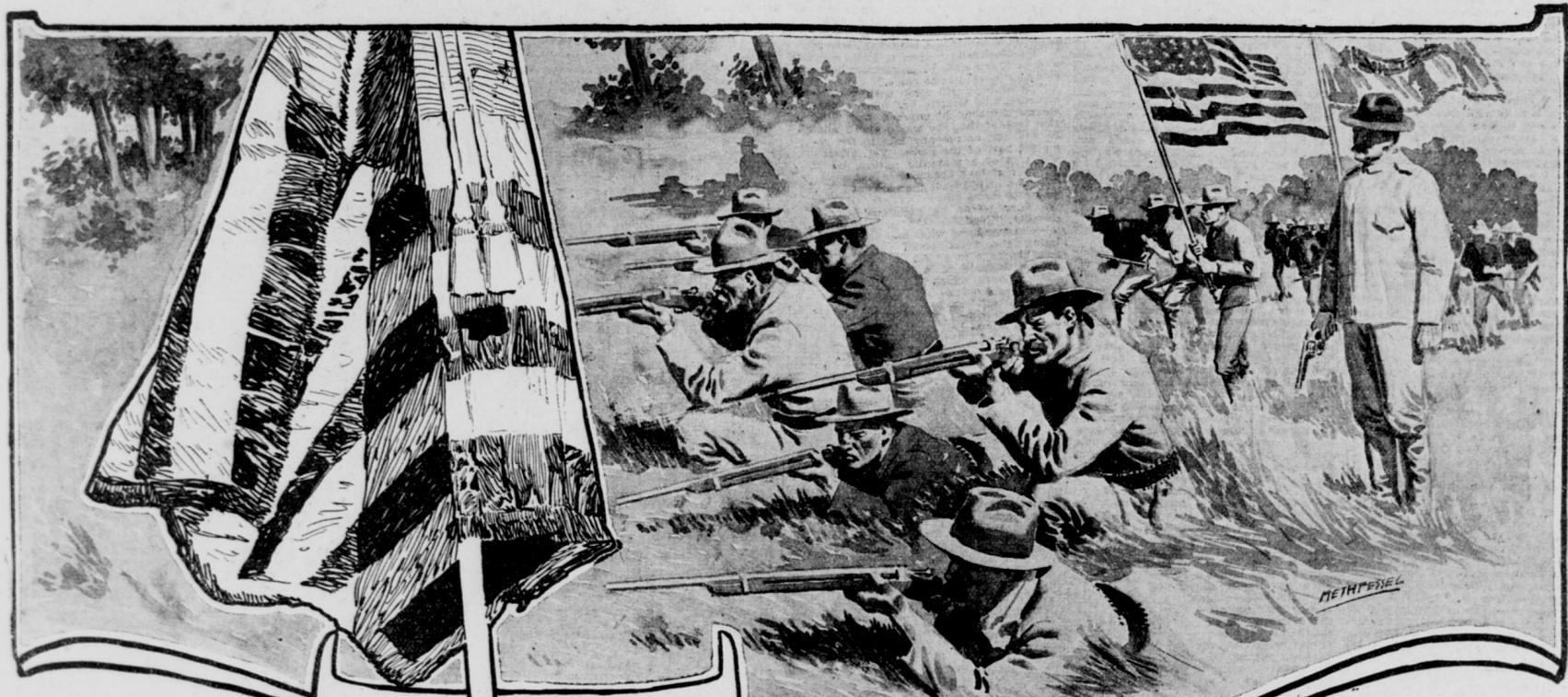


Was a Major and High Official in the Service of the United States,

Now Color Sergeant in the Forty-Sixth Regiment



there will be an infringement of the rigid military rule. The ties of so strong a friendship are not easily broken, even though they conflict with the rigid discipline of the army.

What James Robert Wasson has been doing during the period that has elapsed since he was major and paymaster until he enlisted in the army as a private savors much of the usual career of an unusually intellectual professional man. He has practiced law and has been occupied with civil engineering pursuits in his native State. The result is that he is wealthy. In those sixteen years he has amassed a fortune of upward of \$100,000. He has left the luxuries of a beautiful home for the hardships of the humble soldier. "A good name is better than great riches." It is his name he wishes to cleanse from the stain of dishonor—his wealth could not do it—so he has left it all behind and goes forth to face the privations of the lowly soldier.

