

JOHN'S HUMMING BIRDS.

BY WILLIAM H. BARCOCK.

(Copyright, 1897.)

THIS is a bit of a legend—if one must use such a formidable word—that they tell along the shores of Chesapeake bay. It has to do with a patriotic Maryland boy and his lively allies—and the way they routed a British vessel of war with its officers and crew.

That was during the most doleful part of the war of 1812, when such victories were far too common in our waters, though often worsted at sea.

John Duhamel, a boyside boy of the eastern shore, had heard and seen somewhat of the enemy's doings; he also had turned out early one morning with an old shotgun and the militia to head off an intended raid on the county town. It was a success in the way of resistance, and made him feel proud and warlike. So he had continued awhile in service, and on the evening of our tale was patrolling very wearisomely what is known as Town-point beach. It had its name from an old settlement of the Indians, long vanished except a few shell-heaps and arrowheads.

A mile or two inland lay the camp of the American farmer-soldiers, merry in mood and a little mixed in discipline, quite ready to fight again, but innocently open to surprise.

John knew the importance of his post, but he could not look with favor on an interminable parade with nobody in sight. His mind would wander.

So John halted beyond a chingupin bush near the favored spot, cowering down until he fairly hugged the ground in the intensity of his vigil. It was very still about him, with the twilight deepening. At first, indeed, there was some murmurous activity in the hornet's nest, larger than half a bushel, which hung from a jutting bough half way up the ascent. But with the chill of the night this gradually subsided; and grievous to relate, in a very few minutes our young sentry was sleeping.

That was a pity; for he had the greatest need to be wide awake. Through the faint moonlight, one of the lesser British war sloops was at that very moment slowly approaching. More men than rightly belonged there, were packed on board, for their errand was one of surprise, and midnight fighting would follow. The craft could not stand close in, but lowered a boat in mid channel. Half-way over, the glint of a moonbeam on John Duhamel's gun barrel made them pause—it looked so like an ambush; but the oars dipped again, warily, and in a few moments the slumberer was surrounded.

Then they understood, and laughed. The officer in command stood looking down on the lad, who had been altogether too well fed and trained all his days not to make a comely figure.

It is said that gazing steadily on a person will waken him. John rose, quite suddenly, on his elbow, and groped about for his gun. Then, as he realized what had come to pass, he dropped back, his heart turning sick. He thought they would perhaps kill or torment him; it was a nightmare of helplessness.

But whatever might befall, he must not meet it lying on his back. In a moment he was on his feet, with the life coming back in all his veins.

"What are you going to do with me?" he asked boldly, though shaking within.

The officer joined in the laugh, though but lightly, and answered with great good humor:

"For helping us? Isn't that rather a question for your own people? Fancy sleeping on guard! For you will be on guard surely?"

He meant, of course, "you are." This misuse of the future tense was new to John.

"I will be an angel, I reckon, by the time you are done with me," he answered. "I was watching that otter-slide—and somehow, it came over me."

He felt his cheek turn hot. You see, however he might try to face it out, the performance was not one to be proud of.

There was amusement in the officer's tone as he inquired:

"Where are your shot-gun people, since you are so precise?"

"How do you know there are any?"

"We made their acquaintance near Chestertown the other day. Some of our people, I mean; I wasn't there."

"I was, sir."

"Ah-h! Well, you did nicely for beginners, my boy. They can't be far away. Fancy leaving a bright young sentry all alone in the wilderness like a lost sheep of the house of Israel. But where are they?"

John paused a minute. "If you were in my place would you tell, sir?" he inquired simply.

The young man laughed uneasily. "We are not sent for information," said he, "but we seem to have got into the wrong shop. You must go back with us, my boy. Maybe the captain can make more out of you—he isn't a man to put up with anything short of an answer. And yet it's a shame. What's that about an otter-slide? What will an otter-slide be?"

He asked these questions musingly.

John was very willing to enter on a harmless topic, and more than willing to delay his departure. Dreadful recollections rose in his mind of British prison ships, and he was in some terror of that dimly-hinted captain. Maybe they would insist on making an angel of him, after all.

So he explained and expatiated, pouring out his full budget of otter lore with a zest that made them stare. It is not often that a boy lectures on natural history for his life.

"A young Buffon!" exclaimed his captor. "A born naturalist, I see. It may stand your friend with the captain."

"Is he—a naturalist?"

"By that way in taste—which isn't altogether common in so good a sailor. Haven't you anything you could bring along to show?"

"It's clever of you to think of that. I have right smart at home, that would interest him. I suppose—" he began, wistfully, with a dawning hope. But the officer was shaking his head.

"It's a pity," said John, crestfallen. "I have the finest lot of humming birds' nests! Did you ever see one?"

