DR. TALMAGE'S SERMON.

A SEASONABLE DISCOURSE ON BIRDS.

This is Pre-eminently the Month to Consider the Ministry of Nature—How the Songs of the Various Birds Show Forth the Family Life.

At the Tabernacle.

Rev. Dr. Talmage last Sunday chose for the subject of his sermon "The Song of the Birds." This, like many of his sermons, is suited to the season of the year in which it is preached. It is well fitted to be read under the trees and has in it the health of out-door life. Text, Psalms civ, 12: "By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches."

There is an important and improving subject to which most people have given no thought, and concerning which this is the first pulpit discussion —namely, "The Song of Birds." If all that has been written concerning music by human voice or about music sounded on instrument by finger or breath were put together, volume by the side of volume, it would fill a hundred alcoves of the national libraries. But about the song of birds there is as much silence as though a thousand years ago the last lark had with his wing swept the door latch of Heaven, and as though never a whippoorwill had sung its lullaby to a slumbering forest at nightfall. We give a passing smile to the call of a bobolink or the chirp of a canary, but about the origin, about the fiber, about the meaning, about the mirth, about the pathos, about the inspiration, about the religion in the song of birds, the most of us are either ignorant or indifferent. A caveat I this morning file in the high court of Heaven against that almost universal irreligion.

Feathered Choirs.

First—I remark that which will surprise many, that the song of birds is a regulated and systematic song, capable of being written out in note and staff and bar and clef as much as anything that Wagner or Schuman or Handel ever put on paper. As we pass the grove where the flocks are holding matin or vesper service, we are apt to think that the sounds are extemporized, the rising or falling tone is accidental, the flung up and down by haphazard, the bird did not know what it was doing, it did not care whether it was a long meter psalm or a madrigal. What a mistake! The musician never put on the music rack before him Mendelssohn's "Elijah" or Beethoven's "Concerto" in G or Spohr's B flat symphony with more definite idea as to what he was doing than every bird that can sing at all confines himself to accurate and predetermined rendering.

The oratorios, the chants, the carols, the overtures, the interludes, the ballads, the canticles, that this morning we heard or will this evening be heard in the forest have rolled down through the ages without a variation. Even the chipmunk's song was ordained clear back in the eternities. At the gates of paradise it sang in sounds like the syllables "Kuk!" "Kuk!" "Kuk!" just as this morning in a Long Island orchard it sang "Kuk!" "Kuk!" "Kuk!" The thrush of the creation uttered sounds like the word "Teacher!" "Teacher!" "Teacher!" as now it utters sounds like "Teacher!" "Teacher!" "Teacher!" In the summer of the year 1 the yellowhammer trilled that which sounded like the word "If!" "If!" "If!" as in this summer it trills "If!" "If!" "If!" The Maryland yellowthroat inherits and bequeaths the tune sounding like the words "Pity me, pity me, pity me!" The white sparrow's "Tacep, tacep," woke our great grandfathers as it will awaken our great-grandchildren. The "Tee-ka-tee-ka-tee-ka" of the birds in the first century was the same as the "Tee-ka-tee-ka-tee-ka" of the nineteenth century.

Taught By the Creator.

