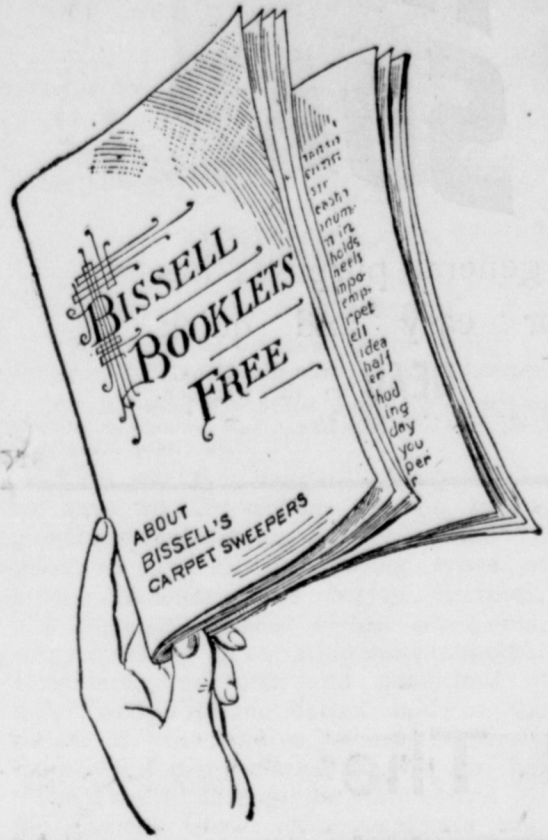


ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, AUGUST 13, 1892.



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St. John, N. B.

THE HOME OF VETERANS.

WHERE BRITISH SOLDIERS ARE CARED FOR BY THE NATION.

Chelsea Hospital and the Stories Told of How it was Established—The Daily Life of Chelsea's Wards—The Hospital and its Surroundings.

In olden times discharged and destitute veterans of the British army wandered from door to door, usually from tap room door to door, and secured food and drink by exhibiting their scars or spinning delectable yarns for the entertainment of any who might bestow charity upon them. The could, also knock at the doors of monastic houses with the assurance of receiving bread and ale and lodging for the night.

After the Restoration their condition was a scandal to King Charles II. and the country. Authorities differ not only widely but vituperously as to the origin of practical effort for their betterment. Some hold that the English were piqued into action through the establishment by Louis XIV. of the Invalides in Paris as a retreat for French veterans. There is record that as early as 1666 a scheme for an infirmary for disabled English sailors had been submitted to Pepys, as Clerk of Admiralty. Others contend that the second Charles had a lazy sort of design to house and comfort the ragged old veterans who had been loyal to his father before the latter had lost his kingly head.

But sometimes tradition has longer legs than history. British folk will never cease believing the tradition that rough, kind hearted Nell Gwynne had all to do with the founding of Chelsea hospital for British pensioners. There are two pretty pretty stories of how it finally came about that an army of savage old critics and iconoclasts can never disparage among the British masses.

One is that one day Nell was sitting with Charles in her summer house at Chelsea, one of whose windows overlooked the fine meadows surrounding King James' college, when the paymaster of the forces entered, and the subject of the projected hospital and the difficulty of finding a proper site was resumed. "Your majesty could not do better," said Sir Stephen Fox. "Than give up for the purpose your recent purchase from the Royal Society." This comprised King James' college and grounds which had just been bought as a gift to Nell at a cost of thirteen hundred pounds. "Tis well thought of," replied the king, casting his eye over the beautiful plot of ground. "You shall have it," but recollecting himself, he instantly added, "Odsol! I forgot—I have already given this land to Nell here." "Have you so, Charles?" exclaimed Nell gaily; then I will return it to you again for so good a purpose." The offer was accepted, and Nell was transferred to a mansion built for her in Pall Mall by the king.

Another more romantic version is that one day pretty Nell was riding in the king's gilded coach, and being most disconsolate the king rallied her, when she confessed that her distress was owing to the following dream:

"Methought I was in the fields of Chelsea, and slowly there rose before my eyes a beautiful palace of a thousand chambers; and in and out thereof walk divers, many old and worn-out soldier men with all kinds of scars, and many maimed as to their limbs. All of them were aged and past service; and as they went out and came in, the old men cried: 'God bless King Charles!' And I awoke, and I was sore discomfited that it was only a dream."

