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F. J. WRIGHT, DENTON. | F. J. WRIGHT, DENTON.

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Miss Matilda's Substitute

Sam Dawson's Campaign as a Soldier In the War

By J. L. HARBOUR

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There was not in the whole town of Kent a more motherly looking woman than Matilda Gwynne. She bore no resemblance whatever to the ordinary spinster. She was a large, jolly, warm hearted woman of about fifty years. Never prim nor in the least "fussy" about her dress or anything else, she verified her oft repeated statement that she always took things as they came.

Miss Matilda was one of the most useful persons in Kent. She was one of those capable women who can turn their hands to most anything, and as the spirit of helpfulness was strong within her there was not a day of her life that she did not do some one a good turn, rejoicing that it was her privilege to do so. When the war with Spain became a settled and sorrowful fact Miss Matilda at once became filled with a desire to do something to help.

The spirit of patriotism ran high in her heart, and she was the first person in Kent to run up a flag and to begin the making of comfort bags and mosquito canopies. It was a labor of love and loyalty.

Then she went around with a subscription paper, collecting money for the Volunteer Aid association, and, although Kent was but a small town, Miss Matilda never stopped until she had collected $500. Only she herself knew how much of that sum had come from her own slender purse.

And yet she was not satisfied.

"If I were a man," she said, "I'd enlist quick as a flash, and I'd go as a nurse if I was not so old and so big and fat. I never could stand it down there in that hot climate, for heat always makes me dizzy. And, of course, they'd want experienced nurses. I've nursed most every disease I ever heard of, but I ain't fit for an army nurse for all that. I'd just love to be down there caring for our boys, but I ain't fit, and I'd only be in the way. But us stay to homes needn't be useless."

When the call for volunteers came it filled Miss Matilda with disappointment and indignation because there were no volunteers from the town of Kent.

"I'm ashamed of the place," she said openly. "To think that there isn't a man in this town with patriotism and loyalty enough to respond to his country's call for men to battle for the right. It's disgusting."

"Mebbe you wouldn't want to go if you had a fam'ly depending on you for support," said old Mrs. Lane, to whom Miss Gwynne had thus unburdened herself.

"I would, for," said Miss Matilda stoutly, "I'd have my fam'ly trained so that they'd be plum ashamed of me if I didn't go and so that they'd be willing to make any sacrifice to have me go. I tell you, Kent wouldn't be without a single volunteer if I was a man."

But Kent made no response to even the second call for troops, and Miss Matilda's regret and indignation waxed warmer.

"Well, there's one thing," she said to herself, "if I can't go myself mebbe I can send a substitute. I know what I'll do. I'll offer to support some man's fam'ly if he'll go and put him to the test that way."

This idea took such full possession of her that she let the comfort bag on which she was sewing fall into her lap and began to run over in her mind men who might be willing to volunteer under these conditions, but the number of available men was very small. Indeed, Miss Matilda could not think of even one until she chanced to look out of her sitting room window and saw Sam Dawson spading up a strip in her vegetable garden.

"Why, there's Sam Dawson!" she exclaimed in the spirit of one who has made a joyful discovery. "He's a great, strong fellow, who ought to be a match for any Spaniard in even a hand to hand fight. I could support his wife and two children for $2 a week better than he supports them, and I'd give more than that to tell that I had a substitute fightin' for my country.

"And it might just be the making of him to go to war. Then, again, he might get killed, but if he did he'd be dying for his country, and his fam'ly would have a pension, which would be more cash money to them ev'ry week than Sam brings in."

After a little further reflection Miss Matilda suddenly appeared in her little garden with a corner of her apron thrown over her head and her crisp calico skirts gathered up in her hand.

"How you getting along, Sam?" she asked.

"Well, it *has* kind o' hard," said Sam, in his usual tone of whining complaint.

"I don't know why it should with so much rain as we've had to soften up the ground. Set down on that bench and rest a spell while I talk to you."

Sam obeyed willingly enough, and Miss Matilda sat down beside him.

"Sam," she said abruptly, "why don't you volunteer?"

"Huh?"

"Why don't you show the people of Kent that at least one man in the town has a little patriotism and go and fight for your country?"

Sam grinned. Then he said, "I got my fam'ly to s'port."

"Well, you don't half do it," said Miss Matilda bluntly. "Your wife takes in washing, and maybe she'd be willing to take in more if you went to war."

"No, she wouldn't. She hates to wash even her own things. I got to stay to home an' s'port my fam'ly."

"You would go if you were sure that your fam'ly would be well provided for during your absence?"

