

WIGGLESBY'S WOON.

A LOVE STORY.
By Will S. Gidley.

I. When a man has lived to the mature age of 40 outside the pale of matrimony and during the last half dozen years of that period has scarcely looked at a woman, there is very little hope for him.

Such at least was the case with Hezekiah Wigglesby. Whenever Wigglesby saw himself in his mirror, which happened once a day, when he shaved himself (not being vain or a woman, Wigglesby had no occasion to consult it often), he had a deplorable habit of addressing congratulatory remarks to his reflection in the glass on the fact that they—he and the shadow—were "able to get along without the silly sex," as Wigglesby alliteratively expressed it.

I use the term deplorable, and it certainly is, deeply so, when an otherwise sensible man is confined to talking to himself in the glass and trying to deceive himself into the belief that he is a perfectly happy and contented old bachelor when such a thing is an utter anomaly and impossibility.

Wigglesby knew at the bottom of his heart that the life he was leading was unsatisfactory and that his deplorable confessions were a hollow mockery and a farce, and one thing more than all else that caused him to realize this was an occasional glimpse which was vouchsafed him of a plump young widow who had recently moved into the roomy old farm house across the way.

For years the place opposite had been

hand extended toward him the smile on his face suddenly vanished and he bowed his head with "Don't want anything today, miss. I never buy from—"

"But I don't want you to buy it," she laughed. "This is your tack hammer, and my sister said to tell you she was ever and ever so much obliged to me." Stammered Wigglesby. "I—I—took you for one of the confounded—er—I, Lord, why didn't you sister come with it herself?"

And with this somewhat lame and ingenuous admission to his attempted apology Wigglesby seized the tack hammer and fled, leaving his astonished caller still standing at the door.

When Maud Maxwell (for such was the young woman's name) upon her return laughing recalled her sister's prediction of his interview with Mr. Wigglesby, she wound up by saying: "Don't you think he must be just a trifla cracked, Kitty?"

And with a smile of superior intelligence the astute Kitty (otherwise known as Mrs. Kate Wilsey) dryly observed:

"I guess he is, but no more cracked than any old bachelor is."

From which it is evident that the plump widow did not have a very exalted opinion of a man who preferred to "flock by himself."

But to return to Wigglesby. For several days after the hammer episode he spent the most of his time drifting aimlessly about his houses and grounds and casting furtive and frequent glances across the way to see if

the plump widow herself came round the corner.



THE PLUMP WIDOW HERSELF CAME ROUND THE CORNER.

what is known as "an abandoned farm," but it had lately come into the possession of Mrs. Wilsey, a substantial and pleasant looking widow, who, in company with a younger sister, had moved over from the city to live in the fascinating and romantic and profitable pursuit of chicken raising.

Until they came Wigglesby's daily vision had been undisturbed by the sight of a woman, save when one happened to drive by, and in that case there was no law compelling Wigglesby to look at her—and he usually didn't.

Wigglesby attended to himself after a fashion of his own, which was certainly original, though it probably would bother him some to secure patent on it.

He had a way of making a hole in his statue, so the nobodys earth except Wigglesby's could tell what end was intended for the head and which the foot, and sometimes he couldn't. And when it came to baking flapjacks, a dish of which he was very fond, Wigglesby usually distributed the dough impartially over the top of the stove, the griddle, and the floor, so that when he took the griddle, carrying the mush the kitchen looked as if the battle of Bunker Hill had been fought over again on the spot with dough for ammunition.

It was one of those interesting occasions when Wigglesby was struggling with a ravenous appetite of flapjacks. I mean—that he received his first call from Mrs. Wilsey, a plump widow across the way. He had a griddle full of flapjacks baked on one side, and he was making a heroic effort to turn them over, using a table knife—but that pose, so they could bake on the other, when a pleasant face suddenly appeared in the half-opened doorway, and a musical voice said:

"Excuse me; this is Mr. Wigglesby, I presume."

