

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, APRIL 30, 1898.

## WAR-TIME MEMORIES.

SOME SCENES AND INCIDENTS OF THE AMERICAN CIVIL WAR.

A St. John Man who was in the Siege of Vicksburg and Some of the Scenes of That Thrilling Time Described—How he Enjoyed a Steady rat Diet.

"Yes, war engenders a bitterness of feeling that time can never efface, nor bridge over. I fought on the Confederate side in the American civil war, and even after all these years I have a well defined feeling against the Northern states that perhaps I could not explain. or you would not understand," said a St. John man the other day during a discussion of the different phases of the Spanish-American trouble. He was in the civil war a member of the 3rd Louisiana Regiment, was through the siege of Vicksburg, and as a consequence had many interesting stories to relate. The ex-Southern soldier was in a reminiscent mood when PROGRESS encountered him, and many were the hair raising tales he told of those exciting war times.

"Ah, those were stirring days," he said, "and though the memory of them is growing rather indistinct now, there are some scenes so impressed upon my mind that they will last while life does. The siege of Vicksburg? Yes I know something about that, but perhaps it would be as well not to speak of the horrors of that time. I think most soldiers have, or should have, the faculty of seeing the other side of the story, and I tell you it's a wonderful help too, and gets you over lots of dark places in a dreary time like that. One funny situation I remember particularly. Two days after the first Northern assault on Vicksburg which was repelled as you may know, we had a hot fight. I can still see the Northerners coming by thousands out of the woods on to the open. Didn't we get a good sweep at them though, and didn't we mow them down just like grain. One company came up just under our breast works and when they realized that it was all day with them they hoisted the white flag, and in a very short time we had that whole company prisoners of war. Some days later there was a truce to bury the dead of both sides. It was very hot weather and the surroundings were becoming mighty unpleasant. While the work of burial was going on, and the flag was still up, one or two other fellows and myself went across the lines into the Northern camp; we knew we would meet lots of old friends and acquaintances there, and we did. We buried the hatchet, and the pipe of peace was much in evidence—and so was the fact that we were growing gloriously drunk. By the time we thought of going back we were in that condition when to whip the whole North single handed seemed the easiest thing in the world to the three Southerners. We didn't attempt it just then, of course, but it was a sure thing, and though I don't think we even hinted our intentions to our friend, the enemy, or to one another, we very generously started back to acquaint the South with our intentions. In the meantime the white flag had been lowered, the truce was a thing of the past, and we—were prisoners of war.

"That was a situation I can tell you; when we started to go back some officers placed us under arrest and after a short time we were taken before the general. I don't recall his name just now but he was a good-natured sort of chap, if he was a Northerner, and when he took in the trouble he laughed, told us to look out for ourselves in the future, and then sent an escort with us to our own lines. How long before we ran short of rations? As a matter of fact we never ran short—while the rats lasted! You wouldn't like rats as a steady diet I suppose? No! Well, now, you might have worse. For three weeks before General Pemberton capitulated we were on quarter rations, and we used to spend considerable time in rat hunting. They were wood rats and we'd stand for hours on guard over a hole with ram-rod held directly over it and when one would show his head that ram-rod impaled him in about two seconds. We were forbidden to do any sharp shooting, but we never minded how long we watched for a rat when we were fortunate enough to land a big luscious fellow. Its surprising how soon one can get used to anything of that sort, and we came shortly to look upon a rodent as a real delicacy; we used to skin him—sprinkle with gunpowder,

roast and eat him; we were satisfied with one a day, but the fellow who could manage two was the envy of his comrades and was considered especially lucky.

"My first experience of mule meat as an article of food was during the siege. I got permission to visit a wounded friend in the hospital in the city; while there I met a fellow who had charge of one of the big guns, and he invited me over to his house to dinner. What a sight that dinner table was to me, and how I did enjoy the well done roast beef with which the woman of the house piled my plate. After dinner I said I had not had so good a meal for months. "I am glad you liked the meat," said my host, "mule makes a very good substitute for beef doesn't it."

"That was before I had grown used to the rats, and my first impulse was to knock the man down. Before the siege was over though I often wished for another hearty meal of mule meat.

"I remember one terrible battle in which the enemy gave us a genuine surprise. Our regiment marched left and front to take up a position along the edge of a corn field which was on our right. We were within about 25 yards of the place when we got a volley from the northern soldiers. They were in our position on the other side of the fence. They were completely hidden from view among the corn which was anywhere from 10 to 15 feet high. Our 1st lieutenant had his throat torn open by a bullet, and the surprise of the attack was so great and such a set back that for a moment we stood perfectly still. Then we got the order to charge and went at them. The northerners far outnumbered us having 25,000 men to our 15,000. Hundreds of our men were on the fence and every eye was on that corn field, wherever a tassel of corn was seen to move there a shot was aimed. Our orderly sergeant was a stout scotchman, who had fought in the Mexican war, and I remember seeing him rush up to the fence at one fellow and drive his bayonet into him, calling him names at the same time that wouldn't bear repetition.