"I might be absent forever if one o' them Spanishers got a good dig at me."

"Well, you would have died in the service of your country, and then there would be the pension for your wife and children."

"That wouldn't do me no good. But then," he added, after a moment's reflection, "mebbe I could manage to git disabled just enough to draw a good big pension my own self."

"Sam Dawson, I'm ashamed of you!"

"Why?"

"For not having any more real patriotism than that. If I were a man and went to war I wouldn't accept a pension if I got all my legs and arms shot off. I couldn't feel that I'd given them to my country if I took pay for them. But, truly, Sam, I do wish our town could have at least one volunteer in the war. If you'll come out like a man and go, Sam, I'll be responsible for the support of your fam'ly while you're gone."

The man looked up with real interest in his flabby, florid face.

"You're such a big strong fellow, Sam, and such a sure shot with a gun you ought to make a good soldier. I'd go if I could, but as I can't I'd like to send you as my substitute, and, as I say, I'll see to it that your wife and children are provided for while you are gone. You think the matter over and let me know tomorrow."

The next issue of the Kent Clarion contained the following notice:

"We are pleased to announce that our fellow citizen, Mr. Samuel K. Dawson, has decided to respond to Uncle Sam's latest call for volunteers. This will give our town at least one soldier boy at the front. Hurrah for Sam!"

The notice gave Miss Matilda great pleasure. She made Sam the nicest comfort bag of all. Her enthusiasm ran high when she saw Sam on board the train, bound for the recruiting office in B., fifty miles distant.

"You must write and let me know what regiment you are put in and all about it. And if you should be in a battle you must write a full account of it for the Clarion. I hope that you'll

"A PRETTY MAJOR GENERAL YOU ARE," SAID MATILDA WITH SCORN.

distinguish yourself so that the whole town will turn out to meet you when you come home."

Two days later the following brief communication from her substitute came to Miss Matilda on a postal:

Gott hear awl rite. Hav not ben assined to anny Rigiment yit by the recrooting offis. Awl well. i may sale for Kuba befor i git time to rite agin. If so, will rite from there.

"Dear me!" said Miss Gwynne on receipt of this information. "He will have to brush up on his spelling before he goes to sending letters to the Clarion. But I guess that there is many a good soldier who cannot spell."

Days and weeks passed without bringing any word from the substitute.

"But that is not to be wondered at, irregular as the mails are now between here and Cuba," Miss Gwynne said to Mrs. Dawson, who said that "Sam never was no hand to write letters, nohow."

Miss Gwynne gave Mrs. Dawson $5 a week for her support and the support of her two children. As this was about $3 a week more than Sam had ever brought in Mrs. Dawson confided to her most intimate friends that she noped that the war would be long.

Affluent as she now was, Mrs. Dawson added a long desired green plush album and lace curtains to her possessions, and her children blossomed out in blue and pink silk dresses, very flimsy as to texture and very lavish as to trimming. A white silk parasol and a pink zephyr shawl partly satisfied her own aesthetic longings, although she declared that if Sam got killed and she got a big pension her neighbors would see her "rigged out fit to kill."

Weeks passed and Miss Gwynne received no tidings from her substitute. She scanned the war columns of the newspapers eagerly, and when the first list of killed and wounded was published she almost feared to find Sam's name. When Hobson sank the Merrimac in the entrance to Santiago harbor Miss Matilda said:

"If Sam had only done that how small it would have made the stay-at-homes here in Kent feel, and what lasting honor it would have brought to the town! I do hope that he will do something to make even that unpatriotic and addlepated wife proud of him. They say that actual conflict develops wonderful courage and bravery in men one wouldn't expect to be possessed of much of either quality. I hope Sam will come home a major general."

Sam had been gone three months and no news of his promotion from the ranks had reached Miss Gwynne. Indeed she had not heard from him at all. One day she went out to the suburbs of the town, where the Dawsons occupied a dilapidated old house of three rooms, in which disorder ran rampant. It was Mrs. Dawson's argument that "if a body cleaned things up they jess got dirty ag'in, so what was the good of cleanin'? It wa'nt no use at all."

Holding to this conviction, Mrs. Dawson's domestic labors were by no means exhaustive, and the house was in an appalling state of disorder, loathsome to one of Miss Matilda's orderly instincts. Had she not felt that she was talking to a possible major general's wife she would have given Mrs. Dawson a piece of her mind regarding the condition of the house.

Holding this desire in check, she said:

"I s'pose you've heard nothing from Sam?"

"No'm, I ain't had a line. Geraldine, you keep away from that there bed!"