As the transport steamed out I saw him standing there, motionless and grave, among the restless shouting soldiers, fondly supporting the fluttering alpen color, in his eyes the humble hope and written on his face the courage to struggle up from the wreckage of his reputation and the disgrace of dishonor to the precious attainment of worthy service and an honorable discharge.

NAN BYRNBEE.

James Robert Wasson, West Point Graduate and Capitalist, Once Dismissed From the Army, Tells Why He Re-enlists as a Private.

JAMES ROBERT WASSON.



WHEN the United States transport City of Sydney steamed out from the Folsom street dock the other day there was a great waving of hats and handkerchiefs, and the usual sound of a thousand leave-takings—some earnest and gay, some sad and sorrowful. High up in the ropes, over the rails of both decks, and from the towering masts the restless blue-clad figures waved and shouted, and the company band played the strains of a national air—but among all the noise and flutter of the upper deck there was one silent and motionless figure, standing alone and grave beside the great silken flag of the regiment. There was none to bid him good-bye and none to whom he felt constrained to say good-bye.

It was the figure of Sergeant James Robert Wasson, the color bearer of Company M, Forty-sixth Regiment.

Not always has Sergeant Wasson's military title been so simple. The man who one month ago enlisted as a private in the United States army at Washington is sixteen years older than the man who was major and paymaster of the same army in the year 1883—much older, much graver and much wiser—but the same man.

The upper deck of the transport was figuratively alive with soldiers, and I had much difficulty in finding him. A kindly corporal sought him out for me and conducted me to where he stood, motionless and alone, wrapped in his own thoughts and looking out to the sea.

He started when I spoke to him, and hesitated.

"Yes," he said, "I am James Robert Wasson. I suppose you want to write me up. I have been pretty well written up already, I believe." He smiled sadly.

It is said that he is 53. He looks 45, and his steady gray eyes have a way of silencing thoughts of his past—that past which rises against his future and kills all hope of military achievement with the poison of a dishonor and disgrace that is deemed in the ethics of the military profession unpardonable.

"No," said he, "I am not entertaining any thoughts of beginning at the bottom of the ladder again; I have about done with ascending and descending ladders."

Sergeant Wasson offers no excuse for his past and makes no effort at a defense. He speaks of his past as a thing unalterable and therefore to be dismissed from discussion.

"You can say, since my motives are questioned, that I have enlisted—well, just for the purpose of serving honorably and

getting an honorable discharge. I want to leave the army with a better record than I did before."

The sergeant alludes to his repentance of the past only in speaking of the hum-

ble hopes of the future. The proud and sensitive nature, with whatever of turbulent feeling there may be beneath the calm exterior, and the hesitancy and delicacy with which he avoids direct allu-

sions are the only evidence of his inner self. The unmistakable bearing of the West Point graduate and the reticence of Sergeant Wasson nip pointed questions in the bud, though a kindly manner invites interest.

The photographer was taking a snapshot of the color guard, and he was called to join the group. As he stood there, his splendid physique outlined against the rough background of ship masts and ropes, his appearance was strikingly military and soldierly. It was not then difficult to identify Sergeant Wasson of the Forty-sixth with Colonel J. R. Wasson, chief engineer of the Imperial army of Japan, the incumbent of the chair of civil engineering in the Imperial University of Tokio and a member of the Imperial Order of Merit. In place of the simple three-stripe sleeve of his uniform, it was easy to imagine the imperial decoration of the Rising Sun.

It was less easy to think of him as the man who, sixteen years ago, proved faithless to a national trust—as the inventor of the cunning but unavailing trick with which he endeavored to ward off the punishment of his crime. It was this man who, sixteen years ago, started the occupants of a Texas train with the news that his satchel, containing \$25,000 in Government funds, had been stolen from under his berth. He and his clerk left the train, telegraphed the officers, organized a posse and retraced the railroad track to find the satchel, safely locked on top but cut open at the sides, and the treasures gone.

The fever of the gambling table had got into the brain of Major Wasson, and he had been startling all Galveston with his reckless ventures; so the story was doubted. He was tried, court-martialed and dismissed from the army and sentenced to two years in prison, which he served.

That, they say, was how a military career in the armies of two governments, meteoric in its brilliancy, was ended in disgrace and dishonor sixteen years ago.

