

THE JERSEY MOSQUITO UNBOSSOMS HIMSELF

Heart to Heart Talk with an Old Settler.

By John Kendrick Bangs



HE was not registered at the office of the hotel, and the landlord denied his presence, but I knew he was there, just the same, for several friends who had been down on the Jersey coast spending their vacation and a good deal of money to boot had written me that he was passing the summer in the neighborhood. Moreover, he was in the hotel piazza as I drove up, conducting an outrageous flirtation with an exceedingly pretty girl from Kansas City, who, apparently, was not favorably inclined toward his advances. She was doing her best to give him his come, and it is my impression that any individual less hardened than he to continual rebuffs would have taken the hint and gone on his way.

He recognized me the moment I alighted, and, perhaps recalling the rather cool reception I had given him when he had last ventured into my presence, immediately disappeared around the corner, and if sounds meant anything, made his way down to the beach, humming that little tune for which he and his tribe are famous.

It was irritating to have him do this, for I had travelled all the way to Long Branch to interview him, and, remembering how persistently upon previous occasions he had pursued me, in spite of my repeated efforts to be rid of him, I was disgusted that he should avoid me upon the one occasion when he was really wanted.

If he was angry with me, then, of course, my representations to the editor that I'd interview him in a fifty would all go for naught, and I began to devise methods by which he should be lured into my presence. My first thought was to hire a bathing suit, and pursue him to the beach, and then I remembered that, in all my past experience with him I had never seen him in the surf. I then sat down and wrote him a note, stating my errand, and tried to have it delivered, but from proprietor to hallway there was not a living soul in the hotel who would admit his presence.

"reated Quite Coily."
"I will waylay him at supper," I thought, but this plan also was unavailing, for, though he passed through the dining room, stopping several times en route to exchange what I doubt not he considered civilities with other diners, I was unable to catch his eye. Later in the evening there was a stiff sea breeze blowing, and up to midnight he had not appeared on the scene and I retired to my little oven beneath the roof very much disheartened. Evidently for the first time in his life this Jersey Mosquito was treating me coily.

I dropped off into a light slumber and must have dozed for an hour, when I awakened with a start. Somebody was humming a familiar strain in the room next to mine, and it was not long before my scattered faculties were recalled again, and I realized that my opportunity had come. The voice was none other than that of the New Jersey Mosquito I had so earnestly sought, and by some odd chance our rooms were adjoining.

To knock at his door was the work of a moment.
"Come in," he answered, pleasantly.
"I can't," I replied, "the door is locked."
"Fly in through the transom," he answered, "or the keyhole. That's the way I always come in."

I laughed. "It's evident you don't know who I am," I said. "I haven't any wings."
"Guess you will have, either," he warbled, airily. "Climb out of your window on to the fire escape and come in that way. It's a bit dangerous, but it's the only other way, for the fact is I'm locked in and the key is down in the office."

It was a perilous proceeding, and when I looked out of the window and saw what a melancholy would follow a misstep I balked.
"You come over here to my room," I suggested. "That's the safest plan."
"All right," said he. "Just wait a second while I wash my face and hands, and I'll join you. I've been taking a spin on the hind wheel of an automobile, and I'm kind of grimy."

Came Through the Transom.
He was good as his word, and five minutes later he came buzzing in through the transom over my hall door, and perched himself on the brass knob of my bedstead.
"Well," said he, "what can I do for you? Too full blooded for this weather?"
"No," said I. "I haven't come to you professionally. When I want to be bled I'll go to the office and get another kind of bill than yours. I've come down here to interview you."