"This battle which was called by our side the battle of "Little Oaks" lasted from daylight until six o'clock in the evening. It was a dearly bought victory for us, but we chased the northern men into Springfield, Missouri.

"Yes, I saw the field afterwards—was one of the burial party in fact—and it was a terrible sight. We dug two immense trenches one for each side and there left the poor fellows.

"I know very little about the manner and bearing of Federal officers in the civil war, but I do know that a truer lot of gentlemen never lived than the southern officers. They seemed to be imbued with a spirit of nobility and chivalry not often met. They were the defeated side and of course the world never heard of countless heroic deeds and manly acts by them.

"I think the United States is going to have all the fight she has been looking for, in this war with Spain. She has been practically challenging the world to "tread on the tail of her coat" for years; and now she has got what she's been looking for—and a little more perhaps.

"The methods of war are very different from what they were thirty years ago—they were civilized modes at least then, so it is difficult to form any opinion as to how the present trouble will end, but I should think it would be a pretty hot time for all concerned before the last shot is fired."

"Bend Down Your Heads!"

One the west coast of Ireland near the mouth of the River Shannon, are several large sea-caves which open into each other. The visitor seems to be floating through a submarine palace of many halls, whose roof are either as green as grass in the sun, or blood-red. But the visitor needs a good guide and a good boatman, for the sea is insidious and labyrinth of caves intricate.

On one occasion, writes Aubrey de Vere, in his "Recollections," soon after a party had entered, the boatman suddenly shouted, "Bend down your heads for your lives."

No one saw any danger, but the boatman felt the placid water insensibly rising, and knew that the tide had turned. At last the visitors knew this, too; for it was not until the boat had ascended within a few inches of the roof that it began to descend.

"Pull your best," exclaimed the man at the helm; "if the second wave reaches us we are lost." But before the second wave reached the cave the boat had issued from its mouth.

## GHOSTS UP IN ONTARIO.

QUEER THINGS THE PEOPLE SAY THEY SEE AND HEAR.

A Ball of Fire and an Old Lady of Property—The Haunted Schoolhouse—Spook of a Peddler—Miscellaneous of Sir John A. Macdonald's Shade.

It is not generally known down this way, that the province of Ontario is ghost ridden. Indeed, the inhabitants boast that there are very few countries in the civilized world which possess in any single district so limited in extent as Ontario the same number of highly respectable ghosts, from the shade of Sir John A. Macdonald, the famous old Conservative Premier, to that of the little peddler whose spook in the fifties terrorized a lumber camp on the upper Ottawa River. Apparitions of high and low degree stalk the land, and many persons may be found who are already to swear that they have seen the apparitions or heard them, at any rats, which in the case of some ghosts is pretty much the same thing.

One of the most uncanny visitations occurred about fifteen years ago in the vicinity of the village of Beaverton, a pretty little hamlet on the shores of Lake Simcoe, about seventy-five miles north of Toronto. There lived about three miles from the village an aged widow, Mrs. Bethune by name, a member of the Cameron clan of Scotland, whose family was among the early settlers in the district. She dwelt in a picturesque rough-cast cottage, built in the manner of an English lodge and surrounded by well kept grounds, an altogether unlikely place for a ghost to be found. Save for a housekeeper and a coachman, the old lady was entirely alone in the house. One night the villagers said an uncanny light, or spook, had been seen in the neighborhood of Mrs. Bethune's home. The rumor was at first discredited as the tale of some drunkard or silly woman, but as night after night brought confirmatory news from people who asserted they had seen the light, it began to be spread abroad that Mrs. Bethune was being warned to prepare herself for impending death. As the old lady kept hale and hearty, despite these repeated visitations, which she declared she had not seen, and as the strange light continued to flit here and there, now in her grounds, now on the country road, again in some woods near by a new theory sprang up to the effect that the housekeeper and the coachman were in league to get the old lady to will them her property, which was considerable, and the light was deemed by many to be the spirit of her dead brother, old Col. Cameron, come to warn her against the alleged conspirators.

