

AN EPISODE OF THE WAR.

MISS EDMUNDS'S CAREER AS A BOOK AGENT, SOLDIER, AND SPY.

HARTFORD, Conn., May 29.—The announcement by THE TIMES that a woman who, in the disguise of a man, served as a drummer during the civil war, would appear in the procession on Memorial Day in New-York, revives interest in the exploits of Miss Edmunds, the author of a book called the "Nurse and Spy," which was published in Hartford in 1863. She was born of poor parentage, and, finding that there were few opportunities for a girl to get an honest living compared with those which are always open to boys, she adopted male attire and sought a livelihood. Just before the war she came to Hartford, under the name of Frank Johnson, and was given a traveling book agency by the American Publishing Company. She had the appearance of a bright, active young man, and her success proved her qualifications to be first class. Her sales were large, and all her business transactions were so prompt that S. S. Scranton, one of the officers of the company, concluded to start his son Charles as a canvasser under the instruction of Frank Johnson. Charles and Frank started off, equipped for a three months' trip, and journeyed in New-England and the Provinces, doing a large and profitable business. They were boon companions, and the innocent youth did not know until nearly three years after that he had shared the bed and board of Miss Edmunds for many weeks without knowing that she was a woman.

Her success was so marked in the East that the company gave her important territory in the West, and while there the war broke out and suddenly she disappeared. She had enlisted in a Michigan cavalry regiment and gone South. For nearly two years she was in the service and no one suspected her true character. Though always known as a soldier, she possessed a marked facility for the work of a spy in the play of two parts, man and woman. At last she disappeared from the army, and upon the rolls she was placed as a deserter. In her dual character it was easy for her to escape. Then she came back to Hartford, this time in her proper costume, and introduced herself to Mr. Scranton as Miss Edmunds and that gentleman did not recognize her until she told him the secret of her life. Then he sent for his son Charles and indulged in a few entertaining reminiscences of peculiar interest just then to the young man. After her book was put upon the market she left Connecticut for good. A philanthropic gentleman, who became interested in her by reading the romantic history of her army experience, subsequently arranged for her education at Oberlin, and from that time nothing has been publicly known of her here.

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