This last remark was sharply addressed to Mrs. Dawson's daughter of five years, who was lounging around a bed in the corner of the room.

Heedless of her mother's admonition Geraldine kept close to the bed, and, suddenly dropping to her hands and knees on the floor, she cried out shrilly and gleefully:

"Peekaboo, daddy!"

"Here, stop that!" cried Mrs. Dawson threateningly, darting forward and grasping the child by the arm. But Geraldine was rebellious, and she clung to the bedstead, crying out shrilly:

"I want to play peekaboo with daddy! Daddy, daddy! Can't I play peekaboo with you, daddy?"

The child tried to crawl under the bed, but Mrs. Dawson grasped her retreating figure by the ankle and dragged her back, saying angrily:

"What possesses you to act so?"

"I'll find out," said Miss Gwynne, with grim determination on her face and fire in her eye. Striding across the room she grasped the bedstead firmly by the footboard and rolled it away from the wall. There, close to the wall, lay Miss Matilda's substitute!

Sam sat up in a corner, abashed and frightened, with Miss Matilda's tall, gaunt form towering over him.

She stared at him in silence for a moment and then said, with withering scorn:

"A pretty major general you are!"

Sam grinned foolishly.

"I would grin if I were you, Sam Dawson!" said Miss Matilda, with increasing scorn and indignation. "Now, you get up there and give an account of yourself or I'll have you arrested for obtaining money under false pretenses. I will as sure as shootin'!"

Sam's account of himself is best told in Miss Gwynne's own words, as she gave full vent to her indignation when she reached home and unburdened herself to a friend whom she found waiting to see her.

"The miserable creature never even tried to enlist," she said hotly. "I made him own up that he didn't! He fell in with some creatures as trifling and shiftless as himself there in B., and if they didn't put off up the country on a hunting and fishing jaunt! Yes, they did! I should think from Sam's looks and what he owned up to that they lived like a lot o' gypsies, and that just suited Sam!

"Then he traipsed off visiting a lot of his worthless kin here and there. He's been for the past three weeks visiting some cousins within five miles of here, and it's my belief that he was getting ready to light out again when I caught him at home, hiding under the bed. He couldn't have got a much worse scorching in the war than I gave him, and he'll never hear the last of it from me! I'm ashamed to think that I live in a town that hasn't patriotism enough in it to send even one volunteer to the war. But it'll be one while before I send another substitute!"

CURIOUS HERMIT CRABS.

They Keep Housemaids, and Also Use Sponges For Protection.

It has been said that crabs are as artful as "a barrow load of monkeys," and no one who has read Professor Edward Step's "Messmates; A Book of Strange Companionships In Nature," will deny that there is considerable truth in the remark. Amazing indeed are some of the revelations which the professor makes regarding crabs.

He relates, for instance, how the common hermit crab actually keeps a housemaid to clean out his house. When he first starts life this particular species of crab hunts for some large shellfish's shell in which he can live at ease, rent free. He usually chooses a large whelk shell and introduces a large seaworm, belonging to what is known as the "nereis" family and which grows to a length of six or eight inches, to keep the interior of the shell clean. The crab feeds heartily on sea creatures that wander carelessly into the shell and throws the indigestible parts of them about the floor. The nereis worm promptly consumes these remains and keeps the shell as clean as a new pin.

The artfulness of this crab, too, is strikingly illustrated by the ingenious manner in which he protects himself against the large fish which look upon him as an excellent article of food. Sometimes he induces a sponge to grow on his shell. Sponges in a living condition give out a strong odor, which is distinctly unpleasant to fish, and even a dogfish will not attack a crab protected in this manner.

Two Kinds of Snobs.

An interesting sense history is that of the word snob, a term of obscure origin, in its earliest use, in 1871, meaning a shoemaker or cobbler. Now there is a distinction between the English and the American use of snob—a distinction due to the influence of aristocratic as compared with democratic traditions. An English snob is a man who falls short of the perfect aristocrat through a taint of democratic vulgarity. An American snob is a man who falls short of the perfect democrat through a taint of aristocratic exclusiveness.—New York Post.

Canalboat Travel Before Railroads.

So prodigiously good was the eating and drinking on board these sluggish but most comfortable canalboats that there are legends extant of an English traveler who, coming to Belgium for a week and traveling in one of these vessels, was so delighted with the fare there that he went backward and forward from Ghent to Bruges all the rest of his life.—From Timbs' "English Eccentrics."

UNDER THE OCEAN

Changes In the Sea Floor From Shore to Shore.

THE BIG MID-ATLANTIC RIDGE.