"No. We don't have 'em, you know. They dangle their nests down from trees, purse fashion, so I'm told."

Probably he had mixed the humming bird and the oriole in his mind, for such knowledge was rather foreign to his profession.

John opened his eyes at this, but he had no chance to say anything, for his captor broke out, eagerly: "Why, surely, there's one now? Where can your eyes be, my lad?"

His own were fastened on the hornet's nest. John gazed in astonishment. Knowing hornets—alas, too well!—the error seemed incredible. He could hardly keep in his laughter as he saw that the other was in earnest.

"It's right smart of a nest, and they are good brisk hummers as you will ever want to see," he answered, like a judge, for it was beyond him to speak in his natural way. A possibility was dawning upon his mind.

"Then get it, and be quick," urged the officer, with the air of one who had little time and much work to do.

John began climbing very gingerly. "It won't do to scare 'em," he explained in a guarded voice.

"Are they both inside, then? I thought only one stayed there, for hatching."

"O they're inside, safe enough. Only they come out whenever they're disturbed."

"We must be very careful," he explained, "or the captain will miss a real

He hesitated no more than a second over the strange name, then adopted it with an old-acquaintance air.

"The bald-face, H'm! Ah, yes! Now I recognize the style of architecture. Are they very rare about here, these bald-faces?"

"I reckon there may be a thousand or more within a half mile"—"or half a yard," he added, inwardly, drawing the dangerous thing back a little, in spite of himself.

"A thousand—fancy! And all of them with such wonderful aptitude, such fervor of execution!"

"Every one of 'em with aptitude and fervor," echoed John, wagging his head sagely. "Especially fervor! Their fervor of execution is just beyond anything! Listen, captain."

As the captain took the nest and bent over the opening compunction seized the boy.

The captain looked up at him with a startled air. The boy was edging away, but with a face as calm as possible. The officers had drawn in rather a dense group about them. Curiosity had brought most of the men nearer than they had any right to be. The captain's ear was close to the hornet's doorway.

"Shake it a little," cried John, pushing gently back through the ring. "Shake it a little, sir. They'll strike up again."

All eyes were on the captain and the experiment. "It is so, he reported," looking up delightedly. "I can hear the birds humming like an aeolian harp. Yet how they contrive it in such narrow quarters—that passes me. Yes, yes, what awakening! what a deepening thrill in the tone; how rich and warm—ah! ah! ah!"

For his enthusiasm had quickened theirs, and he was getting the thrill and warmth in a most bewildering way. One hand fought the air wildly about his eyes; the other dashed away his tormenting prize. It struck the deck violently in the midst of the crowd,



"OF WHAT VARIETY?"

surprise. He has never seen anything like it I am sure. I want to get them there asleep."

"Hain't we better stop the opening?" said the officer, making a motion that way.

"Don't, don't!" exclaimed John, stepping back. "I'll get 'em there safe; never fear." Inwardly he was wondering how much longer the miracle of their quietness would last. But the cold had made them stupid.

The officer wondered, too, chiefly at John's behavior.

"Come on then," he said, in a dissatisfied tone.

They had found nothing as yet but this boy and his "humming birds," and whether any good would come of that seemed very doubtful. It would not have been doubtful at all, if he had known.

On the way to the sloop John went through a deal of anxiety, with alternations of hope and fear. Luckily he climbed the side in one of his braver turns, and it held. He stood coolly enough on one side, as bidden, while his captor made his report; and he watched with rather more than interest the Jove of this little world—his height and portliness, and rather pompous dignity. It was a pity, John thought, to spoil such a fine figure of a man; but why couldn't great English captains stay at home and let other people alone?

Presently they brought the prisoner nearer to be questioned; and before many words had passed, he felt that under all this pretentiousness there was some hollowness. For in truth, here was a man with a queer twist in his vanity; not content with what he really knew; he was absurdly willing to put forth counterfeit claims to science, of which he knew hardly anything.

"Ah!" said he, "a young—very young—American soldier. And something of a naturalist, too, they tell me. Now I myself take an interest in all such lines of investigation." He turned to the nest with a gravely interested air. "Of what variety?" he asked.

John's heart beat fast. Was it possible that the captain, too, could take that thing for a bird's nest?

"The bald faces," replied John, with the utmost effrontery.

As he spoke there came into his mind these little frontlets so bearing a memory of what portended that his lips writhed in spite of him. Surely he must be found out now. But the captain was riding too high a horse to see anything. "Maybe his credit with all whom he commanded was at stake.

bursting on feet and knees and planks, filling all the air with insect fury and the yells of men.

By this time John Duhamel was at the taffrail, in full flight from both kinds of wrath to come. Overboard he went headlong, with a great splash. When he came up, something washed against him—a piece of hewn timber from the shore, as he afterward found. He seized it, and the incoming tide bore him quickly away.