The flapjack which Wigglesby was in the act of eating fell sprawling with a thud to the floor, and poor Wigglesby turned all the colors of the rainbow at once and incoherently stammered:

"N—n—no; I m—mean yes, I'm M—Mr. Wigglesby, I should say, Wigglesby; and—and—"

"And I'm Mrs. Wilsey, your new neighbor, and I can't find my tack hammer, and I would like to borrow yours a little while if you don't mind lending it. But I see I'm interrupting your work, and—pardon me, but your flapjacks are turning. Allow me to turn them for you, and I'll be gone." "I need not say, but you really need a—" "O—no; I don't!" interrupted Wigglesby hastily. "Really I—"

"Why, yes you do, Mr. Wigglesby," calmly went on the plump widow; "you need a regular partner, and you would find it ever a much handier than a knife for such work."

"Gosh! that was a narrow escape, I thought she was going to say a—wife," muttered Wigglesby to himself, as he dashed out of the room in search of his tack hammer.

"With you very much," said Mrs. Wilsey with a grateful smile, when Wigglesby returned with the required article. "It is real kind of you to lend your hammer, and I will be sure to bring it back the minute I'm through using it."

"You're welcome, I'm sure; and—then there's no hurry about bringing it back," Wigglesby managed to stammer, as his fair caller took her departure with the hammer.

After she was gone Wigglesby was unaccountably nervous and dejected. His batch of flapjacks had been ruined, and he was a vague unrest, a new, strange longing. Could it be that, after all, there was something lacking in the life he was leading? He wandered restlessly about from room to room and somehow the big house had never seemed to him so empty as it did then.

II.

Next day there came a timid knock at the door. Wigglesby's heart jumped up into his throat, and he straightway forgot every word of the gracious speech he had planned so carefully.

"Just my luck!" he groaned, and then hastily pulling himself together he started for the door, groping blindly around in his mind in the meanwhile for his mistake.

He had found it once more and all might yet have been well were it not for the fact that instead of bringing back the hammer herself Mrs. Wilsey had sent it by her younger sister.

When Wigglesby opened the door and saw a girl standing there with something in her

females are so plaguey—I mean, all hens are dead now, you know."

"Are they? I didn't know it."

"Yes," hastily responded Wigglesby, calculating himself on the fact that Mrs. Wilsey hadn't noticed the bad break he came near making; "but this hen might as well make up her mind to set, thirteen or no thirteen. If you will take her a minute, I think I can fix the nest so she will have to stay on it."

Mrs. Wilsey relieved Wigglesby of his burden and then he looked wise and went on:

"I suppose the surest way would be to bore two holes in the bottom of the nest, then stick her legs down through and the nest fast under the nest, but—er—"

"Aren't the—er—the eggs wouldn't fall through?" anxiously inquired the owner of the hen, at this point.

"Er—I was just wondering about that myself. I don't think tying her on the nest is going to work very well. Wait and I'll see if I can get a box to turn upside down over her. If we can get one small enough and then put it well under the nest, then she's got to set whether she likes it or not."

"But I'm afraid I am putting you to an awful lot of trouble, Mr. Wigglesby."

"Not at all; just as soon come over and help you to set her in every day if you want me to. Just as soon as possible."

Oh, yes," said Wigglesby, who was progressing.

He had found the right size box, and the woman wound up by saying: "Don't you think he must be just a trifla cracked, Kitty?"

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YOUNG SCOUT IN WAR TIME

Fort Keogh Man Who Has Seen Service in the Tryings Times.

WORK ON THE WESTERN FRONTIER

Though but a Boy, He Was One of Sheridan's Most Trusted Men—Some of His Thrilling Adventures.

Dinner parties with women among the guests were not particularly numerous in the army of the Potomac during the closing months of the war. Mrs. Grant and Mrs. Rawlins were visitors at General Grant's camp in front of Richmond one Sunday in March, 1865, however, and there was a little extra spread in their honor, Grant's whole staff participating. The dinner was served in as good style as the circumstances would allow, and as far as it went it was a thoroughly enjoyable affair. But it was never finished. The arrival of scouts from Sheridan with important dispatches interrupted the feast and broke up the party.

