How you goin' to be a sod'ger if you don't fight? Sod'gers has got to fight," was Billy's rejoinder.

"Yes, 'n' they's fightin' for something. Sod'gers goes to war an' they fight for their country."

"Oh, well, they's got to learn how to fight!"

"'N they does learn how to fight. They learn how to carry a gun 'n' to shoot, 'n' not to be afeared a bul-

lets, 'n' to die brave."

"Gee, I bet that real sod'gers fights and they's brave! You ain't brave or else you'd fight."

"I ain't afeared; but I ain't goin' to fight. They ain't nothin' to fight for, I tell y'."

"Then, I'll wrestle y'."

"Go ahead, Tommy, that's a fair show. Wrestle 'im," urged his brother, eagerly.

Tommy hung his head and hesitated.

"Nope," he said in the end. "I won't wrestle, neither."

"Gee! what a 'traid cat!" taunted Johnny.

"Ah, go on, Tommy, wrestle him! They ain't nothin' in that. Pop did n't say it was bad to wrestle."

Tommy shook his head, and all efforts to persuade him failed. He only shook his head the harder.

"Nope, won't do it."

The boys were on the point of leaving him in disgust, when he said to them:

"Gee, you fellers is talkin' so much, why don't you wrestle? I'll be umpire."

"It's a go," said Johnny, eagerly. "Come on, Billy, we'll show him that we ain't afeared."

They went at it like young tigers. They pulled and mauled each other, with brutal indifference to clothes. And all the while, Tommy sat on a nearby fence calmly surveying the conflict. At last, after much puffing and blowing, Johnny managed to sent himself on Billy's head. "Down?" he asked, in threatening accent.

"Duh-duh — duh-duh — oooooon!"

Three times the combatants came together, and three times Johnny, who was the taller and heavier, downed his adversary. And when the test was over, both victor and vanquished gloried in Tommy's humiliation.

But Tommy was prepared to meet them with an invincible argument this time.

"Now I've gotcha both," he exclaimed, joyfully. "Gen'ral's don't fight, they leads—See!"



Three times the combatants came together



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