The goldfinch has for 6,000 years been singing "De-ree dee-ee-ree." But these sounds, which we put in harsh words, they put in cadences, rhythmic, soulful and enrapturing. Now, if there is this order and systematization and rhythm all through God's creation, does it not imply that we should have the same characteristics in the music we make or try to make? Is it not a wickedness that so many parents give no opportunity for the culture of their children in the art of sweet sound? If God stoops to educate every bluebird, oriole and grosbeak in song, how can parents be so indifferent about the musical development of the immortals in their households? Which God will accept out attempts to sing, though it be only a hum or a drone, if we can do no better, what a shame that in this last decade of the nineteenth century, when so many orchestral batons are waving, and so many academies of music are in full concert, and so many skilled men and women are waiting to offer instruction, there are so many people who cannot sing with any confidence in the house of God, because they have had no culture in this sacred art, or while they are able to sing a fantasia at a piano amid the fluttering fans of social admirers nevertheless feels utterly helpless when in church the surges of an "Ariel" or an "Antioch" roll over them! The old fashioned country singing school, now much derided and caricatured—and indeed sometimes it was diverted from the real design into the culture of the soft emotions rather than the voice—nevertheless did admirable work, and in our churches we need singing schools to prepare our Sabbath audiences for prompt and spontaneous and multipotent psalmody. This world needs to be stormed with hallelujahs. We want a hemispheric campaign of hosannahs. From hearing a blind beggar sing Martin Luther went home at 40 years of age to write his first hymn. In the autumn I hope to have a congregational singing school here during the week, which shall prepare the people for the songs of the holy Sabbath. If the church of God universal is going to take this world for righteousness, there must be added a hundredfold of more harmony as well as a hundredfold of more volume to sacred music.

The Divine Melody.

Further, I notice in the song of birds that it is a divinely taught song. The rarest prima donna of all the earth could not teach the robin one musical note. A kingfisher flying over the roof of a temple a-quake with harmonies would not catch up one melody. From the time that the first bird's throat was fashioned on the banks of the Gihon and Hiddekel until to-day on the Hudson or Rhine, the winged creatures has learned nothing from the human race in the way of carol or anthem. The feathered songsters learned all their music direct from God. He gave them the art in a nest of straw or moss or sticks and taught them how to lift that song into the highest heavens and sprinkle the earth with its ballet enchantments. God fashioned, God tuned, God launched, God lifted music!

And there is a kind of music that the Lord only can impart to you, my hearer. There have been depraved, reprobate, and blasphemous souls which could sing till great auditoriums were in raptures. There have been soloists and bassos and baritones and sopranos whose brilliancy in concert halls has not been more famous than their debaucheries. But there is a kind of song which, like the song of birds, is divinely fashioned. Songs of pardon. Songs of divine comfort. Songs of worship. Songs like the night" like those which David and Job mentioned. Songs full of faith and tenderness and prayer like those which the Christian mother sings over the sick cradle. Songs of a broken heart being healed. Songs of the dying flashed upon by opening portals of amethyst. Songs like that which Paul commended to the Colossians when he said, "Admonish one another in psalms and hymns and spiritual songs, singing with grace in your hearts to the Lord." Songs like Moses sang after the tragedy of the Red Sea. Songs like Deborah and Barak at the overthrow of Sisera. Songs like Isaiah heard the redeemed sing as they came to Zion. Oh, God, teach us that kind of song which thou only canst teach and help us to sing it on earth and sing it in Heaven. It was the highest result of sweet sound when under the playing of Paganini one auditor exclaimed reverently, "Oh, God!" and another sobbed out, "Oh, Christ!"

The Songs of Hope.

Further, I remark in regard to the song of birds that it is trustful and without any fear of what may yet come. Will you tell me how it is possible for that wren, that sparrow, that chickadee, to sing so sweetly when they may any time be pounced on by a hawk and torn wing from wing? There are cruel beaks in the bush and in the sky ready to slay the song birds. Herods on the wing. Modocs of the sky. Assassins armed with iron claw. Murderers of song floating up and down the heavens. How can the birds sing amid such perils? Besides that, how is the bird sure to get its food? Millions of birds have been starved. Yet it sings in the dawn with the certainty of breakfast or dinner or supper. Would it not be better to gather its food for the day before vocalizing? Besides that, the hunters are abroad. Bang! goes a gun in one direction. Bang! goes a gun in another direction. The song will attract the shot and add to the peril. Besides that, yonder is a thunder cloud, and there may be hurricane and hail to be let loose, and what then will become of you, the poor warbler? Besides that, winter will come, and it may be smitten down before it gets to the tropics. Have you never seen the snow strewn with the birds belated in their migration? The titmouse mingles its voice with the snowstorm as Emerson describes the little thing he found in tempestuous January:

> Here was thistledown in full breath
> Hurling defiance at vast death;
> This scrap of valor just for play
> From the north wind in waistcoat gray.

