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## AUGUSTA TABOR'S WASH DAY

MRS. ELIZABETH ENTRIKEN, A 59ER AND THE SISTER OF OUR BELOVED SNOWSHOE MINISTER, REVEREND JOHN DYER, SHARED THIS INTERESTING STORY ABOUT AUGUSTA TABOR'S LABORS TO WASH TEAMSTERS SHIRTS TO EARN A BIT OF HER OWN GOLD DUST.



MRS. ENTRIKEN WAS IN THE HOTEL OF HER BROTHER-IN-LAW, NEAR THE STOUT BRIDGE THAT SPANS THE PLATTE RIVER NEAR BAILEY'S RANCH, WHEN SHE SPOTTED A COVERED WAGON DRIVEN BY A SUN BONNETED WOMAN AND HER HUSBAND. THE WAGON STOPPED BESIDE THE RIVER AND THE WOMAN REMOVED KINDLING, WOOD, AND SEVERAL LARGE POTS. AFTER FILLING THE POTS WITH WATER, SHE SUSPENDED THEM OVER WOOD FIRES AND USED A ROCK TO NAIL A SIGN TO THE TRUNK OF A SPRUCE TREE.

### SHIRTS WASHED. 50 CENTS.

SHE SOON HAD A CROWD OF TEAMSTERS SURROUNDING HER, PULLING OFF THEIR SHIRTS AND HANDING THEM OVER.

CURIOUS, MRS. ENTRIKEN WALKED OVER TO INVESTIGATE AND INTRODUCED HERSELF TO THE HARD-WORKING WOMAN WITH CURLY BROWN HAIR.

"THE NAME'S TABOR," THE WOMAN TOLD MRS. ENTRIKEN. "THIS IS THE WAY I MAKE MONEY TO HELP MY HUSBAND. HE'S BENT ON PROSPECTING AND ONE OF THESE DAYS HE'LL MAKE THAT BIG FIND. HIS LUCK WILL TURN, JUST SEE IF IT WON'T! 'TIL THEN I'M WILLING TO DO MY PART."

GLANCING INTO THE WOMAN'S BUBBLING POTS FILLED WITH CHECKERED SHIRTS, MRS. ENTRIKEN ASKED, "HOW DO YOU KNOW WHICH SHIRT BELONGS TO WHICH MAN?"

"I PUT KNOTTED STRINGS IN THE TAIL. SEE?" AUGUSTA TABOR PICKED UP A BLUE FLANNEL SHIRT AND DANGLING FROM THE SHIRT-TAIL WAS A WHITE STRING WITH SEVEN SMALL KNOTS. "BEFORE I TAKE A SHIRT, I PENCIL THE MAN'S NAME AND GIVE HIM A NUMBER. THIS MAN'S GOT THE FIGURE '7', SO I INSERT A STING WITH THAT MANY KNOTS ON IT."

THEY CONTINUED COMPARING HOUSEKEEPING NOTES AND AUGUSTA TABOR EXPLAINED, "IT'S WORTH FOUR BITS, WHAT WITH GETTING OUT THAT DIRT, THEN THE BOILING IN CLEAR WATER AND THE TWO RINSINGS, ONE HOT, THE OTHER WARM. I ALSO SEW ON BUTTONS AND MEND RIPS AND TEARS."

IMPRESSED WITH MRS. TABOR'S INDUSTRY, THE TWO WOMEN COMMISERATED ABOUT THE AMOUNT OF LICE THE MEN CARRIED ON THEIR CLOTHING AND THE STENCH FROM PERSONAL ITEMS LAUNDERED TOO INFREQUENTLY. FINALLY, MRS. ENTRIKEN SAID HER GOODBYES, RETURNING TO HER OWN CHORES BUT HOPING SHE'D HAVE THE PLEASURE OF MEETING THE HARD-WORKING MRS. TABOR ANOTHER DAY.

1. Moynihan, Betty, *Augusta Tabor: A Pioneering Wife*, Cordillera Press, Inc., 1988, pp 48-50.
2. Picture from Denver Public Library Digital Collections.