"Interview me?" he cried sceptically, rubbing his proboscis with his fore-feeler.
"About what?"
"Oh, things in general," I answered. "Music, art, letters, politics, divorce, yourself—anything you choose to say we shall be very glad to print."
"In my own language?" he demanded with a glittering eye.
"Well, as nearly so as possible," said I, cautiously. "You must remember that some terms that will do very well for a golf link won't go in the family circle."
"I thought there was a string tied to it somewhere," he said, crossing his knees reflectively, and buzzing forth his little tune. "Well, five ahead—I'll answer any question you put to me."
"Well, you might begin with a little dissertation on 'Wild People I Have Bitten,'" I suggested.
"Ah—you want my personal recollections and impressions, eh?" he said.
"Well, I've done a good deal of biting in my day. From Bar Harbor to Palm Beach I've tapped the best veins of the country, and I know a thing or two about what I might call the 'Delicateness of Humanity,'" he remarked.
"How has your digestion stood the test?" I asked.
"Very well, except at Newport," he replied. "At Newport my health was so badly shattered that in a paper that I read before the Mosquito Convention at Milwaukee last



month, I advised parents not to let their young visit Newport until they were of full stature and had had their digestions subjected to a paté de foie gras and champagne test of the most thorough order. After a single evening spent at the home of my dear friend, Mrs. Struyvesant Square, on Bellevue avenue, just season, I assure you, on my honor as a mosquito, that I had to go on a milk and water diet for six months.

"I stumbled in upon a dinner party that charming lady was giving to Jo-Jo, the dog-faced boy from Barnum's, and after one bite upon the luscious cheek of Miss Pollie Van Hooten, the most beautiful debutante of the season, I found I had unwittingly absorbed so much champagne that it made me reckless, and I flew from guest to guest, taking a nip here and another there, until in one hour I was utterly unconscious of what I was doing. When I came to I found myself floating on my back in the Atlantic Ocean."

"Great Scott!" I cried. "It's a wonder you weren't drowned."
"Oh, no," said the mosquito, scratching his proboscis absently. "You see my head swam so I got ashore all right. I laughed, but otherwise remained silent

in the presence of so resourceful a creature and he soon began again.
"Saratoga's just as bad, only in a different way," he observed, quietly. "I hadn't bitten two people up there before I was howling for a chance to bet all my chips on the double O, and back every horse on the track with the hard end of a 10 to 1 shot. After a day there I was ready to gamble on anything from the number of blue bottle flies in the dining room to Bryan as the next candidate of the republican party on a prohibition platform. It was too fierce for me, and when I saw two small boys out in Congress Park playing roulette with a marble and the hind wheel of a baby carriage I fled."

"There isn't to be any of that there this summer," said I.
"There isn't?" he demanded. "Then they've taken the place off the map, that's all. You might as well try to make a comfortable bed with a mineral spring as reform Saratoga in one season."

"Where did you go from Saratoga?" I asked.
"Lenox," he said. "To get rested up and cooled off. I sampled three people up at Lenox and immediately fell into a peaceful slumber that lasted five weeks."

"Beautiful, but, Lord save us, I couldn't stay there more than fifteen minutes. My storage capacity is limited, and flitting like a bee from millionaire to millionaire for twenty-four hours a day, I couldn't accumulate gold enough to stay in the game ten minutes," he said with a sigh. "It's a lovely place, though, and if there is to be a mosquito heaven for those who lead good and innocent lives I hope it will be located in some such beautiful spot."

"Can a mosquito lead a good and innocent life?" I queried doubtfully.

Where the Indians Quarried Their Flint Arrowheads.
ALL boys and a great many men have wondered how the Indians made their weapons, knives, arrowheads and spears, from cold, glassy flint, forty times harder than iron and full of fire when you strike them with steel. But for the flintlock guns of early American days how could the heroes of Fenimore Cooper have done their wonderful shooting? For a century boys have been digging up arrowheads in ploughed fields, but where the flint originally came from to be fashioned into weapons of war has been a mystery.

At last there is light on the subject. The American Museum Expedition, under Harlan J. Smith, announces the discovery of the prehistoric quarries where the extinct Pacific coast Indians got flint for their weapons.

It was on June 10 that these quarries were discovered, in the solitudes of the Selah Canyon of the Natchez River, seven miles from North Yakima, in the State of Washington. According to geological, archeological and other signs, these mines must be of a few centuries old. Perhaps when Alexander the Great was taming his famous stallion the American Indians were whittling out flint weapons by thousands. Perhaps the flint was once like clay, easy to fashion. But it is as hard as diamonds now.