For every bird a thousand perils and disasters hovering and sweeping round and round. Yet there it sings, and it is a trustful song. The bird that has it the hardest sings the sweetest.

Songs of Family Life.

Further, I notice that the song of birds is a family song. Even those of the feathered throng which have no song at all make what utterances they do in sounds of their own family of birds. The hoot of the owl, the clatter of the magpie, the crow of the chanticleer, the drumming of the grouse, the laugh of the loon in the Adirondacks, the cackle of the hen, the scream of the eagle, the croak of the raven, are sounds belonging to each particular family, but when you come to those which have real songs, how suggestive that it is a song in a family song! All the skylarks, all the nightingales, all the goldfinches, all the blackbirds, all the cuckoos, prefer the song of their own family and never sing anything else.

So the most deeply impressive songs we ever sing are family songs. They have come down from generation to generation. You were sung to sleep in your infancy and childhood by songs that will sing in your soul forever. Where was it, my brother or sister, that you heard the family song—on the banks of the Ohio, or the Alabama, or the Androscoggin, or the Connecticut, or the Tweed, or the Thames, or the Raritan? That song at eventide, when you were tired out—indeed too tired to sleep, and you cried with leg ache, and you were rocked and sung to sleep—you hear it now, the soft voice from sweet lips, she as tired, perhaps more tired than you, but she rocked and you slumbered. Oh, those family songs!

The songs that father sang, that mother sang, that sisters and brothers sang. They roll on us to-day with a reminiscence that fills the throat as well as the heart with emotion. In our house in my childhood it was always a religious song. I do not know that the old folks knew anything but religious songs. At any rate I never heard them sing anything else. It was "Jesus, Lover of My Soul," or "Rock of Ages," or "There Is a Fountain Filled With Blood," or "Mary to the Saviour's Tomb." Mothers, be careful what you sing your children to sleep with. Better have in it something that will help that boy thirty years from now to bear up under the bombardment of temptation.

Better have in it something that will help that daughter thirty years from now when upon her comes the cares of motherhood, and the agonies of bereavement, and the brutal treatment of one who swore before high Heaven that he would cherish and protect. Do not waste the best hour for making an impression upon your little one, the hour of dusk, the beach between the day and the night. Sing not a doleful song, but a suggestive song, a Christian song, a song you will not be ashamed to meet when it comes to you in the eternal destiny of your son and daughter. The oriole has a loud song, and the chewink a long song, and the bluebird a short song, but it is always a family song, and let your gloaming song to your children, whether loud or long or short, be a Christian song.

These family songs are about all we keep of the old homestead. The house where you were born will go into the hands of strangers. The garments that were carefully kept as relics will become moth eaten. The family Bible can go into the possession of only one of the family. The lock of gray hair may be lost from the locket, and in a few years all signs and mementos of the old homestead will be gone forever. But the family songs those that we heard at 2 years of age, at 5 years of age, at 10 years of age, will be indestructible, and at 40 or 50 or 60 or 70 years of age will give us a mighty boost over some rough place in the path of our pilgrimage.

The Captives' Song.

Many years ago a group of white children were captured and carried off by the Indians. Years after a mother who had lost two children in that capture went among the Indians, and there were many white children in line, but so long a time had passed the mother could not tell which were hers until she began to sing the old nursery song, and her two children immediately rushed up, shouting, "Mamma! Mamma!" Yes, there is an immortality in a nursery song. Hear it, all the mothers—an immortality of power to rescue and save.

What an occasion that must have been in Washington Dec. 17, 1850, when Jenny Lind sang "Home, Sweet Home," the author of those words, John Howard Payne, seated before her! She had rendered her other favorite songs, "Casta Diva" and her "Flute Song," with fine effect, but when she struck "Home Sweet Home" John Howard Payne rose under the power, and President Fillmore and Henry Clay and Daniel Webster and the whole audience rose with him. Anything connected with home ransacks our entire nature with a holy power, and songs that get well started in the nursery or by the family hearth roll on after the lips that sung them are forever silent and the ears that first heard them forever cease to hear.