The story goes that the king was touched by Nell's dream and then and there swore a great oath that it should come to reality. And so it did. The king hardly saw more than the corner stone laid by Sir Christo-

pher Wren, in 1681; but before Dr. Tension, afterwards Archbishop of Canterbury, had preached Nell Gwynne's funeral sermon in 1690, there truly "slowly rose before her eyes a beautiful palace of a thousand chambers," where, though she did not live long enough to know it, there have been many blessings from grateful throats in grizzled frames, if not for Charles, for the lowly orange-girl who, whatever her life or faults, was ever great enough to move a profligate king to most of the good and generous acts which he performed.

An easy and delightful way to visit Chelsea Hospital is to take one of the countless Thames steamers. These ply up and down the river at all hours of the day and night, taking on and landing hundreds of passengers at piers about a quarter of a mile apart, on each side of the river; something as the little Philadelphia pleasure boats puff up and down the Schuylkill, between the dam and the Wissahickon.

This zigzag trip on the Thames is the most interesting in all the world, for its distance; providing you go on board, say, at the "Old Swan" pier, on the city side of London bridge; for the Tower, the Monument, St. Paul's, Westminster Abbey, parliament houses, Lambeth palace and numberless other of London's greatest and most historic structures are passed; while the Thames here not only presents its liveliest panoramas of stupendous interests, varied scenes and characterful life, but shows that portion most renowned in fiction and history for more than a thousand years.

Abutting Albert bridge at the western end of that portion of the Thames called Chelsea Reach, you step upon a little pier and thence upon the upper Thames embankment, and at once are within a charmed and charming region. Almost within a stone's throw of the hospital grounds have tarried, or lived or died, hundreds famous in history, literature and art. Smollet came here to live in retirement, in 1750, in a house once owned by Henry VIII. Sir Thomas More's black memorial slab is in Chelsea Old church; Lady Dacre, Lady Jane Cheyne and the Duchess of Northumberland, three of Chelsea's grand ladies, lie beneath monuments within the church; while Charles, George, and Henry Kingsley once lived in the rectory with their father, who had received the "living" from Lord Cardigan.

In Cheyne Walk lived Turner, the painter; and in Cheyne Row lived George Eliot and rugged old Carlyle. Queen Elizabeth used to visit the Earl of Shrewsbury at Shrewsbury House, just back of Cheyne Walk; and doughty old Samuel Johnson, who thought he could mould China as well as make a dictionary for a long time came here every day to the old Chelsea china works at the corner of Lawrence street and Justice walk, his faithful housekeeper trailing after him with a huge basket containing his daily food.

The poet George Herbert dwelt in this neighborhood; Rossetti lived and sang here amid his garden of flowers; and at a little barber shop and coffee house, "Don Saltero's," it was called, in Cheyne Walk, Richard Cromwell, Steele and Addison and Benjamin Franklin, who worked in a printing shop in Bartholomew Close, came to get shaved and to loiter over their coffee "where the Literati then sat in council."

Indeed a grand, good, sweet book could be written about the folks who have loved and known old Chelsea whom we have known and loved for what they did for the world. Sauntering on through the quaint streets with their ancient and picturesque mansions, hosts of the silent great will throng about you. But now and then your delightful memories will be not unpleasantly broken in upon by the appearance of some shriveled old man, often with a cane or a crutch and always in flaming red.

You will find these venerable old fellows in red, who become more frequent as you near the hospital, either moody, con-

templative and contemptuous, with the corners of their mouths drawn in deep lines and their puffy lower lips in a sort of endless tremulous activity of scornful repartee or oburgation, or with bright, pop-eyed looks of garrulousness and good greeting. All have pipes in their mouths, and all hold them there with a ferocious kind of grasp, as though whatever else they might lose, the pipe was the one good friend of old that should never be torn from them without a mighty struggle.