J. A. Campbell of Fort Keogh, Mont., was one of the scouts that so unceremoniously interrupted the feast. Dr. Campbell was at the Ryan hotel, St. Paul, several days last week, and he and the plump widow between them got the hen under it and the box properly anchored down, and then Wigglesby said he guessed it was time he was going.

"I'll—er—come over again tomorrow to help you with the hen," he added, thoughtfully. "I'll—er—come over again tomorrow to help you with the hen."

"But my sister will be home tomorrow. She has only gone away for the day, and when she gets back she can help me if I need any assistance."

"Oh, well," said Wigglesby, in an injured tone of voice, "if you prefer her assistance to mine."

The widow broke in with a gay little laugh and then suddenly grew sober.

"All right; you may come again tomorrow, if you wish," she said, demurely.

A week later the hen (which had been fed and watered daily and encouraged to stick to her post by her two faithful attendants) hatched out a dozen downy chicks, and when Wigglesby took the box and placed them in Mrs. Wilsey's upon a glance down at them in motherly fashion and cooed:

"What tiny helpless little things they are! One cannot help loving them!"

"I suppose not!" said Wigglesby gloomily. "I wish I'd been hatched instead of born, and then maybe somebody'd love me."

"Why, you great goose! you are perfectly eligible on that score; but I hadn't heard that you had asked anybody yet."

"I haven't, but I will do so at once if you've got time to listen, Mrs. Wil—I mean Kitty."

"Plenty of time, seeing it's you," whispered Kitty; and during the next few minutes that apronful of chickens narrowly escaped smothering, and nearly expired through anxiety about and nearly expired from nervous prostration before her safe and sound.

LOVELY ARCTIC GRAVES.

The Last Resting Places of Some Ill-Fated Explorers.

Beyond the region of human habitation, relates the London Mail, the arctic zone is sparsely dotted with the graves of brave men who lost their lives while engaged in polar exploration. Among the dead are the polar bear, and subsequent expeditions endeavor to preserve these graves as far as possible and keep a record of them.

Cape Sabine, across Smith sound, in a southeasterly direction, is marked by a solid granite cross, erected by Dr. Hayes, an arctic explorer, whose skin and bones were found exposed to view by Lieutenant Peary during his last arctic trip, and by him restored to their tomb under the loose stones that had been scattered about, probably by wolves and bears.

Another grave, a few rocks tumbled one upon another in a deep rent between massive boulders, is on Littleton Island, about seven miles to the northward on the eastern side. Christian Olsen, aged 36, the leader of Dr. Kane's expedition of 1850, in its retreat, passed this island in time to leave the body. Two other members of Kane's expedition, Baker and Schurz, died while the Advance, Kane's ship, wintered at Fern Rock. They were buried in the little observatory there.

On the same side of the sound, at Baird Point, George W. Rice, a member of the Lady Franklin expedition, died from cold in trying to secure food for his comrades at Cape Sabine. His companion, Fredericks, buried him in the snow.

There are five graves at North Star, one of Sir John Franklin's Belcher's squadron, in search of Sir John Franklin, was forced to winter at the lower end of this sound, during which period one man was killed by falling down a cliff and four others died from natural causes.

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The reader has probably guessed the truth: Wigglesby was in love, but being a new experience to him he did not fully recognize the fact. He knew that something allured him, but wasn't exactly certain what it was. He had a good sort of a notion, however, that some nice widow across the way would be good for his complaint, and when an old bachelor reaches that stage there is some hope for him yet.

III.

For a fortnight Wigglesby waited in vain for a second call from his new neighbor, and then it occurred to him that perhaps she was waiting for him to return her call, or maybe she didn't consider her borrowing was her fault, and finally Wigglesby was in despair. He even began to think seriously of sneaking across the way some dark night and stealing some of Mrs. Wilsey's tools so she would be compelled to come the next day and borrow something else.

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