

"EATING CROW."

NEAR the camp of the old Pennsylvania Bucktail Regiment, in Virginia, early in the war, lived an old, aristocratic, exclusive and pompous Virginian, in true baronial style. His mansion, of very old age, was made of imported brick, his chimneys were tall and massive, and the rooms were large and pleasant. The chief attraction of the old place, however, were the grounds that surrounded the mansion. They were very extensive and inviting. Large trees gave luxuriant shade, and the underbrush in portions of the grounds afforded shelter for rabbits and other small game. There were walks, and orchards, and arbors, and the whole bore such a scene of general peacefulness and repose that it was no wonder the wild Bucktails were charmed with the prospect, and anxious to penetrate into a spot which gave such promise of enjoyment.

The Bucktails were not the most tractable soldiers. They came from the stepping-off place—the wilderness of Pennsylvania—McKean, Potter, Forrest and Tioga Counties—they obtained their name, which clung to them during the entire war, through a fancy of Col. Kane, brother of the Arctic explorer, who became their commander. He recruited the regiment in the early days of 1861 (beginning on the day of the arrival of the news of the fall of Fort Sumpter) from the backwoodsmen, who were famous marksmen. They were all deer hunters, and as a designation each man was furnished with a tail of a buck by Col. Kane, and when they marched from Camp Curtin with the bucktails in their hats it was a novel sight. Col. Charles J. Biddle, of Philadelphia, was made the Colonel, and Col. Kane the Lieutenant Colonel of the regiment—both men noted for their short, attenuated forms. Neither was scarcely more than five feet high, and their combined weight was that of 220 pounds.

It may readily be guessed that these soldiers had little respect for Virginia aristocracy, and the tent poles had hardly got settled in the ground before a noted raider named—well—Smith—shouldered his deer killer and started on a little expedition. He was a Sergeant, and of immense size, and went by the name of the Big Sergeant. He made a straight march for the Virginian's mansion. Now, the old man had many pets about his grounds, and among them was a tame crow which he valued very highly. He also had tame rabbits, doves, &c. The Sergeant climbed the stone wall and dropped himself and his gun on the inside of the grounds. The first thing his eye caught was this tame crow, which unconcernedly flew near him, and lighted on a limb and began to caw at him. The Sergeant put his rifle to his shoulder and banged away, and Mr. Crow came fluttering to the ground. The soldier reloaded his gun, leaned it against the wall, and went to get his crow.

Instantly there came running from the house, in a high state of excitement, the old Virginian, and when he saw that his pet crow had been killed his rage had no bounds. He rushed for the Sergeant's gun, and swearing that he wouldn't have given the crow for the whole Yankee army, vowed that he would blow the soldier's brains out. With this he brought the piece to a cock and glanced along the barrel. The Sergeant begged for his life, and the Virginian swore he would take it.

The Virginian finally thought of a compromise, with a look half between amazement and rage, told the Ser. that he must eat that crow raw. In vain the other protested, the Virginian insisted on the price of his adversary's life. So the Sergeant pulled off some feathers and began to gag and eat.

"How do you like crow?" hissed the Virginian through his teeth.

The only answer the other gave was a request to be let off. He was sorry he had shot the crow; didn't know that it was tame, and he wouldn't do such a thing again. Finally the old man took the gun from its aim and told him he needn't eat any more. His heart full of joy the Sergeant threw the bird upon the ground and said:

"Well, I kin eat crow, but I don't like it."

The story might stop here if it was only to show the origin of the phrase but the rest of it is the best.

The old Virginian, after surveying his dead pet for an instant in a sorrowful manner, returned the gun and started for his mansion. The other quickly brought his piece to his shoulder and called out:

"Hold on there, Mister?"

"What do you want?" asked the other, as returned and beheld a "bead" drawn on him.

"I'd like to have you eat the rest of this crow."

Then the old man fumed and swore, and tore about in a frantic manner, saying he'd be d—d if he would, and that he didn't want any of the young man's jokes. The cocking of the gun, and the assurance on the part of the soldier that he would certainly put a ball through the old man's shoulder unless he complied with the demand, induced the Virginian to retrace his steps. "Now," said the Sergeant, "I want you to eat the rest of that crow, and no nonsense."