The light was too big for any will-o'-the-wisp, and, moreover, there was no swampy ground to give basis for its appearance from any natural cause. Its appearance was that of a large ball of fire, and its custom was to hover above the country road near Mrs. Bethune's home until the approach of the night, express from Toronto, when it would dart across fields to disappear along the railroad track, flying ahead of the engine. It was noted that the light was never seen after passing a certain point about a quarter of a mile from the widow's home. Commercial travellers and other visitors from Toronto made it a point to go out and see the light, which appeared for more than eighteen months with more or less regularity. So great did the terror of it become that the country folk, after nightfall, generally sought a circuitous route to and from the village, in order to escape seeing the light, which frightened not only their horses, but also themselves.

Mrs. Bethune died at last, and no one ever saw the light again. But one night when her final illness had overtaken her the coachman fell down in a fit, and was ill with brain fever for weeks afterward. Rumor had it that when going into the stable he met the light coming out, and the illness was caused by the shock. To complete the story he should have died, but he did not. By Mrs. Bethune's will the property went to the housekeeper, just as every one had feared, and, of course, an interminable lawsuit was the result.

Not many miles from Toronto in a south-westerly direction is standing by the roadside what at first glance one would deem an ordinary country schoolhouse. But the door swings idly on rusty hinges, the benches and desks are covered with dust, and the schoolhouse has long been untenanted save by some ghostly inhabitant. The terror of the place is so widespread that even tramps in search of a place to

sleep give the quaint little wooden building a wide berth. The first appearance of the ghost was in broad daylight, when the school was in full blast, the pupils at their desks, the pretty schoolm'am in her wonted place. It came unheralded, and terror seized upon the children when loud footsteps were heard proceeding up the aisle with no bodily presence accompanying them. This was followed by a series of raps on the walls and ceiling, shuffling of feet in the porch, and groaning. This happened two years ago. Newspaper men and curiosity seekers alike tried to solve the mystery, but in vain. It is suspected that the ghost is still doing business at the old stand.

The history of the peddler in the lumber camp on the Ottawa is still remembered by many an old inhabitant. He disappeared from the camp one night, and it was generally suspected that he had been murdered for a small sum of money he was known to have. The couple living in the shanty where he had been stopping were, it was supposed, his murderers, but evidence could not be obtained against them. Scarcely a week had elapsed after his disappearance when the suspected pair removed out of that district, leaving no clue where they could be found. A couple of young lumbermen moved into the shanty, but remained in it only one night, and in the morning asserted they had been visited by the peddler's ghost, who had stared in at them through the window, had slammed the door, blown out the candle, and indulged in other antics. It was at first thought that the ghost might be the peddler himself, and that he was not dead after all, but the men insisted that his face had appeared to them all covered with blood and very pale. Whatever it was, the fact remained that no one would live in the shanty, until a venturesome naturalist came along, who declared that he had no fear of ghosts, and that they were better than rats, inasmuch as they would leave his stuffed animals and birds alone. One night was enough for him, and nothing would induce him to tell what he had seen in the shanty. He left camp in a hurry next day and never returned. The mystery of the peddler's death was not solved until two years later, when his ghost appeared one night to a party of merrymakers taking a short cut home through a swamp. All fled in a hurry, but one of the party noticed just where the ghost was standing, and returned the next day armed with a spade. When the ground was turned up the skeleton of the peddler was found about two feet below the surface.

Very different from the foregoing was the conduct of the shade of Sir John A. Macdonald. When Sir John Thompson was premier, there was handed to him one morning a card bearing a name that he did not recognize. The card was marked "Important," and, waiving ceremony, Sir John gave the sender an audience at once. He proved to be a young man of unassuming appearance, who in all seriousness told the Premier that he had several visits from the ghost of Sir John A. Macdonald, who had urged him to carry certain instructions to Sir John Thomson in regard to state affairs of great moment then pending in the Cabinet. The young man assured Sir John Thompson that he had at first feared to carry out the instructions less he be deemed insane, but that Sir John's spirit had given him no peace until he promised to obey its mandates. He then proceeded to detail the instruc-

tions that had been given him, and the Premier was surprised to find that they coincided to a strange degree with the action which the Cabinet was then about to take, but which had been kept a proud secret.

Near Woodstock, a city about half way between Detroit and Toronto, is a swamp which has attained a certain degree of notoriety as the scene of the murder, several years ago, of a young Englishman named Benwell by Reginald Birchall, who was executed for the crime. It is now asserted that the shadowy outlines of two human figures, closely resembling the murderer and his victim, have been seen entering the swamp on more than one occasion at the spot where Birchall and young Benwell are supposed to have entered it in life and that the ghosts of the two men enact the tragedy all over again. A similar story has originated about the cottage in which were found the bodies of the two little girls whom H. H. Holmes murdered in Toronto. But the stories about this cottage died away, and at the present time of writing it is tenanted and quite free from anything supernatural.