Many an odd little story you will find among the cantankerous past age heroes in the quiet streets of Chelsea. Chelsea would hardly be Chelsea without them. Struggling along its thoroughfares, sitting bent and silent on sunny benches, leaning against fountains, vases and statues, resting as composedly as house owners on house steps and vestibules, or stumping along with orders to this and that servant, as if long habit had given them acquired supervisory rights over the affairs of residents, they irresistibly suggest a bevy of croaking cockatoos turned loose in park and garden, each one harping upon some fancied grievance or delight.

Many are the snug little public houses near by, worse luck to the British citizen and pensioner! you would find it easy enough to make friendships with these old fellows, who have little to do and much to remember while awaiting the last long muster. It would be sorely ungracious in you not to cement an acquaintanceship of this sort with a little purchase of "backy," and several purchases of "four ale," even though an unrelenting prohibitionist at home. Thus you will learn marvelous things of British valor afield, all of course, in the old days when, different than now, fighting was fighting indeed. You will secure a willing and tateful guide to Chelsea Hospital. And above all you will learn how a British pensioner's pride in his own and his country's achievements may be mingled, in the same breath, with his own everlasting discontent and contempt.

You will find Chelsea Hospital a dark and imposing structure, possessing that indefinable gloomy grandeur which its builder, Sir Christopher Wren, gave as a marked characteristic to all his architectural creations. Indeed one may well say Wren seems to stare at you from out the facades of all great London buildings. But the grounds are wide and ample, and the noblest trees in London everywhere flank the fine old building, far enough away to give floods of sunshine in the courts and large parade grounds between the hospital and the Thames embankment. The building comprises three huge courts, the largest facing the south, the Thames and the masses of foliage of Battersea Park, across the river.

There are practically no restrictions upon these old wards of Chelsea. They go and come at will; and punishments for infraction of always lenient discipline are confined to the wearing of a black cap for extraordinary revolt against good order, or a few hours in the guard house for a pensioner taken red-handed in battle with John Barleycorn at the ale house. They are royal grumblers all. To them their clothing is "shoddy," soup is "swill," cocoa and coffee are "pizen," butter is "Thames skimmings," and, in scornful imitation of the officers appropriating all the joints of mutton while leaving them but the ribs and brisquets, they stoutly assert that "Every sheep killed for Chelsea has nine breasts!" But I believe they are, on the whole, very comfortable and considerably treated, and fully as well served and cared for as are the veterans of our own Soldiers' Homes.

The most interesting places in Chelsea hospital are the ward rooms, the kitchen when the noon day meal is nearly ready, the chapel and the great hall. In the ward rooms I discovered one chippier old fellow who will be 93 years old in October. He is William Merrill, late of the 31st Foot; is a native of Bedfordshire; enlisted in 1819; and has seen over 40 years of actual service. My companion

said he was the "slyest rogue and joker in No. 10 ward." Gay old William also has the record of countless flirtations over the area railings of Chelsea's mansions. Carlyle chased him all the way back to the hospital one day for too vigorous badinage with the serving-maids of the philosopher's family in Cheyne Row.

Any Sunday forenoon you may see 300 or 400 of these grizzled pensioners at chapel. They are not very reverential, and are as uneasy as children in the pew. They shuffle their feet, get into complications with their wooden legs, canes and crutches, and there is much snuffling, clearing of throats and hard asthmatic breathing. But Herkimer's great painting does not exaggerate the pathos of their collective and individual aspect. So many of these white heads and battle-scarred, bent frames together looked very pitiful indeed when all are bowed and still at time of prayer and benediction.

EDGAR L. WAKEMAN.

Bismark and the Emperor.

Prince Bismark told a story, the other day, of the battlefield of Koniggratz. The old Emperor—then King of Prussia—had exposed himself and his staff to the enemy's fire, and would not hear of retreating to a safe distance. At last Prince Bismark rode up to him, saying, "As responsible minister, I must insist upon your majesty's retreat to a safe distance. If your majesty were to be killed the victory would be of no use to us." The king saw the force of this and slowly retreated, but in his zeal returned again and again to the front. "When I noticed it," Prince Bismark went on, "I only rose in my saddle and looked at him. He understood perfectly, and calling out, rather angrily, 'Yes, I am coming!' But we did not get on fast enough, and at last I rode close up to the king, took my foot out of the right stirrup, and secretly gave his horse an energetic kick. Such a thing had never before happened to the fat mare, but the move was a success, for she set off in a fine canter."