A punch of the rifle on the shoulder of

the old man roused him to a quick sense of his position, and, picking up the crow, he endeavored to bite it. He grew pale, the perspiration stood on his face, he trembled like a terrier, his mouth watered, his eyes filled, he gagged, and it seemed a physical impossibility for him to touch the crow. The Sergeant, however, compelled him to take a bite, and it was the only one he did take, for his breakfast came up so rapidly to protest against crow that the soldier relented and told him to "git," and never to trouble a Bucktail again.

Here would seem another proper place to end the story, but there is still another paragraph.

The next day, the old Virginian, smarting under the indignities he had suffered, in not only having his pet crow killed, but being compelled to eat a portion of it, went to the headquarters of the Bucktails and made complaint to the Colonel against the Big Sergeant. The Colonel at once sent an orderly for Sergeant Smith, rightly supposing he must be the person referred to. He obeyed the summons at once. He pushed the door of the tent aside and entered the presence. Snapping his heels together and standing erect in the position of 'attention,' he brought his right hand quickly to the visor of his military cap, and gave the customary salute to his Colonel.

"Sergeant," said his commander very gravely, "do you know that gentleman?" pointing to the old Virginian.

"Yes, sir," promptly answered the other.

"How did you become acquainted with him, Sergeant?"

"We dined together yesterday, sir," promptly answered the culprit.

The roar of laughter which followed this reply need not be described nor the manner in which the old Virginian joined. The sergeant was sent back to his quarters, and the interview between the old aristocrat and the Colonel was ended by an invitation to the latter to dine the next day at the old mansion.

An Irishman's Trick.

MANY years ago there resided at Saratoga an eccentric individual by the name of John S. Dusty who had seen the vicissitudes of life in various forms. In youth he spent fifteen years in prison among the Indians. Then he obtained a knowledge of herbs which was his means of subsistence as an Indian doctor in after years. In the practice of his profession he was roaming all over the country, often with his pockets well filled, but, as often without a solitary cent to swear by. In all circumstances he was fond of his glass, and he would resort, when the fickle goddess was unkind to him, to any means to obtain it. Loitering one day on the canal dock of Rochester, he fell in company with a son of Erin just as penniless and thirsty as himself. By accident they succeeded in taking a large wharf rat, which the Irishman carefully confined in his pocket handkerchief, and under instruction from Dusty, proceeded to a saloon which stood close by and entered into a colloquy with the proprietor.

"I say, landlord, what will yees be after givin' me for a foine muskrat?"

"What the d—l do I want with a muskrat?" responded the landlord.

"Och, he will be after makin' afone pet for the childher. Jist look at him, will yees?"

So saying he carefully unfolding a corner of the handkerchief, and the landlord took a peep.

"Call that a muskrat?" he roared; "it's nothing but a common wharf rat."

"I tell yees it's a muskrat," rejoined Pat.

"It's a wharf rat—don't you suppose I know a muskrat?"

"I tell yees it's a muskrat, an' if yees think yees knows so much, I'll be after layin' a small wager that it's a muskrat an' not a wharf rat at all," persisted the obdurate Irishman.

The controversy waxed warm, and ended in Pat making the following proposition.

"I'll tell you what I'll do, my foine fellow, I'll bet you the value against a gallon of your best whusky, that it's a muskrat."

"Who will you leave it to?" demanded the landlord.

"Faith, I'm not particular. I'll lave it to the first man that comes in," was the response.

"Done," yelled the landlord, and in stalked Dusky with, "Landlord give us a glass of"—but before he could complete the sentence he was approached by the Irishman with.

"I say, misther, the landlord and meself has jist been after making a little bet, an' will yees be so kind as to decide it?"

"What's the bet?" asked Dusky.

"Well, will yees just look in here an' tell us what sort uv an animal it is."

Dusky looked with care, seemed undecided, looked again and responded:

"Certainly, sir; it is a muskrat."

"Muskrat the d—l!" roared the now raving landlord; "do you think I don't know a muskrat?"

"Muskrat or no muskrat, my foine fellow, will yees be after and passing over that gallon uv whusky yees owe me."

The landlord paid the bet, but would swear to his dying day that he had met two fools who neither knew a muskrat.