Toronto did have for years a house which was pointed to with pride as being really haunted. It was a two story brick structure on Gerard street east, and strange to say no story of crime or sudden death was connected with it. Nevertheless it became a happy haunting ground for ghosts. Chairs thrown across the rooms, sticks hurled through the air, draughts experienced despite windows and doors tightly shut, and, worst of all, blows felt while asleep in bed are some of the happenings told of it. As no one would leave the house and it was falling into disrepair, the owner concluded to tear it down and rebuild. That settled the ghosts.

A weird story was related to the writer by a lady in whose veracity he would place the utmost reliance. She was the wife of an English church clergyman, and when she married him her husband had charge of a small parish in a place called Stayner. They were living there when a child, a girl was born to them. One evening, when the little girl had attained the age of five, a brother clergyman, the Rev. John Langtry now of St. Luke's church, Toronto, called at their home. The clergyman was not at home, but his wife was, and she began to entertain Dr. Langtry, who said he would wait a short time as he was very desirous of seeing his friend. They were talking in a room down-stairs, when suddenly Dr. Langtry's face grew very pale, and he hurriedly asked the lady to go up and see if her child was all right. Surprised at the request, she nevertheless did as she was asked, and soon returned with the information that the little girl was sleeping soundly. The clergyman said he was glad to hear it, and shortly took his leave without waiting for her husband to return. Some days after, however, meeting him on the street, Dr. Langtry said:

"I should advise you to go to your child at once should she be taken ill, away from home."

He would give no explanation of this for some time afterward. One day the little girl was actually stricken while on a visit in a neighboring town and died soon after her parents had arrived at her side. Dr. Langtry then informed them that the night he had visited their house he had seen the form of an angel come downstairs and go out of the hall door carrying the little child in its arms. Hence his premonition that the child might die soon.

Before His Day.

One part of an elevator-boy's duty is to answer questions, but not even an elevator boy can be expected to know everything. Apropos of which, the Boston Transcript says:

A guest at one of our big hotels, while going down in the elevator, remarked to the colored elevator-man, "I want to go to the wharf where the tea was thrown overboard."

"Well," said the man, looking mystified, "you'd better inquire at the office. I reckon that was before I came here; I've only been in Boston about a year!"

## DOCTORS DON'T DENY IT.

### The frank testimony of a famous physician.

When Dr. Ayer announced his Sarsaparilla to the world, he at once found the physicians his friends. Such a remedy was what they had looked for, and they were prompt to appreciate its merits and prescribe it. Perhaps no medicine known as a patent medicine—is so generally administered and prescribed by physicians as Dr. Ayer's Sarsaparilla for blood diseases, and diseases of the skin that indicate a tainted condition of the blood. Experience has proved it to be a specific in such diseases, and sores of long standing, old ulcers, chronic rheumatism, and many other like forms of disease have yielded to the persevering use of Dr. Ayer's Sarsaparilla after other remedies had utterly failed. The testimonials received from physicians to the value of this remedy would fill a volume. Here is one leaf signed by Rich'd H. Lawrence, M. D., Baltimore, Md.

"It affords me pleasure to bear testimony to the success which your preparation of Sarsaparilla has had in the treatment of cutaneous and other diseases arising from a vitiated condition of the blood. Were it necessary, I might give you the names of at least fifty individuals who have been cured of long-standing complaints simply by the administration of Dr. Ayer's Sarsaparilla. One very remarkable instance was that of a quite old woman who had lived at Catoonsville, near this city. She had been

afflicted with the rheumatism for three years, and had taken as she had informed me, more than one hundred dollars' worth of medicine to obtain relief, yet without any beneficial result. I advised her to try a bottle of Dr. Ayer's Sarsaparilla and told her that if it failed to do her good, I would refund the money. A short time afterward, I learned that it had cured her, and a neighbor of hers similarly afflicted was also entirely relieved of his complaint by its use. This is the universal result of the administration of your Sarsaparilla. It is without exception, the best blood purifier with which I am acquainted."

There is no other similar medicine can show a similar record. Others have imitated the remedy. They can't imitate the record. Dr. Ayer's Sarsaparilla has the friendship of the physician and the favor of the family, because it cures. It fulfills all promises made for it. It has healed thousands of people of the most malignant diseases that can mutilate mankind. Nothing has ever succeeded it and nothing ever will until a medicine is made that can show a record of cures greater in number and equal in wonder to those wrought by Dr. Ayer's Sarsaparilla. Dr. Ayer's Curebook, a story of cures told by the cured, is sent free on request by the J. C. Ayer Company, Lowell, Mass. Write for it.