In a few moments he could see the indescribable commotion behind, the men battling as if with demons.

Discipline was no longer possible; officers and men alike went nearly frantic. Hands and garments were flourished wildly in the air, heads ducked under covering, forms jostled blindly against each other, voices howled and screamed and swore. "Devils! Devils!" cried some one.

"No!" called back John, still within hearing, at full compass of lungs. "Not devils; only Americans! A long-suffering race, but they make things lively when they turn. Good luck to your humming birds!"

That drew a seething volley of musket balls and curses; but he had little need to fear any aim out of that Tophet. Besides, there was only moonlight on the water; there were no splashes very near him.

He had done his work and retrieved the lost ground. As the water ran out of his ears the roll of a drum filled them from over the land, while distant voices proved that at last the American camp was now astir. Whatever else befell, there would be no further surprise that night.

As he ran ashore he saw the white wings of the sloop spreading, and the anchor drawn up on the side—but with loud complaints and uproar, as though their vengeful insect visitors took fresh umbrage at every motion and would not let them be. This disturbance continued until the hostile vessel was quite beyond earshot, and no one ever knew just when the fight ended or the pursuit grew weary.

John was very much more than forgiven, in consideration of having routed the enemy single-handed, with no trouble to anybody; and his "humming birds" have been rewarded for their good service by an honored place in tradition ever since.

—Some people, when they are forced to do a thing, have the faculty of doing it as if they wanted to all the time.—Washington Democrat.

Nourish Him.

That's the whole secret in a word. We can cure no disease unless we can keep up the patient's strength. And there's only one way to do that—feed him. But if the system refuses food? Then use SCOTT'S EMULSION OF Cod-liver Oil with Hypophosphites. It goes STRAIGHT TO THE BLOOD, stops the wasting, rekindles the vital fire, makes new flesh and so renders a hopeful fight possible against ANY disease. Especially is this so in bronchial and lung troubles, in the relief and cure of which Scott's Emulsion has won its reputation. Book about it free.

Scott's Emulsion is no mysterious mixture. It is palatable, non-nauseating and infinitely preferable to the plain oil. The genuine has our trademark on salmon-colored wrapper. Get the genuine.

For sale at 50 cts. and \$1.00 by all druggists.

SCOTT & BOWNE, New York.

FILES PERMANENTLY CURED In from 3 to 5 days' time, by the use of LO-MO.

One bottle guaranteed to cure any case of piles, regardless of how long standing, what you have tried, or what your physician may claim. Money refunded if permanent cure is not obtained in the most severe cases in less than 5 days' time. After all others fail get LO-MO and be cured.

Price \$1.00 per bottle, sent prepaid to any address, on receipt of price. Address Harry Logue, 100 W. Fourth street, Williamsport, Pa. 9 23-1y

Educate Your Bowels With Cascarella. Candy Cathartic, cure constipation forever. 10c. 25c. If C. C. C. fail, druggists refund money.

Bishop McCabe, of New York, on Dr. James' Headache Powders.

"With regard to Dr. James' Headache Powders, I have no hesitation in commending them to sufferers from headache. They relieve the pain speedily, and I have never known anyone to be harmed by their use. I have been a great sufferer from headache in my life, but have almost gotten rid of it by the constant use of hot water and fruit and by doing without coffee. The Dr. James Headache Powders have, however, greatly relieved me at times and I never allow myself to be without them, and have recommended to others freely. C. C. McCABE."

For sale by W. H. Spangler, Druggist Middleburgh, Pa. 6 17-9m

ONE OF TWO WAYS.

The bladder was created for one purpose, namely, a receptacle for the urine, and as such it is not liable to any form of disease except by one of two ways. The first way is from imperfect action of the kidneys. The second way is from careless local treatment of other diseases.

CHIEF CAUSE. Unhealthy urine from unhealthy kidneys is the chief cause of bladder troubles. So the womb, like the bladder, was created for one purpose, and if not doctored too much is not liable to weakness or disease, except in rare cases. It is situated back of and very close to the bladder, therefore any pain, disease or inconvenience manifested in the kidneys, back, bladder or urinary passage is often, by mistake, attributed to female weakness or womb trouble of some sort. The error is easily made and may be as easily avoided. To find out correctly, set your urine aside for twenty four hours, a sediment or settling indicates kidney or bladder trouble. The mild and the extraordinary effect of Dr. Kilmur's Swamp-Root, the great kidney and bladder remedy is soon realized. If you need a medicine you should have the best. At druggists fifty cents and one dollar. You may have a sample bottle and pamphlet, both sent free by mail. Mention the Middleburgh, Post and send your address to Dr. Kilmur & Co., Binghamton, N. Y. The proprietor of this paper guarantees the genuineness of this offer.

