

A CAMP FIRE STORY.

Doing guard duty on one of these clear, frosty nights is what I call a "big thing." Standing before a huge fire, whose glimmering rays shoot into the dense pine forest which surrounds you, as if they, too, had partaken of the spirit of vigilance, and were searching for some hidden foe, one's mind is naturally affected, and every shadow and tree as an association which awakens the soldier to a full appreciation of his sentinel duties. But such a night as last night, dark, dreary, wet and disagreeable in the extreme—has an entirely different effect, and we clustered around the fire, piled high with seceder rails, which at times seemed to exert its best light and most genial rays to spread humor and life among those who stood smoking around it. Then, as if exasperated at the failure, it would splutter and crack, contending furiously with every drop of rain, and hiss out a strong reproof at the element which was making the sentinels so uncomfortable. But the guard must be vigilantly maintained through the night, and we dare not sleep; for you must know, Mr. Editor, that sleep courts the soldier as sweetly under the dropping rain as it does in his tent, if perchance he has a gun blanket for a bed, and his knapsack for a pillow.

I proposed a song, but the only music that could be raised was made by a little corporal, who doled out, in a most melancholy style,

"Some days must be dark and dreary."

This seemed to be the only song that the corporal knew, and the only one of that kind which we wanted to hear. Under those auspices, I proposed a story, and the sergeant of the guard, an old Mexican soldier, "up and told" the following story, which I quote, as nearly as I can remember, in his own words:

Seated in my tent, one evening, just before the battle of the City of Mexico, the Captain came to me with, "Corporal, I have been requested to send a trusty non-commissioned officer to the general council to-night as a messenger. Will you go?" I replied in the affirmative, thanking the Captain for his confidence. Our company was, at that time, detached from its regiment, and was doing special duty at General Scott's headquarters. In the discharge of that duty, I had made a point of being specially attentive, and had therefore gained the confidence of our captain, and once or twice was commended by old "Fuss and Feathers" himself. I brushed up my old clothes, and brightened my shoes and brass plates in the neatest manner possible that evening, and presented myself to the Adjutant General for instructions. I found that the council about to meet for the consideration of Gen. Scott's plans for taking the city, was to be composed of all the colonels in the division, and that my duty would be to go on errands and attend to bringing charts, papers, or whatever might be required.

Well, the council met, and I was at my post. It was the finest body of military men I had ever seen together, and when they assembled round that table, and the old General stood towering high above the rest, I could not help admiring him more than ever. After the customary salutation and organization, they sat down in the order of rank, beginning with Gen. Wool, and succeeding each other in seats, as seniority of rank gave them privilege. It was no time for delay, and the General spoke rapidly and with earnestness, occasionally referring to some one on the right or left for information and co-operation.

Thus carefully and explicitly were the movements and marches, the sallies and sorties, and the whole plan developed, so that every one seemed to understand. But presently a flaw was discovered something was wrong, and I saw by the perplexed look of those around the table, that a very serious mistake had been made, but from what cause, my knowledge of military affairs did not enable me to judge. A dispute arose between some Colonel and the engineer in chief in regard to the position and strength of some battery, and the topography of the surrounding country.

The Colonel said the frequent reconnaissance of the ground, from the fact of his being encamped near the place in question, led him, even in direct opposition to the chart of the engineer, to protest against its truthfulness, and he would urge upon the General to make himself sure of the condition of affairs before he fully completed his plan.

But this would not do; it was necessary that very important and vigorous movements should take place upon that very section of the defence, and without a correct knowledge of the place, no action could be carried on with safety or certainty. It seemed, in fact, to be a main point, at which position success would have to fall to the American forces.

Finally, the Colonel said that there was a young Lieutenant in his regiment who had a correct chart of the defences, and a map of the demesne there adjacent. The engineer-in-chief snoringly said, "Very well, sir, you had better send for your Lieutenant, and let us see this great map." The General nodded his approbation and the Colonel gave me the name and address of the Lieutenant.

The encampment was not very far away, and I mounted my horse and rode off in haste to the regimental headquarters, and found the very man I was in search of in the Colonel's tent, with draughting paper on a table before him, and sketches of the city and surroundings scattered everywhere.

I handed him the note, which he read and hastily tore up, asking me if I could wait until he could borrow a horse? I told him I

could, but I had not long to wait, for he came back in a few moments, and carefully wrapping up his surveys, he placed them in a long tin case, and mounting, prepared to follow me. On the way he conversed with so much earnestness and in such a mild, interesting manner, that I felt encouraged to talk and chat, contrary to my usual practice when on horseback. He informed me that he was a graduate of West Point, and that there he had fallen so much in love with the science of geometry that he made it an *alm* at constant study, and that now he found it very interesting, in the interval of duty, to make sketches and surveys of the city.