I preach this sermon just before many of you will go out to pass days or weeks in the country. Be careful how you treat the birds. Remember they are God's favorites, and if you offend them you offend Him. He is so fond of their voices that there are forests where for a hundred miles no human foot has ever trod and no human ear has ever listened. Those inviolable forests are concert halls with only one auditor —the Lord God Almighty. He builded those auditoriums of leaves and sky and supports all that infinite minstrelsy for Himself alone. Be careful how you treat His favorite choir.

In Deuteronomy he warns the people, "If a bird's nest chance to be before thee in the way in any tree, or on the ground, whether they be young ones or eggs, thou shalt not take the dam with the young, that it may be well with thee, and that thou mayest prolong thy days." So you see your own longevity is related to your treatment of birds. Then go forth and attend the minstrelsy. Put off startling colors, which frighten the winged songsters into silence and put on quiet and more sober attire and move noiselessly into the woods, farther and farther from the main road, and have no conversation, for many a concert in and out of doors has been ruined by persistent talkers, and then sit down on a mossy bank—

> Where a wild stream with headlong shock
> Comes rattling down a bed of rock.

And after perhaps a half an hour of intense solitude there will be a tap of a beak on a tree branch far up sounding like the tap of a musical baton, and then first there will be a solo, followed by a duet or quartet and afterward by doxologies in all the tree tops and amid the branches, and if you have a Bible along with you and you can without rustling the leaves turn to the one hundred and forty-eighth Psalm of David and read, "Praise the Lord, beasts and cattle, creeping things and flying fowl," and then turn over quietly to my text and read, "By them shall the fowls of the heaven have their habitation, which sing among the branches," or if under the power of the bird voices you are transported, as when Dr. Worgan played so powerfully on the organ at St. John's that Richard Cecil said he was in such blessed bewilderment he could not find in his Bible the first chapter of Isaiah, though he leafed the book over and over, and you shall be so overcome with forest harmony that you cannot find the Psalm which David never sang, for God will speak to you so mightily it will make no difference whether you hear His voice from the printed page or the vibrating throat of one of His plumed creatures.

God's First Temples.

While this summer more than usual out of doors let us have what my text suggests—an out of doors religion. What business had David, with all the advantages of a costly religious service and smoking incense on the altar, to be listening to the chantress among the tree branches? Ah, he wanted to make himself and all who should come after him more alert and more worshipful amid the sweet sounds and beautiful sights of the natural world. There is an old church that needs to be rededicated. It is older than St. Paul's or St. Peter's or St. Mark's or St. Sophia's or St. Isaac's. It is the cathedral of nature. That is the church in which the services of the millennium will be held. The buildings fashioned out of stone and brick and mortar will not hold the people.

Again the Mount of Olives will be the pulpit. Again the Jordan will be the baptistry. Again the mountains will be the galleries. Again the skies will be the blue ceiling. Again the sunrise will be the front door and the sunset the back door of that temple. Again the clouds will be the upholstery and the morning mist the incense. Again the trees will be the organ loft where "the fowls of Heaven have their habitation which sing among the branches." Saint Francis d'Assisi preached a sermon to birds and pronounced a benediction upon them, but all birds preach to us, and their benediction is almost supernal.

While this summer amid the works of God let us learn responsiveness. Surely if we cannot sing we can hum a tune, we can whistle. If we cannot be an oriole, we can be a quail. In some way let us demonstrate our gratitude to God. Let us not be beaten by the chimney swallow and the humming bird and the brown thrasher. Let us try to set everything in our life to music, and if we cannot give the carol of the song sparrow take the plaint of the hermit thrush. Let our life be an anthem of worship to the God who created us and the Christ who ransomed us and the Holy Ghost who sanctifies us. And our last song may it be our best song!

THE HEROES OF 1777.