TO CONSUMPTIVES. The undersigned having been restored to health by simple means, after suffering for several years with a severe lung affection, and that dread disease Consumption, is anxious to make known to his fellow sufferers the means of cure. To those who desire it, he will cheerfully send (free of charge) a copy of the prescription used, which they will find a sure cure for Consumption, Asthma, Catarrh, Bronchitis, and all throat and lung maladies. He hopes all sufferers will try this remedy, as it is invaluable. Those desiring the prescription, which will cost them nothing, and may prove a blessing, will please address:

Rev. EDWARD A. WILSON, 9-10-17r Brooklyn, New York

An Important Question. If your friends or neighbors are suffering from coughs, colds, sore throat, or any throat or lung disease (including consumption), ask them if they have ever used Otto's Cure. This famous German remedy is having a large sale here and is performing some wonderful cures of throat and lung diseases. W. H. Spangler, Middleburgh; M. Rothrock, M. D., Mt. Pleasant Mills, will give you a sample bottle free. No matter what other medicines have failed to do, try Otto's Cure. Large size 25 and 50 cts.

THE OLD ESTABLISHED MERCHANTS' HOUSE, Third Street Above Callowhill, PHILADELPHIA, PA. Under New Management. Rates \$1.50 a day, \$5.00 per Week.

Wm. F. Miller, Prop'r.

SUSCRIBE FOR THE MIDDLEBURGH POST.

It gives all important news of the Nation. It gives all important news of the World. It gives entertainment to young and old. It gives brilliant and instructive Editorials.

The Best, the Cheapest Price, \$1.50 a Year.

Advertising rates on application. Sample copy free to advertisers. MIDDLEBURGH, PA.

FURNITURE, CARPETS AND CHINA.

Bright new designs look out from every nook and corner of our Store. Styles and Styles in which at once you see your ideal.

Couches AND EASY CHAIRS. CARPETS, RUGS, ART SQUARES and PICTURES at prices so low that other merchants can not compete.

Yours Respectfully, W. H. FELIX, Lewistown.

Liberal Adjustments. Prompt Payments.

H. HARVEY SCHOCH, GENERAL INSURANCE AGENCY, SELINGSGROVE, PA.

Only the Oldest, Strongest Cash Companies, Fire, Life, Accident and Tornado.

No Assessments. No Premium Notes.

The Aetna Founded A. D., 1819, Assets \$11,055,513.88

"Home " " " 1853 " 9,853,628.54

"American " " " 1810 " 2,409,584.53

The Standard Accident Insurance Co. The New York Life Insurance Co. The Fidelity Mutual Life Association. Your Patronage Solicited.

Great Reduction Sale of FURNITURE For Ninety Days!

The Undersigned Offer The Public Their ENTIRE STOCK OF FURNITURE AT THE GREATEST SACRIFICE EVER KNOWN IN CENTRAL PENNSYLVANIA.

We are not selling out, but we do this to increase our sales above any previous year. We give a few of the prices as follows:

Soft Wood Chamber Suits.....\$14.00 Cotton Top Mattress..... 2.00

Hard Wood Chamber Suits..... 1.75 Woven Wire Mattress..... 1.25

Antique Oak Suits, 8 Pieces..... 19.00 Bed Springs..... 1.25

Plush Parlor Suits..... 30.00 Drop Tables, per ft..... 2.00

Wooden Chairs per set..... 2.50 Platform Rockers..... 2.00

In stock, everything in the furniture line, including Mirrors, Book Cases, Desks, Side-boards, Cupboards, Centre Tables, Fancy Rockers, Baby Chairs, Feather Pillows, Lounges, Couches, Doughtrays, Sinks, Hall Racks, Can Seat Chairs—fine, medium and cheap furniture, to suit all classes.

Prices reduced all through. Come early and see our stock before giving your order, and thus save 15 to 20 per cent. on every dollar.

Special Attention Given to Undertaking & Embalming.

KATHERMAN & HARTMAN, Limited, MIFFLINBURGH, PA.

A NEW ENTERPRISE... -AT- OPPENHEIMER'S Clothing & Shoe Emporium.

Now is the time to make Bargains in Boys', Youths' and Men's Shoes. As few bought our stock before the late advance we can give our customers the benefit of same.

FALL AND WINTER READY MADE CLOTHING

For Youths, Boys and Men received daily. Remember we are Head-quarters for Gents' Furnishing Goods. Hats, Trunks, Satchels, Umbrellas, Etc. You'll save money by buying of

Full Line Horse Blankets, Lap Robes—H. Oppenheimer, Selingsgrove, Pa. Market St.