When we arrived at the General's quarters again, the lieutenant was introduced, and at his Colonel's request produced his charts. The party were astonished at their finish and fine execution, and when, after examination, they were found to be correct, General Scott came forward, and grasping the young lieutenant by the hand, personally complimented him on his skill and thanked him for his efficiency. The chief engineer, somewhat chagrined at this display of skill and learning on the part of his young rival, sneeringly said: "General perhaps this young man has some plan by which this part of the defences may be attacked." Upon inquiry, it was found that he had a plan, which was produced with some degree of reluctance, and laid before the assembly. It was read and criticised, and corrected, and finally, to make a long story short, adopted, with some amendments by the council. This displeased the engineer, who seemed to think that the lieutenant, though but a few years his junior, had no right to display so much knowledge of a science which did not belong to his branch of the service.

"I need not tell you," continued the corporal, "that in the taking of Mexico, a few days after, the plan offered by this lieutenant was of signal service, and that he was brevetted soon afterward."

Here the story ended, and the sergeant relapsed into his "pipe and silence." We all looked for awhile into the fire, when one of the sentinels asked him what the name of this young lieutenant was. He slowly puffed the smoke from his mouth and replied.

"I believe it was George—George B. McClellan."

"And who was that engineer?"

"I believe his name was George too—Geo. T. Beauregard."

And we all smoked and looked into the fire, until the sentinel shouted—

"Grand rounds! Turn out the guard!"

ABOUT REPORTEES.

A repartee we presume to be an immediate and appropriate reply to an observation, depending upon the rapidity of the working of the mental powers, which seem to work rather faster with some people than others. We were once riding in an old stage coach with a worthy farmer; the mud was very deep, and our progress at the rate of 2.40 miles per hour. To our impatient inquiries as to when we should reach our destination, the old man replied in a slow one, which did not belie his words, "I never allow my mind to travel any faster than my body."

Some persons, however, seem to have an electric current of wit, which flashes the moment it meets an opposing one; and it is our purpose here to give from memory a few specimens of this sort of wit, for which we would give the authors proper credit if we knew their names; beginning with the two of Lamb's, which cannot be left out in such a catalogue, familiar as they are. First, his reply when he was rebuked for coming in to business at the India House so very late in the morning—"You know I always go away very early in the afternoon; and the still older one to the anxious passenger's query on entering a crowded omnibus—"All full inside?" "I don't know how 'tis with the other passengers, but that last piece of oyster pie did the business for me." It is related of some friends of Campbell, the author of *Hohenlinden*, in leaving his room after a gay supper, that one of the number had the misfortune to fall down a long flight of stairs. The poet, alarmed at the noise, opened the door and inquired—"What's that?" "Tis I, sir, rolling rapidly," was the immediate reply of his fallen friend. Sheridan is said to have remarked on entering a crowded committee-room, in parliamentary language—"Will some member move that I may take a seat?" Also on being asked how the sensitive Fox would take a salary provided for him by his charitable friends, replied, "Quarterly." A poor poet, desiring a compliment, asked Curran (referring to his recently published poem of that name), "Have you read my *Descent into Hell*?" "No; I should like to see it," replied the wit. A prosy member of Parliament having asked him—"Have you read my last speech?" he replied, "I hope I have." Two old New England ministers were riding by a gallows, when the older one asked the other—"Where would you be if that tree bore its proper fruit?" "Riding alone, sir," was the immediate reply. An Irish girl at play on Sunday was accosted by the priest—"Good morning daughter of the devil," and meekly replied, "Good morning, father." Two friends meeting, one remarked—"I have just met a man who told me I looked exactly like you." "Tell me who it was, that I may knock him down," replied his friend. "Don't trouble yourself, said he, I did that myself at once." The celebrated David Crockett, on visiting a menagerie, was comparing the countenance of a monkey to that of one of his

fellow members of Congress. Turning, he saw the gentleman had overheard his remarks; so, to make matters pleasant, he said—"I don't know which to apologize to, you or the monkey." Two deacons were once disputing about the proposed site for a new graveyard, when the first remarked—"I'll never be buried in that ground as long as I live." "What an obstinate man, said the second. 'If my life is spared, I will.'"

THE ABOLITIONISM OF CONGRESS TOO STRONG EVEN FOR NEW ENGLAND.

The following excellent hit at the legislation of the last Congress comes from the meridian of New England. The negro in the last Congress was too strong, even for the Abolition regime:

ACTS AND RESOLVES OF THE THIRTY-SEVENTH CONGRESS, FIRST REGULAR SESSION.