But the end was not yet. An appeal was made to Secretary Root a month ago in Wasson's behalf, and he was so convinced of the sincerity of the man's contrition, and admired his pluck and ambition to such an extent that Wasson has been permitted to enlist as a private in the army from which he had been ignominiously dismissed, with the quiet and unostenta-

tious purpose of "serving honorably and getting an honorable discharge."

The Forty-sixth have already recognized his personality and his evident ability. Within the month he has been promoted to the rank of sergeant, with the special honor of being a member of the color guard. He sailed with his regiment on the City of Sydney.

When questioned as to his friendship with the son of General Grant, the sergeant grew communicative.

"We were classmates at West Point, and we have always been close friends. The papers are wrong in their idea that I helped him through the academy and coached him through his examinations—they are wrong, entirely wrong. It was not so; we were classmates and friends, that was all."

Sergeant Wasson is modest and loyal to his friend. It is a matter of tradition at the academy that Fred Grant was as dull as he was good-natured, and that Wasson as a cadet was at the head of the school and was an intellectual and bright as his friend was dull; it is a matter of tradition also that Fred Grant was patiently aided and pulled through his four years at the academy by his devoted friend, and tradition adds also that it was through the influence of Sergeant Wasson that the professors of the academy were enabled to compromise the matter with their consciences and grant the son of the President his diploma.

"Is it not true that you were the protégé and particular friend of General Grant himself?"

"The general had the kindness to interest himself in me. It was through his influence that I entered the Japanese army—in fact it was upon his advice and by his kindness that I was enabled to go to Japan at first. It was not done through the gratitude of the general for my supposed kindness to Fred—that is absurd."

Sergeant Wasson has a mother away back in Iowa, he told me, with tears in his eyes, and there was a look of tenderness on his handsome face. When I told him he had been photographed he asked me to send one of the photos to her.

"She is the dearest old lady, with white hair—"

The sergeant suddenly broke off, sighed and gave me the address—"Mrs. Julia A. Wasson, Stanhope, Iowa." He comes of a good old German family of Iowa and he

is proud of the fact.

Sergeant Wasson also had a wife. He met her in Japan—the daughter of John Bingham, special envoy to the Mikado's court from the United States. The romance in the sergeant's life was short; the bride he brought from the Orient died soon after they returned to America. It was the one romance of his life, though he was a man very popular in the society circles to which his high position gave him open sesame. He speaks very tenderly of her.

"She died before while I was still in the army," he said, gently fondling the silken flag the honor of bearing which is accorded him.

It is odd and pathetic to see the honest pleasure and appreciation evinced by the man in the humble honors of the present in comparison with the reckless carelessness with which he threw away the high offices of the past.

"It is considered a special honor," he told me, "to be appointed color sergeant. It is a privilege any man should be proud of to be allowed to bear the colors." And he added with simple pride, "I was promoted sergeant immediately after I enlisted."

Gently straightening the folds of the flag he spoke again of his hopes of honorable and active service.

Among the thousand passengers on the City of Sydney there are many who are ambitious of military distinction, but there are none to whom their ambition is more precious than that of Sergeant Wasson.

Besides the friend of his youth, who is now Brigadier General Grant, Sergeant Wasson expects to meet many military friends in the Philippines, for he was widely known and universally liked. Colonel Walter Schuyler, who is in command of the Forty-sixth Regiment, and who sailed with them to the Philippines, is an old classmate. He will experience many bitter humiliations in his self-enforced service. It is a serious offense for an officer of the army to speak with one who has been dismissed from military position and from the army under the circumstances which attended the sergeant's dismissal, unless upon matters of an official nature. Just what will happen when the lowly sergeant meets the brigadier general is a matter of interesting conjecture, but it is safe for one to predict that

An Alaskan Home.