An Incident of the War.

A MISSISSIPPI paper tells the following incident which happened during the war:

During the year 1865 Henderson's scouts were encamped at Panola, and parties from the company were continually scouring the section between Tallahatchie river and Memphis, on the alert to catch the first signs of a forward movement on the part of the enemy, and to report such a state of facts to headquarters, so as to give timely warning to the gallant band of scouts and Chalmers' buttermilk cavalry to make good their retreat beyond the banks of the Yal-labonaha, where securely ensconced among the pine hills, with room for a forward movement to the rear, they could look down with minds serene and peaceful breasts and cry out in the fullness of their joy, "What a good thing it is to be a horse soldier!" During a raid of a detachment of Federal troops in this section, this affair has its origin.

The gallant members of said band of scouts came to Mr. Jones's house about sundown one evening, and calling the aged man from his house, asked if there were any Federals about. He replied that his little grandson had just come from a neighbor's house, and that there was quite a large detachment of Yankees there, being about two miles distant. The old gentleman urged the soldiers to leave, as they would be captured, but they asked him if he would not give them supper and some feed for their horses; that they would hitch their horses back of the house in the plum bushes, and approach the house when supper was ready. He insisted that it was extremely dangerous, but that he would willingly feed them if they would risk the danger. When the two Confederates had retired to the orchard back of the house, two Federals rode up, and calling Mr. Jones from the house, asked him if there were any Confederates about. He told them yes, that they were at Panola and all over the country. They asked him if he could get supper and feed their horses. He was in a terrible dilemma, with no way to notify the Confederates, and, afraid to refuse the Yankees, he had to tell them yes, and they hitched their horses in front of the house and fed them, retaining Mr. Jones with them. He saw his negro coming with his plow horses from the field, and, being afraid the Federals would take them, he ordered them back, which the negro obeyed, and the Yankees made no objection. Mr. Jones' daughter, Mrs. S. L. Blann, endeavored to notify the Confederates of the presence of the Federals, but could not do so, and at the same time the two Confederates stepped in from the front, and the two parties met face to face.

Mr. Jones thought that a collision would take place at once, but, remarkable to say, each put their hands on their arms and looked sharply at each other without saying a word. Mr. Jones invited them in to supper and both parties went in, taking opposite sides of the table, and with one hand upon their pistols, they sat facing each other with fierce, glaring eyes, constantly watching the movement of the other. Not a word was spoken by either party and the meal was finished, neither party eating anything scarcely. Mr. Jones sat at the foot of the table and his daughter, Mrs. Blann, at the head, each expecting every moment to see a deadly conflict but both parties arose simultaneously and passed hastily out the back door in the direction of their horses, and the Federates with equal celerity passed out to their horses, and the last dying echoes of the horses feet, as they moved in opposite directions, was the last Mr. Jones ever heard of either party.

Mr. Jones was satisfied from a few moments' observation, that it was not a ruse, by either Confederates or Yankees, from the intense anxiety displayed by each party, and he can give no account why the one or the other did not attack and try to capture the other except that each were so completely taken with surprise, and not knowing what circumstances surrounded the other, that they moved mechanically, and each waited for the other to attack.

The Federals retreated the next morning and Mr. Jones did not see any of the command except the two who attempted to eat supper, but who found other guests who stole away their appetites.

An honest thrifty, well-to-do German in a Connecticut city applied to a wealthy landlord who rents a great many houses.

"The house is to let, certainly," said the owner, "and if upon inquiry, I find you to be responsible and a suitable man for a tenant, you shall have it." "Vers goot Mr. H—, you make just as many questions as you mind. I takes the house when you gets ready." Two days afterward the house owner called upon the German.

"Well," he said, "I've inquired pretty generally respecting your character and means, and as everybody speaks of you as an honest, respectable man of abundant property, you can have the house." "Vell den," said Hans, "I takes the house. And I wants to tell you I've asked all about you among the peoples, and day all say that you is de meastest landlord in de town; but I takes de house all de same."

"Never mind, Jonathan, my boy, if you watch the sheep you will have the sheep?"