Italy's Queen as a Child.

A charming story is told in the current number of *The Revue de Famille* of the Queen of Italy. Her favorite governess, when she was a child, was Middle, Rosa Aberser, who was a girl of 22 when the ten-year-old Princess of Savoy became her pupil. The two became very much attached to each other, for the Viennese teacher's yoke was easy, and her instruction was pleasantly imparted. The princess at that time received a small amount of pocket money every month. The governess noticed at one time that her pupil had spent nothing of it for several months, and when asked what she intended doing with it gave an evasive answer. At the end of the fourth month, however, Princess Margaret of Savoy presented her governess with a ring of her own hair ornamented with her initials in diamonds.

VICTIMS OF ASSASSINS.

European Rulers Who Have Been Targets for Murderous Attacks.

Within little more than 300 years two French rulers have perished by assassination—Henry III., who was murdered by Jacques Clement in 1589 and Henry IV., probably the most popular monarch that ever bore sway in France, was stabbed by Ravalliac, May 14, 1610. Since that time unsuccessful attempts have been made on the lives of several of the rulers of France. Louis XV., Napoleon, Louis Philippe, Napoleon III., were the objects of assassination plots, some of which came very near succeeding. In Feisch's attempt on the life of Louis Philippe upwards of forty persons were killed or injured, and Marshall Morier, who had survived the campaigns of Napoleon, was struck dead by a bullet from the infernal machine. This was on July 28, 1835. Several other attempts were made to kill the king. In all, seven assassins at different times sought his life. By the explosion of a bomb, with which the Orsini conspirators sought to slay Napoleon III., several persons were killed or injured. For this attempt Orsini perished on the scaffold. A crazy man a year or two ago fired a shot at President Carnot.

French rulers have not had an exceptional experience in this respect. Within a century two czars of Russia, a king of Sweden, a grand duke of Parma, and a prince of Serbia have been assassinated. Two attempts on the life of the late Emperor William are known, and in one of these he was severely wounded. Within ninety years a prime minister has been assassinated in the lobby of the House of Commons, and at least two assassination plots have been detected. One of these, the Cato street conspiracy, contemplated the slaughter of the entire cabinet at one fell swoop. For this conspiracy, sometimes called the Thistlewood plot, Thistlewood and four of his accomplices suffered death May 1, 1820. Queen Victoria has had several narrow escapes, having been the target at close range of several murderous cranks.—*Boston Transcript*.

Heliography.

Heliography is the name applied to the method of communicating between distant points in which usual signals are obtained by reflecting the rays of the sun on to the heliographic mirror and thence through the rings.

The two instruments generally used in heliography are the heliograph and the heliotrope. The heliotrope is operated by hand, and it is the instrument which, in its more or less improved form, is used by Professor Davidson in coast survey work.

Heliotropes are usually placed upon a stand or table and adjusted to the distant signal station by the sights over the up-rights. The centre ring is a trifle larger than one at the end, so that when the shadow of the centre rim shows upon the rim of the outer ring the flash may be said to be in focus, and when the sun is in front of

the operator that is all there is of it. When the sun is in the rear, however, it is necessary to make use of another mirror, placing it where it will reflect the sun on to the heliographic mirror and thence through the rings.

This creates a light like a star, but in order to keep it continuous the operator has to adjust the mirror every moment or two with his hand to conform to the motion of the earth. In triangulation the operator usually begins work at sunrise and keeps his heliotrope in focus until the day's work is practically over. The triangulator, having that bright, daylight star for his basis, has by that time been able to lay out considerable drawings, and he signals the heliographist to shut up shop by passing his hat over the rays from his own instrument a given number of times. Each party on survey work prearranges its own signals. There is no regular code made use of in this work, but in the army it is different.

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