AN IMPORTANT BATTLE OF THE REVOLUTION.

The Part That Bennington, Vt., Played in Our Struggle for Freedom—Gen. John Stark of the New Hampshire Militia—The Catamount Tavern.

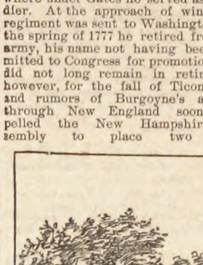
A Page from History.

The evacuation of Ticonderoga on July 7, 1777, had carried sorrow and foreboding throughout the country. It involved great loss of army stores and was accompanied by a depressing influence on the American troops. At that time Gen. Schuyler held the entrance gate to the North River, but New England seemed at the mercy of the British. In the extremity to which the country was brought the new army and its leader were providentially furnished and in a short time threw down the gauntlet to the invaders.

John Stark, who was selected at this critical period by the colonial authorities of New Hampshire to lead the militia, had acquired a good reputation as a soldier in the French war and in the early battles of the Revolution. August 28, 1728, he was born in Londonderry, N. H. During the French war of 1755 Stark was given a commission in Rogers' corps of frontiersmen.

JOHN STARK.

On the cessation of war, in 1759, he retired to his home and followed agricultural pursuits for the following sixteen years. The first blood of the Revolution shed at Lexington started him from his quiet life, and, like Putnam, he left everything behind and went to the field of action. In two days at Medford he had mustered thirteen full companies and soon received a Colonel's commission. His regiment was ordered to Ticonderoga in the summer of 1776, where under Gates he served as brigadier. At the approach of winter his regiment was sent to Washington. In the spring of 1777 he retired from the army, his name not having been submitted to Congress for promotion. He did not long remain in retirement, however, for the fall of Ticonderoga and rumors of Burgoyne's advance through New England soon compelled the New Hampshire Assembly to place two brigades under his command, and with power to act independently of Congress. The rendezvous of this force was at Charlestown, on the Connecticut River, and, later, in the valley of Otter creek, north of Manchester. Rumors of a foray by Burgoyne, in the direction of Bennington, then a frontier town of 1,500 inhabitants, caused Stark, on the 8th of August, to leave Manchester with his brigade for that place. His force then consisted of 900 men, the rest being out on various expeditions. On the 9th of August he encamped on the west of the town. The Council of Safety was then sitting in the famous "Catamount Tavern"—a name given it from the stuffed skin of a catamount placed on the summit of a pole supporting the landlord's business sign. On the 13th his scouts reported the arrival of 150 Indians at Cambridge, twelve miles distant, and later it was learned that they were the advance guard of a more formidable body under Gen. Baum, assisted by Gov. Skene. The 14th and 15th were spent in skirmishing and maneuvering. The morning of the 16th dawned clear and bright, and Stark gave orders to prepare for battle. The American troops now consisted of eight incomplete regiments, in all about 1,750 men. The British force numbered 1,600 men.



THE OLD CATAMOUNT TAVERN, BENNINGTON.

As midday approached the Americans were massed to receive orders; the locality was a large field, the entrance to which was by sliding bars and tall posts peculiar to the vicinity. Stark leaped to the topmost rail, steadied himself by the tall post, and harangued his troops in the well-known sentences: "Now, my men, yonder are the Hessians; they were bought for seven pounds tenpence a man. Are you worth more? Prove it. To-night the American flag floats over yonder hill, or Molly Stark sleeps a widow." Throwing knapsacks, jackets, and all baggage in a heap, and placing a guard over them, the force started for the hill on which the enemy lay. The plan of battle was that while Stark was to engage the enemy by marching slowly back and forward in front of the hill to engage their attention, Col. Herrick's Rangers, with the Bennington militia, 300 strong, were sent to make a detour of Baum's right; Col. Nichols, with 350 men, was sent to the rear of the enemy's left—the two forces, when joined, to make an attack; 200 men under Col. Stickney and Col. Hobart, including part of the Berkshire militia, were sent against the Tory works on the hill, with directions to keep concealed in a cornfield near by and await the opening of the action at Baum's Hill. The scheme worked, and about 3 o'clock in the afternoon the Yankee coil commenced to tighten about the now bewildered British. A hot and obstinate fight was waged for about an hour, neither side suffering great loss. Suddenly the reports of the muskets and small arms were drowned by a detonation which shook the hills and for a moment spread consternation among both sides. An ammunition cart of the Hessians had exploded. Instantly comprehending the situation, the Americans made a dash which nothing could withstand. Baum was driven from the hill and into the arms of Stark's forces which were advancing from the south. At the foot of the hill the swords of Baum were sheathed and in a short time threw down the gauntlet to the invaders.