Professor Smith's Discovery.
Until this recent discovery it was one of the mysteries of archaeology where the coast Indians got their silica and how they made their weapons from it. This is how the flint mine was discovered—Professor Smith started from the Pacific coast on muleback to determine exactly how far the coast Indians of prehistoric times wandered inland. A big flood was raging in the Yakima River. The thermometer stood at 100 degrees and rattlesnakes were as thick as blackberries, frightening both the mule and the Professor.

For a time the survey was interrupted by these swarms of rattlesnakes that the floods had driven from their overlowed dens. Frequently there were enough snakes within a mile to bind the Nebraska wheat crop. In dodging the snakes and hunting for places of safety Professor Smith made the discovery of flint that will give him fame.

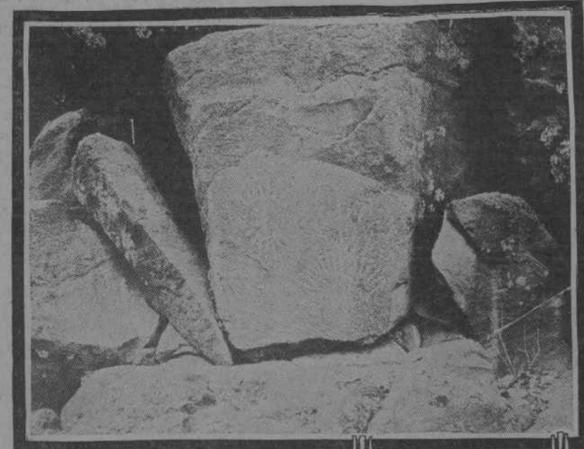
He entered a canyon with misgivings, but finding the walls of the great cliffs covered with prehistoric inscriptions and pictures he became oblivious to danger. In amazement he deciphered the prehistoric inscriptions and drawings on the rocky walls, telling that further up there was something of importance. Ascending to a considerable altitude he came upon the debris of ancient quarries. The fragments of flint boulders indicated

the presence of the original aborigines—the flint carvers of the prehistoric world.

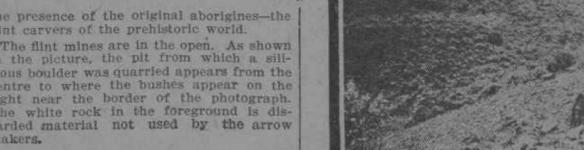
The flint mines are in the open. As shown in the picture, the pit from which a silicious boulder was quarried appears from the centre to where the bushes appear on the right near the border of the photograph. The white rock in the foreground is discarded material not used by the arrow makers.

Flints Still Awaiting Shipment.
A pile of flint rocks ready for use still await transportation. Chips of blocks that had been removed lie in piles around the quarry for a quarter of a mile. A stone hammer for quarrying was found on the dump. Specimens of the rock and samples of the weapons and stone hammers have been shipped East.

It is expected that the experts will now be



GUIDE POST TO THE PREHISTORIC FLINT QUARRY, THE INSCRIPTION MEANS STRAIGHT AHEAD.



THE ANCIENT FLINT QUARRY.

"Oh, yes," he replied. "We become what we eat, you know, and the mosquito who bites only babies is sure of eternal felicity."
"Are you interested in letters?" I asked, somewhat impressed by this statement.
"Very much," he answered. "Particularly in historical novels. I am very anxious, in fact, about the historical novel, for I firmly believe that it is only through this medium that my much maligned race can finally be vindicated. I gave the real historians up as a narrow minded, bigoted lot, from whose pens we can never hope to obtain justice, long ago."
He paused a moment, and seeing that he had something of real importance on his mind I held my tongue.

"I suppose," he said, in a few moments, "that it is only another example of the ingratitude of republics, but the American people, forgetful of our tremendous service to their cause in the War of the Revolution, are now actually trying to exterminate us—aye, even in this State that we have made glorious. Who won the Battle of Monmouth, anyhow?"
"I have a vague impression that George Washington, aided by two distinguished foreigners, known as the Marquis de Lafayette and Baron von Steuben, had that honor," said I.
"Tarradiddle, likewise fudge!" ejaculated the Mosquito, wrathfully. "That's what the historians tell you, but I tell you Clinton had 'em licked. The Americans under Lee had retreated to that marshy ravine just off the Middletown road. The British, in hot pursuit, were carrying everything before them, when up from the marsh, ten thousand strong, under the command of no less a person than my great-great-grandfather, rose an army of good American mosquitoes, who fell upon the invaders hip and thigh to Middletown in search of witch hazel and pennyroyal."
"But Washington?" I began.
"Washington nothing!" he retorted. "His job was easy. All he had to do was to follow us. The minute the British dropped their arms to scratch themselves after our attack there wasn't a show of resistance, and yet, where are we or our great feat mentioned in history? Fleke says the British loss was much greater than 46, but he doesn't refer to the number that were put out of the game because they were bitten by that noble phalanx of warriors under my great-great-grandfather and to-day, instead of erecting a monument or what the Greeks used to call aere prennius in his memory