"What does grandfather mean by that? I said to myself; I don't expect to have sheep. My desires were moderate, and a fine buck was worth a thousand dollars. I could not exactly make out in my mind what it was, but I had great confidence in him, for he was a judge and had been to Congress in Washington's time; so I concluded it was all right and went back contentedly to the sheep. After I got into the field I could not keep his words out of my head. Then I thought of Sunday's lesson—Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, I began to see through it. Never you mind who neglects his duty; be you faithful and you will have your reward."

"I received a second lesson soon after I came to this city as a clerk to the late Kymen Reed. A merchant from Ohio, who knew me, came to buy goods, and said: 'Make yourself so useful that they cannot do without you.' I took his meaning quicker than I did that of my grandfather."

"Well, I worked upon these two ideas until Mr. Reed offered me a partnership in the business. The first morning after the partnership was made known, Mr. James Geery, the old tea merchant, called to congratulate me, and said: 'You are all right now.' I have only a word of advice to give you: be careful who you walk the streets with. That was lesson number three."

And what valuable lessons they are! 'Fidelity in little things; do your best for your employer; carefulness about associates.' Let every boy take these lessons home and study them well. They are the foundation-stones of character and honorable success.

SUNDAY READING.

Golden Words from a Merchant.

We all want to know how good and strong men have made their ways in the world. They were once boys like you. What steps did they take to become true men? An eminent merchant in New York Mr. Jonathan Sturgis, tells a little of his experience, which I am sure every boy will be glad to hear about.

"One of my first lessons," says Mr. Sturgis, "was in 1813, when I was eleven years old. My grandfather had a fine flock of merino sheep, which were carefully tended during the war of that day. I was the shepherd boy, and my business was to watch the sheep in the fields. A boy who was more fond of his book than the sheep was sent with me, but left the work to me while he lay under the trees and read. I did not like that, and finally went to my grandfather and complained of it. I shall never forget the kind smile of the old gentleman as he said:

"Never mind, Jonathan, my boy, if you watch the sheep you will have the sheep?"

"What does grandfather mean by that? I said to myself; I don't expect to have sheep. My desires were moderate, and a fine buck was worth a thousand dollars. I could not exactly make out in my mind what it was, but I had great confidence in him, for he was a judge and had been to Congress in Washington's time; so I concluded it was all right and went back contentedly to the sheep. After I got into the field I could not keep his words out of my head. Then I thought of Sunday's lesson—Thou hast been faithful over a few things, I will make thee ruler over many things, I began to see through it. Never you mind who neglects his duty; be you faithful and you will have your reward."

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Too Fast.

One morning an enraged countryman came into Mr. N.'s store with very angry looks. He left a team in the street, and had a good stick in his hand.

"Mr. N.," said the angry countryman, "I bought a paper of nutmegs here in your store, and when I got home they were more than half of them walnuts; and that's the young villian I bought them of," pointing to John.

"John," said Mr. N., "did you sell this man walnuts for nutmegs?"

"No, sir," was the ready reply.

"You lie, you villian," still more enraged at his assurance.

"Now look here," said John. "If you had taken the trouble to weigh your nutmegs you would have found that I put the walnuts in gratis."

"Oh you gave them to me, did you?"

"Yes, sir. I threw in a handful for the children to crack," said John laughing at the same time.

"Well now, if that ain't a young scamp," said the countryman, his features relaxing into a grin as he saw into the matter.

Much hard talk and bad blood would be saved if people would stop to weigh before they blame others.

"Think twice before you speak once," is an excellent motto.

No person can possibly know whether there is in him the tendency to inebriety until it is stimulated into development. No person can possibly even have this development except by the use of alcohol. The man who totally abstains is safe, even though the tendency to inebriety may lurk within him, the fearful legacy of an ancestor. The man who drinks, no matter how cautiously or moderately, may wake up this devil within him, which no human power can control. Health and safety are on the side of abstinence, while danger, disease, and premature death are in the pathway of the habitual drinker.

A farmer, whose cribs were full of corn, was accustomed to pray that the wants of the needy might be supplied; but when any one in needy circumstances asked for a little of his corn, he said he had none to spare. One day, after hearing his father pray for the poor and needy, his little son said to him:

"Father, I wish I had your corn."

"Why my son, what could you do with it?" asked the father. The child replied,

"I would answer your prayers."

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