Hardly was this victory won when reinforcements arrived on both sides, but again the Americans, after a sharp conflict, were victorious and took many prisoners and valuable stores, together with some important papers.

At the close of the war home and the quiet pursuits of life had great attractions for the war-worn soldier, and thither Gen. Stark returned with a constitution somewhat impaired. In the care of the farm his remaining days were spent. He died May 8, 1822, at the ripe age of 94, after a life of usefulness and devotion which will stand, not as a monument of stone for years or centuries, but in the minds of men for all time.

A FOURTH OF JULY DIVERSION.

How American Marines Spent the Day in Chinese Waters.

"I remember a Fourth of July spent on board a man-of-war in Chinese waters," said Capt. R. E. Clark, of the Revenue Marine, "when the sailors had nothing better to do for amusement than to make an effigy of one of Uncle Sam's boys, which they did by making up a lay figure out of their cast-off garments. We were on the Monocacy, lying in harbor at Hong Kong, and it was the evening of the Fourth and also of pay day. After each man had marched up to the window of the pilot house and received his dues, they seized our effigy and propped him up in line.

"'Here's another man who wants his money,' said one of the men.

"The paymaster supposed it was the pilot and shoved his money over, but as he saw the figure he drew it quickly away again.

"Then we pitched him down stairs into the firemen's room, and had the fun of seeing several of the men run to pick him up, supposing he was a comrade in distress.

"But the best of the fun came the next morning, when the Chinese women came round our ship in their sampans looking for loot. We took our man and pitched him overboard just as a sampan filled with native girls drew near. He fell across the bow of their boat, and they shrieked and chattered like fear, believing him to be a real sailor; but in a moment some older women in another sampan reached for him with their boat hook and he went to pieces. There was then a free fight for the clothes, which were snatched in all directions, making much diversion for us, as the women fought and clutched, in their greed to secure some things of value. Small as this incident was, it gave us a Fourth of July diversion."

THE FOURTH AT PIKEVILLE.

An Elaborate Program Which Was Intercepted by the Weather.

THE Fourth will never be forgotten at Pikeville. The program was prepared at a meeting thirty days beforehand. The meeting was exciting. Miss Laura De Sha was selected to read the Declaration of Independence. "She's the only young lady that can read, I suppose," whispered Mrs. Ames, and she glanced at her five grown daughters. Whispers continued until twenty women had agreed never to buy even a yard of calico at Mr. De Sha's store. Six young ladies said they would not speak to Miss De Sha any more.

Dr. Bunkerman was elected orator.

"Maybe he's the only man in town who can make a speech," muttered Lawyer Tibbs, and his gold-headed cane struck the floor.

"I wouldn't have him doctor a canary," said Mrs. Tibbs. Two lawyers, one doctor, and four district school teachers agreed with Mrs. Tibbs.

The grocer, Mr. Brown, proposed a foot-race.

"I object!" thundered Squire Mudd. "Let's have a jumping contest. My Thomas can jump with any of the boys, but he can't run."

The majority, however, voted for the foot-race, and Squire Mudd and nineteen others said they would get their groceries in Swamptown for the future.

The blacksmith, William Bonn, moved to adjourn.

Joseph Scanlan and Johnny Gray opposed the motion, but it was carried, and Mr. Scanlan, Mr. Gray and ten more said their horses should go unshod rather than be taken to Bonn's.

