

## JOHNNY APPLESEED.\*

BY J. W. STURMER.

It is hard to realize that a little more than a century ago the region which now constitutes northern Ohio and northern Indiana was a vast forest, the cherished hunting grounds of the red men. Here for unnumbered generations they kindled their camp fires, erected their wigwams, and lived their lives in peace and in tribal warfare, in accordance with their traditions. Whence they came, or when they came, no one knows; history records only the dramatic and tragic episodes of their passing.

The pale face from the distant lands of the rising sun, who came to dispute the red man's exclusive right to his ancestral hunting grounds, was no welcome intruder. But it was with an intense hatred that the Indian contemplated the influx of the pioneer who came to build a permanent home. For with his axe he felled the trees and made great clearings in the somber forest. His plow uprooted the familiar flora and prepared the ground for strange grain. His gun exterminated the game. In due course he built roads, linking the clearings, bridged the streams, drained the swamps, founded villages teeming with strange activities, and indeed changed the very face of nature as effectively as some great physical cataclysm, coming as an act of wrath of the Great Spirit.

But the influx of these dauntless and marvelously efficient pale faces, once begun, never slackened. They brought their kith and kin. Their block houses and trading posts soon occupied the strategic positions along the water courses, and the Indian saw himself dispossessed of his hunting grounds. He was forced to retreat deeper and yet deeper into the forest, which he did, however, with the determination to exact of the intruder the highest possible price in human blood. Hence it is that the early history of Ohio and Indiana is a record of ambuscades and massacre, and of the heroic defense of their newly established homes, by the early settlers.

Both history and fiction have faithfully portrayed the typical pioneer, as handy with the gun as with his tools of agriculture, a sturdy figure, the advance guard in the great military invasion which conquered the Middle West for the white man.

Yet, when about a hundred years ago, the Indians had planned a night attack upon a settlement a little more than sixty-five miles southwest of where we now sit (Cleveland), the warning was brought by a strange white man who had traversed unarmed the great forest which beyond gunshot range of the clearings was a "no man's land," full of lurking dangers; and it was he who, travelling at night, brought reinforcements from a block house thirty miles distant. A tall gaunt man, clad in clothing much the worse for wear, the coat having been improvised from a coffee sack, and the mush pot of his meager camping outfit doing service as a helmet, he must have been an odd figure, even in those unconventional days. But he was a welcome guest at every pioneer's fireside, for he was none other than Johnny Appleseed—Swedenborgian missionary, philosopher, poet, nature lover, a kind of nomadic Thoreau, but with a deep human sympathy, gentle and kindly, whose philanthropy extended to the stranger, and whose altruism contemplated

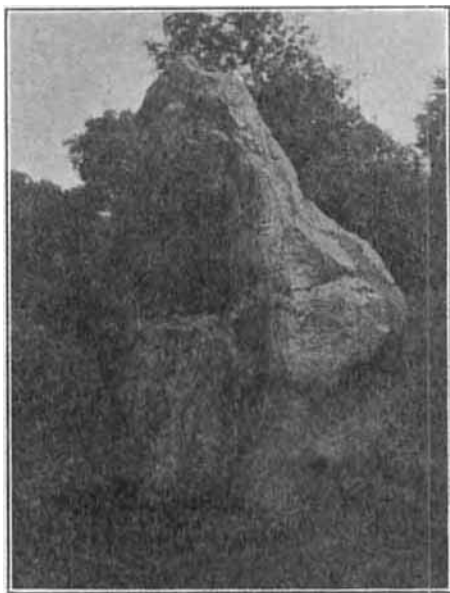
---

\* Section on Historical Pharmacy, A. Ph. A., Cleveland meeting, 1922.

the generations who were to inhabit this newly settled region. He was the pioneer nursery man of the Middle West, and the distributor of seeds of medicinal plants brought from the older settlements. As he put it—

“I love to plant a little seed  
Whose fruit I'll never see;  
Some hungry stranger it may feed,  
When it's become a tree.”