on that battle field, the State of New Jersey is actually appropriating sums of money to have us exterminated."
Excited Over the Great Wrong
My interesting vis-a-vis became so excited over his great wrong that I did not venture to correct the slight error in his classical allusion. I contented myself with the observation that the people did seem somewhat ungrateful.
"It is the crime of the ages!" he cried, agitatedly walking up and down the brass rail of the bedstead and waving his proboscis so fiercely in the air that I feared he would fall and break his neck on the counterpane. "But some day some historical novelist who is not afraid of the truth will come along and write the true story of how General Culex Mosquito, of the Amboy Guards, really won the battle of Monmouth and freed the American people from the hated yoke of George the—ah—well, I've forgotten the man's number, but you know the chap I mean."
"What are you doing now?" I asked, hoping to divert his mind from his indignation.
"Leading a strenuous life," he replied, sitting down again on the brass knob and making an effort to calm himself. "I'm training a mosquito band to take Duss' place next summer in New York. I've got a couple of hundred good voles that cover every note that can be found in Wagner, and I'm working hard with them over in the woods on Long Island to get them in shape for next season. Each one strikes a different note, you know, and in combination they sound off the most delightful chords and harmonies imaginable. They can do the 'Cavalleria Rusticana' Intermezzo, and the 'Bamboos Tree' pretty well now, but you can't give a series of fifty concerts on those two numbers, you know—that is, not outside of a restaurant."

I admitted the truth of this observation, for I had never having the faintest idea of the utter futility of attempting to do anything of the sort.
"That's a mighty interesting news item, and I should be glad to become your press agent," said I. "But do you think in a place like the Madison Square Garden you could make yourselves heard?"
"The mosquito's voice is hardly more voluminous than the still, small voice of conscience."
"Oh, yes," said he. "You see, we all sit inside of a megaphone when we play."
Just then a sonorous snore from the room beneath mine, which was occupied by a gentleman who had worn a diamond the size of an automobile headlight in his shirt front at dinner, was heard, and my guest rose up hastily.
"Jerusalem!" he cried, "it's two o'clock. That chap always strikes the hour that way. I must be off."
"Oh, stay and tell me some more," I pleaded.
"I'd like to very much," he said, with a sigh. "But I cannot. I have work to do. You see, I am the only mosquito in the place this summer, and if I didn't pay attention to my business the guests would think they had

able to solve the great problem of the extinct coast Indians—just why they ceased to exist. These are considered important questions, as the tribes left remarkable fortifications along the whole coast and entirely around Vancouver and other coast islands. In addition, they had magazines well stocked with arms. The fortifications are such that they might easily be defended with modern guns.

That such a powerful and well organized people, expert in war, should have become extinct in the prime of their national life is a problem to be solved. They left evidences of culture visible, exactly as if they had suddenly abandoned it—been annihilated. Was it some Martinique explosion of gas or some awful pestilence, with clouds of scorpion locusts dropping from the sky?

It could not have been an earthquake such as Mark Twain experienced, in midnight dishabille, and was advised by a San Francisco lady to run for a clothing store. If it had been an earthquake the tools and half manufactured flints would not be lying just as they were left ages ago, when Alexander was taming horses. Coming scientific reports on these discoveries, with photographs and drawings, will be of great interest to the public.

been cheated. You can't run the New Jersey coast without a mosquito any more than you can play 'Hamlet' without the melancholy Dane, or Mansfield without Richard."
And with this he buzzed off toward the transom, and, with a pleasant smile, waving all his feelers at me graciously, disappeared into the darkness of the corridor.
I have thought a good deal since about that revolutionary episode and really think his kind deserves some recognition. I shall write to the President, suggesting that my friend be given a comfortable governmental job, in token of his family's service to the nation. The administration can very well afford to secure him an appointment in Havana to try yellow fever experiments on. The pay is not high and the place is no sinecure, but it is an honor to serve the cause of the world's health, and certainly the preference is not too great for one who is a lineal descendant of him who, if his story can be confirmed, saved the day at Monmouth.