It Starts at Iceland and Bisects the Ocean Down Almost to Cape Horn. In Places It Rises Above the Surface, Forming Groups of Islands.

A sketch of the "landscape" of the ocean bed is given by Dr. A. E. Shipley in an article in the Edinburgh Review:

"The passengers and the crew of a liner racing over the surface of the Atlantic are apt to imagine that under them is a vast layer of water of varying depth sparsely inhabited by a few fish. As a matter of fact, the whole of this great ocean is teeming with life. If instead of taking ship we could take to the water and walk across the bed of the Atlantic to America, starting from the shores of western Europe, we should in effect be traveling through a succession of new countries. Not only would the surrounding physical conditions vary as we advanced, but the animal and plant life would vary in correlation with the altering physical conditions.

"Walking farther and farther toward the depths of the Atlantic, we should soon lose all sight of the algae, and the shallow water fish—the plaice and sole, whiting, skates, dogfish and others and cod—would give way to the megrim and the hake. The sea floor would gradually change from rock or gravel or stones to sands and ultimately to mud or oozes of various tints, their original colors often modified by the action of the decomposition of organic particles in them and on them. All these finer deposits are derived from the neighboring land and are blown seaward by offshore winds or washed down by rains and streams and carried out to the sea by rivers.

"The distance to which fine matter in suspension may be carried is very great. The Kongo is said to carry its characteristic mud as far out to sea as 600 miles, and the Ganges and the Indus as far as 1,000 miles.

"Except in the neighborhood of such great rivers a subaqueous traveler would soon pass beyond what Sir John Murray has called the 'mud line,' a line that limits the terrigenous deposits everywhere surrounding dry land. Having reached this limit, we must proceed warily, for at the mud line, at an average depth of a hundred fathoms, we shall find ourselves at the edge of the continental shelf, that rim which extends seaward to a varying distance from all land areas, the rim on which Great Britain rests. Beyond lies the continental slope, a precipice more or less abrupt and more or less high, descending by steep declines or terraced cliffs until depths of 2,000 fathoms are reached.

"The Atlantic, compared with the other great oceans, has an unusually large area of comparatively shallow water. Of its total area 27.5 per cent is covered by water less than 1,000 fathoms deep; 18 per cent lies between 1,000 and 2,000 fathoms and 47 per cent between 2,000 and 3,000 fathoms; the remaining 7.5 per cent is still deeper.

"At the foot of the continental slope lies an illimitable plain of a uniform dull, grayish buff color, flat and featureless as the desert, and only diversified by an occasional as yet uncovered rock or wreck or the straight line of a recently laid cable. This plain continues with scarcely a change in scenery or in level until we approach the great mid-Atlantic ridge. As Bruce has shown, this ridge, which roughly bisects the Atlantic, extends from Iceland as far south as fifty-three degrees of south latitude, with a slight and quite inexplicable break just under the equator. The ridge runs almost parallel with the eastern contour of North and South America, which, in turn, as the ordinary map will show, roughly corresponds with the western contour of Europe and Africa. From time to time the ridge rises above the surface of the water, as in the Azores group, St. Paul's rocks, Ascension, Tristan da Cunha and Gough island.

"Having ascended the eastern and descended the western slope of this mid-Atlantic ridge, we should again traverse plains of grayish ooze far more extensive than any level land tract known to geographers, and as we approached the American coast we should gradually pass through, in reverse order, the zones of life traversed when leaving Europe. On the eastern coast of America the slope is much more gradual than on the western coast of southern Europe and Africa."

EGGS BY THE YARD.

Korea Also Produces Oysters That Weigh Ten Pounds Each.

While in the orient a correspondent had occasion to call on friends who lived near Seoul, the principal city of Korea. He tells the following story:

One morning my hostess, while giving orders for the necessary things from the market for the day, mentioned four yards of eggs. I accompanied the steward that day on his marketing trip, and when the eggs were asked for the grocer reached down in a barrel and brought out the end of a large straw rope. He measured off the required length on the counter, just as a dry goods store clerk would measure off cloth, rolled it up and put it in the basket without a smile. The eggs were inside of this hollow straw rope, with a string tied on the outside of it between each egg. This effectually protected the eggs from being broken while handling.

Another day my hostess ordered two "small" oysters for dinner. This order caused me to wonder a little, for I knew that there would be seven to dine, besides the servants, but when the oysters arrived all was explained, for one weighed four and a half pounds, and the other five pounds. On inquiry I was informed that some of the oysters on the northern side of Korea weigh as much as ten pounds.—Christian Science Monitor.