His real name was John Chapman, and his birthplace, Springfield, Massachusetts. In 1806 he arrived in Ohio, and planted his first Ohio nursery near the present town of Steubenville. From this point he moved westward and northward, until his plantings formed a chain extending into Northern Indiana. His seedlings and his seeds of herbs were distributed without charge, though he would accept a night's lodgings, a meal, or some simple article for his camping outfit. For forty-six years he was a rover, along his chain of nurseries, and at the ripe age of seventy-six he died of pneumonia, at a farmer's home, a few miles north of Fort Wayne, Indiana. Nearby, in what is known as Archer's Cemetery, rest his remains. And in Sweeney Park, in the aforementioned city, the Indiana Horticultural Society has erected a memorial to his memory, a granite boulder, worn smooth by its glacial journey from some distant parent rock. Old apple trees grown from the stock provided by Johnny Appleseed are still bearing fruit, and several may be found in Fort Wayne, near the conflux of the St. Mary and St. Joseph Rivers, which form the Maumee.



Johnny Appleseed Memorial.

But no one can estimate how many gardens in Ohio and Indiana contain medicinal plants traceable to the seeds which he distributed. He was no great botanist, and his knowledge of the medicinal worth of plants was rather erratic. And some of the unwelcome weeds, as, for example, the ill-smelling dog fennel, *anthemis cotula*, now so common in many rural school yards, and on farm land allowed to lie fallow, were disseminated by Johnny Appleseed, with the mistaken idea that he was providing valuable medicine for his fellow man. But as to that, he is far from standing alone when it comes to being in error about the true therapeutic value of plants, purported to be medicinal.

John Chapman—Johnny Appleseed—one of the most picturesque figures of the pioneer days of this section, lived a life of peace in an era of Indian wars. When his contemporaries established homes and accumulated property, he, though a poor man, spent his allotted years in practical philanthropic enterprise. He led no military expeditions, framed no laws, laid out no towns. Yet who would say that this gentle, eccentric distributor of seeds—and of young apple trees—by his

example of outstanding unselfishness, did not leave a profound impress upon the pioneers of this section? Preceding the country doctor, and the village apothecary, he was literally the pioneer in supplying medicinal herbs to the settlers of this region. The history of Ohio and Indiana pharmacy would therefore be incomplete if it did not include some reference to this uncouth but kindly wanderer in the wilderness—Johnny Appleseed.



*Wide World Photos, N. Y. Times*

#### O. HENRY IS NOT FORGOTTEN.

Archibald Henderson, accompanied by Judge Thomas A. Jones, Mrs. Charles M. Platt, Mrs. William Sidney Porter, Dr. Pinckney Herbert and Mrs. Fagg Malloy, placing a wreath on O. Henry's grave at Riverside Cemetery, Asheville, N. C., on the 60th birthday anniversary of America's great short story writer.

William Sidney Porter was employed for five years in the drug store of his uncle, Clark Porter, in Greenville, N. C. It is said he was attracted to the name "O. Henry" by the reference in the U. S. Dispensary, under "Hydrocyanic Acid." However, he did not adopt the pen-name until sometime in 1898, but from then on he kept it till the end. The family name is "Sidney" not "Sydney," but the author used both—in most of his writings the latter. He was born in Greensboro, September 11, 1862, and died in New York City, June 5, 1910. Dates of his birth are differently given, but that of September 11, 1862, is registered in the family Bible.

Dr. Archibald Henderson, shown in the picture, was president of the Literary and Historical Association of North Carolina when a bronze tablet was unveiled in memory of the author's mother and her illustrious son, in the Library Building at Raleigh, N. C.

It was in Dr. Pinckney Herbert's office in Asheville, N. C., where part of the last complete story was written by O. Henry, namely, "Let Me Feel Your Pulse." It may not be generally known that William Sidney Porter was eighth in lineal descent from Peter Folger, Benjamin Franklin's grandfather.

The American Pharmaceutical Association will meet in Asheville, N. C., in 1923.