An Alaskan hut is not the worst place in the world—far from it. Its interior consists of a square floor of earth flanked on all sides by two wide ledges rising one above the other like a terrace. On the lower one rest the cooking, weaving and fishing utensils, the knives and needles, pots and pans. On the upper ledge, with much display of wonderfully woven blankets, are the beds. In the center of the room glows the fire, the smoke groping its way out of a hole in the roof. After the day's work is done and the stomachs of both people and dogs are full, the family gathers around the fire. Facing the door sits the father, next him the mother; on one hand the sons and on the other the daughters, even to the third and fourth generation, it may be. Beyond these are the servants or slaves. Each has his place and takes it as a matter of course. Without, in the darkness, the dogs cut their teeth about the door and howl. The mysterious and ungodly scenes are wild and fearful. The snow-capped mountains, with their illimitable glaciers, lie just beyond. The shafts of the northern lights dart through the sky, like the harpoons of a titan, with incredible celerity. Is it strange that, amid scenes so wild and fearful, superstitions also wild and fearful spring into existence? Or can one be surprised that in an unlettered country the story-tellers are of mighty power and tell tales that frighten the children till they scramble to the safe shelter of their mother's arms? When the family sings in strange broken yet rhythmical measures, the dogs howl louder than before, and the women sway their squat bodies back and forth unceasingly, keeping their hands occupied meanwhile at their tasks of weaving or braiding. The men carve their spoons or cut curious figures from the black slate. The sutler for the hand of one of the daughters enters slyly and takes a seat with the sons. No protest is made. The father and mother go on with their little tasks, the young girls giggle after the fashion of girls the world over. And the sutler, thus unrepulsed, contents himself, thinking his cause won. The oldest among them chants some old folk-song, and the father rises. It is the signal for good-nights. The ashes are spread over the fire, and by the light of a few fishes' tails, dried for the lighting, the family goes to bed, forgetful of crashing bergs, of the mysterious aurora, of the mountains where the snow lies forever and away. So is home made anywhere where the spirit of home exists.

—Self-Culture Magazine for November.

Happy Idea of a Cage to Keep the Children Safe.

M. R. SHELBY MARTIN, the banker, is certainly a man of resources, and as the patter song in "Mikado" runs, he "has devised a plan whereby young men may best be stended," that is, very young men. The young man who has developed all this latent talent in Mr. Martin is his hopeful son and heir, John Westley Martin, aged about 8 years.

Mr. Martin's troubles began when he gave up his comfortable home in this city and moved to Oakland for the winter. His family physician said the baby must have more fresh air and a chance to root in the dirt, otherwise he could not answer for his health, and as the baby did not seem to be abnormally rugged, Mr. Martin, like a devoted husband and a doting father, moved to Oakland. He rented a swell flat on Eighth street and settled down for a few months of peace and quiet, where the chirp of the cricket and the croak of the bullfrog harmonize sweetly with the hum of the trolley car.

Mr. Martin found everything just as the obliging real estate man had promised. The climate was all right, and the dirt for the boy to play in was there in abundance. Then there was the convenience of having a trolley car pass the door every five minutes.

The baby's health began to improve rapidly; not so with his parents, for they were gradually being worn to shreds by constant watching. During business hours Mrs. Martin and the housemaid had to stand watch and watch, as they do on board ship, in order to rescue the boy from under the wheels of the trolley car, and when Mr. Martin came home in the afternoon he had to stand his watch. This brought things to a point where patience ceased to be a virtue, and the head of the family set his wits on some scheme to overcome this constant worry. He consulted all the neighbors without success; then he tried the commuters. One crusty old bachelor advised him to tie the boy to a tree. Sheriff Martin said he would lend the banker a pair of leg irons, with the further suggestion that it might be a good idea to place a ring-bolt in the sidewalk, then fasten the irons to the ring with a chain just long enough to keep the boy clear of the track. But somehow none of these suggestions seemed to please Mr. Martin, and Mrs. Martin considered them just brutal.

One day, in order to give Mrs. Martin a much needed rest, her husband said he would take the boy to the circus, and while enjoying the wonders of the managerie they finally arrived in front of the monkey cage. Of course the lit-

tle boy clapped his hands in delight when he beheld the playful beasts. "Oh, papa, he cried, 'see what a nice little playhouse the monkeys have, and they can't get out on the railroad track, so they never get whipped for running away.'"