Fortune Ruined and Vanished
The Story of a Night.
T was the day of my deepest despondency, closing with a dark outlook that promised only disaster. All had gone wrong. The requested raise in a meagre salary had been denied; my wife and child, both sick, had gone from home under our physician's advice; at great expense, that same physician's bill, for nearly a hundred dollars, was in my pocket, unpaid; rent was past due on my little unpretentious flat, and I had issued a check that would draw my last dollar from the bank.

"What am I to do?" I asked myself, as I tossed on my bed at midnight. I courted sleep without avail. My mental tortures were added to by a distressing headache and a most rebellious stomach. I thought of my sick wife and child, and with every thought it seemed as though there came to me the



deep voice of a great bell, ringing out the word "Money!"
"Money! Money! Money!" I could endure it no longer. I sprang from my bed, dressed, and hurried into the street, hoping that fresh air and exercise would induce sleep. I passed the bank where my last check had gone to destroy the remainder of my small account, and turned this corner into one of the darkest streets.
The exercise was affecting my stomach, and to rest my dizzy head I stepped into a vacant lot through an opening in a high dilapidated fence.
For a few seconds I stood with my head against the rough boards, when I heard the sound of hurrying feet. A man passed, running rapidly, and threw something that fell near me. A few seconds afterward several other men went running in the same direction.
"What did it mean? What had the man thrown in the lot? I stooped and cautiously raised a strong paper bag that was quite heavy. I stepped to the opening in the fence, where some light from a lamp across the street entered, and examined my find.
"Money! It is money!" I said, half aloud, when I saw great packages of bills that I knew must count into the thousands of dollars. "My money! my money!" I was startled at the thought. I felt as though I was guilty of a crime. No one was in sight. I hurried past the bank and into my lone-some home.

"The bank!" I whispered. "It must have been robbed, and the thief in his flight threw the money away, hoping to return and find it when the pursuit is over. He will not find it. It is mine!"
I saw that the doors were locked and the shades down, and that I could not see the bills. Forty-two thousand dollars! I could pay my debts and have ample means to restore my wife and child to health.
"I possess a fortune," I said, and then I tried to sleep. Sleep did not come, but a question that assumed to be written in letters of fire appeared before my closed eyes—"Is it money?"

"The bank had lost it without my fault, the thief was not entitled to it, and fortune had placed it in my hand. Thus I argued and tried to sleep.
"Shall I tell my wife and child how I got the money?" I asked myself. Then I felt more wretched than at any time before. "I will return the money to the bank." Peace came with the thought.
After a moment the vision of my terrible poverty was stronger than before. "The end justifies the means," I said. "A little deception before wife and child will only be a slight wrong and for their great benefit. Yes; that is the way I will have it." Then I tried to sleep.

"Must I live a lie all of my life?" I asked. "Must the getting of this foundation of a fortune remain a secret with me? No! It would be a living torture. I will not make a slave of my soul!"
Then for the first time came the thought of a reward for the return of the money. That would be something. That would be legitimate. I determined to return the money to the bank in the morning, and then I slept.
The sun was high when I awoke, and I at once hurried for my morning paper to see what reward was offered for the return of the money. Not a word did I find about a bank robbery, but on the first page, under startling headlines, was an account of the raiding of a counterfeiter's den, which said:—
"Four of the men found in the room when the officer broke in the door were at once arrested, but the fifth man leaped through a back window and climbed down a fire escape, carrying a large paper bag, which evidently contained counterfeit money. He was pursued for more than a mile, but succeeded in making his escape."

"And now," said the Caliph Omar, when he had given orders to burn the Alexandrian library, "I think some important manuscripts will come to light."