For weeks after this meeting people passing the homes of Miss De Sha and Doctor Bunkerman late at night could hear her reading the "Declaration" in a sweet voice, and the Doctor rehearsing his oration, now softly, now in tones loud enough to be almost sublime.

At night men were seen here and there running in alleys and pastures by starlight. They were practicing for the foot race.

The third of July came. Until midnight mothers and daughters ironed white dresses. Dissatisfaction with the program would keep no one at home tomorrow. All would celebrate. And every one was delighted that the sun had set in a clear sky arched by two rainbows, and that now at midnight all the stars shone.

Little birds were awaking one by one on the morning of the Fourth, when all the windows in all the houses of Pikeville rattled. People leaped from their beds to close the shutters. The lightning flashed. Women ran into cellars. Rain fell heavily all day, and no one went out of doors.

CAPTURE OF THE EAGLE.

A Fourth of July That Was Celebrated in Effective Fashion.

THE cows were grazing in 1813 on the ground where the lofty buildings far "down town" in New York now stand. Instead of beautiful Central Park the Battery was then the pleasure ground of the citizens—a delightful spot, with green turf and graceful trees, swept by the sea-breezes and overlooking the harbor. On that Fourth of July, the Battery was thronged with eager spectators, all gazing at two vessels newly come to anchor. One was a trim shapely sloop-of-war, the other a common fishing-smack. Not a very astonishing spectacle for the people of a maritime city, one might suppose. Yet women waved their handkerchiefs at the two crafts, little children were held aloft to see them, cheer after cheer resounded, and it seemed as if the rejoicing would never cease. The explanation is in the story of how the sloop-of-war and fishing-smack came there.

Probably all American school children old enough to study the history of their country know that we were at war with our mother country, England, in 1813. The British fleet under Commodore Beresford was cruising up and down the coast. The vessels stationed to protect New York were commanded by Commodore Lewis, among whose officers was Lieut. John Percival, a young man already famous among his companions for his quick wit and fearlessness. News of the burning of a coaster by a British man-of-war had roused him to an intense desire for retaliation. His fertile brain soon devised a plan for which he received the approval of Commodore Lewis. Lieut. Percival determined to try his ruse on the Fourth of July; perhaps because he imagined that "Independence Day" might bring good luck, perhaps because he wished to celebrate it in a memorable fashion. Doffing his uniform, he disguised himself as a fisherman, borrowed a smack, bought a calf, a sheep and some geese, tied them on deck, and sailed down the harbor to Sandy Hook with a fresh wind. He stood out to sea, apparently bound on a trip to the fishing-banks.

Lieutenant Percival remained alone on deck, his hand on the helm, watching every movement of the English war-sloop Eagle. But thirty picked men on whose courage he could rely were concealed below, armed with muskets, and on the alert to catch their leader's command. The smack had passed a short distance beyond Sandy Hook when the Eagle gave chase and soon overhauled her. Noticing the live stock on deck, the British Captain ordered her down to Commodore Beresford's ship, the Poictiers, which lay in the offing about five miles away. "Aye, aye, sir," replied the pretended fisherman. At the same intant he put up his helm and swung the smack alongside the Eagle. Before the crew of the war-ship had time to catch the meaning of this unexpected maneuver, Percival's ringing shout of "Lawrence, Lawrence!" fell upon their ears. Then broke out the rattle of musketry as the armed men, at the sound of the watchword, sprang to the deck of the smack.

The English sailors, taken completely by surprise, rushed below, some in a panic, some for cutlasses and weapons. The captain of the Eagle, trying to rally his men, was mortally wounded, to the great grief of Lieutenant Percival, who vainly tried to stanch the life-blood of his country's great foe. It was the news of this capture which brought the eager crowd to the beautiful Battery. Every one was anxious to see the little smack and her stately prize, and to welcome the gallant officer who had celebrated the Fourth of July in so effective a fashion.—Youth's Companion.

Fourth of July in the Woods.