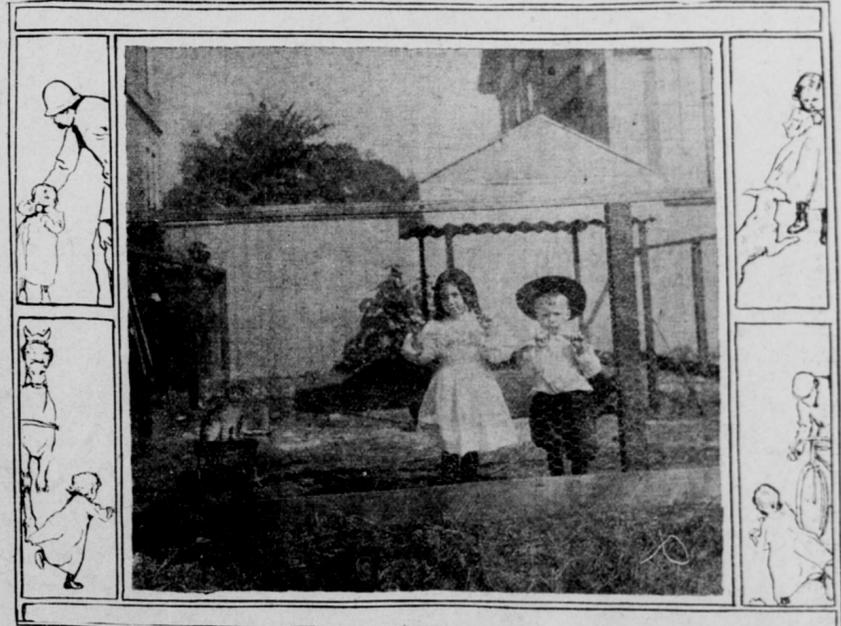
"Lucky star! Surely there was an inspiration. As soon as the show was over Mr. Martin hurried home and informed his wife that he had struck the correct solution for their problem at last. "Never mind what it is," he exclaimed with sup-

pressed excitement; "just tell me where I can find a carpenter. I will show you in the morning what I mean to do."

When the carpenter came he was ordered to build a simple monkey cage in the front yard. Mr. Meyers, a neighbor, said he would look into that matter as soon as it became known to him, for he, too, had a child who was taking a try at disputing the right of way with the trolley company at least ten times a day. He thought he would build one himself. "Never mind that," said Mr. Martin; "it

is to be 10 by 12, and quite large enough for both children and the monkey."

The very day after the circus had visited Oakland Mr. Martin's idea, that protection like charity should begin at home, was a working reality, and now every pleasant morning John Westley Martin and Miss Susie Meyers, aged respectively three and four, are carefully locked in the monkey cage, there to remain until their parents think proper to release them, as the reader may see by the photograph.



A Playground That Holds the Youngsters Secure From the Trolley Wheels.

How I Have Spent Sixty-Three Thanksgiving Days at Sea.

Continued from Page Twenty-one.

mile off the water boiled like a cauldron. The wind was whirling and bringing the water up ten feet high and coming right toward us. I ordered, 'Let go all the halyards.' The sails all came down, but the wind put them right back again and lifted my bowsprit and broke it off, and the foremast was broken in three places. Then the mainmast went. I had nothing left standing but my mainmast. I was standing aft and never felt a breath of wind. She went all forward of the mainmast and took everything she struck overboard.

"In the midst of the confusion the Chinese cook managed to get aft. He rushed into the cabin and bawled out at my wife: 'Madam, masts all gone; sails all gone; turkey all gone; everything gone; no dinner—no nothing.' My wife hurried on deck and found that the Chinaman had told the truth."

Captain Holmes recounted his Thanksgiving reminiscences not as vaguely remembered dreams by any means, but he lived them again with the enthusiasm of long ago.

"Superstitious? Oh, yes, of course; all sailors are superstitious." Then, with an

air of reluctance, "but do you know, there is something really queer about one of their whims, and that is the 'black cat' bugbear."

"We were off Montevideo, near the La Platte. We had been becalmed there for five days. I had a black kitten aboard, about which the sailors had done a deal of talking. One day some gulls were flying around the ship and the kitten jumped into the channel in close pursuit. Suddenly a bird darted near her, she gave a little spring and over she went. No effort was made to save her; they were all glad to see her go and I knew nothing about it until half an hour later, when a spanking breeze sprung up and some one said: 'We'll have luck now; the cat's overboard.' Sure enough, we had it, too, after crossing 50 south in the Atlantic we made San Francisco in forty-six days—a record that since then has never been equalled—and the sailors claim it was the hoodoo cat which becalmed us."

Captain Holmes laughed heartily at the popular superstition, then suddenly grew grave. "Can you imagine," he continued, "bearing your ship down upon a dismasted ship—a wreck with her crew