[Not copied from the record, but put down according to our recollection, and warranted correct in the main.]

1. An act in relation to niggers.
2. An act to emancipate niggers.
3. An act to prohibit what-ye-call-it in the Territories.
4. An act to abolish what-ye-call-it in the District of Columbia.
5. An act concerning niggers.
6. An act to confiscate niggers.
7. An act to anticipate the wives and babies of contrabands.
8. An act to emancipate niggers who fight for the Confederacy.
9. An act to make 'em fight for the Union.
10. An act to make freed niggers love work.
11. An act to educate said freed niggers.
12. An act to make paper worth more than gold.
13. An act to make a little more paper worth more than a good deal more gold.
14. An act to free somebody's niggers.
15. An act in relation to niggers.
16. An act to prohibit importations by increasing duties.
17. An act to make white folks squeal, otherwise known as Tax Bill.
18. An act authorizing the President to draft white folks.
19. An act authorizing the President to arm niggers.
20. An act to give a little more paper.
21. An act concerning niggers.
22. An act to make omnibus tickets a legal tender.
23. An act to compensate Congressmen for using their influence in obtaining contracts.
24. An act authorizing the issue of more omnibus tickets.
25. An act declaring white men almost as good as niggers, if they behave themselves. (Laid on the table.)
26. An act to repeal that clause of the Constitution relating to the admission of new States.
27. An act to repeal the rest of the Constitution.
28. Resolutions pledging the Government in pay for emancipated niggers.
29. An act authorizing the President to pay for said niggers. (Went under.)
30. An act to confiscate things.
31. Resolutions explaining that some other things are not meant.
32. An act in relation to niggers.
33. An act to make niggers white.
34. An act to make 'em a little whiter.
35. An act to make 'em a good deal whiter.
36. An act in relation to colored people.
37. An act in relation to contrabands.
38. An act concerning negroes.
39. Resolution of adjournment.

[Cincinnati Enquirer.]

A GERMAN INNKEEPER—A PORTRAIT.—He was a tall, hard, massive figure, venerable to look upon, for he had thin snow-white hair, with a small thick velvet cap upon it, almost like a clergyman. Also he wore spectacles with silver rims and large round glasses. These he only used for reading, generally wearing them raised on his forehead. Thus it seemed as if his calm intellect looked directly out of his forehead; and calm indeed—he was majestically calm—and had a reputation for exceeding wisdom. To be sure he spoke very little; but then who without wisdom could have brought things so far as mine host of the Lion? His face was somewhat red, and, as we have said, imposed conviction; though his mouth, which was generally drawn together as if he was swallowing something nice, did not exactly accord with this feeling. He was a serious and taciturn man, and seemed as if he felt it his duty to act as a counterpoise to the loquacity of his wife and daughter. When his wife went on a little too much with her tongue, he sometimes shook his head, as if he meant to say—A truly respectable man cannot approve of this.—[Ed. Weiss.]

A SUBSTITUTE FOR TURPENTINE.—A new product, which bids fair to compete with, if not to supersede, turpentine, has recently been obtained. It is distilled from petroleum asphaltum. The asphaltum company have succeeded in producing this spirit, which can be used in place of turpentine, without danger or fear; and as it can be obtained at one-third of the price cheaper than turpentine, it is likely to be extensively consumed.—[London Mechanics' Magazine.]

ANOTHER EXPERIMENT.

The Steam Road Wagon, or "Prairie Motor," which we partially described in our last issue, was brought out again on Saturday.

The machine was in good trim, the roads good and the weather fine. After making a trip some distance out west of the city and back, a large train of wagons was attached, which were literally crowded with ladies and with the Stars and Stripes floating over the Locomotive, the train moved off. It ran through the principal streets of the city, made good time and demonstrated its capacity to move heavy loads and susceptibility of being handled with all the ease of an ordinary road wagon. The train halted in front of the Seymour House and our city artists—W. C. Williams and G. B. Hare—took sketches of it with a photographing apparatus.

The proprietor—Mr. Brown—who has been some years engaged in the invent on and construction of machinery of this kind, and the engineers—D. L. Osborne and C. B. Slote—who are experienced locomotive-drivers and practical machinists, all expressed themselves satisfied at the result of the experiment. The machinery is all new and does not work as smoothly as it will, but the success so far, attending their movements, exceeds the expectations of the most sanguine.

In the experiment of Saturday, the weight of the train would not fall much short of ten tons and the maximum speed attained while running was about 8 miles an hour. The train will leave this city early this week for Denver, Colorado and on its return, should it prove successful, the enterprising proprietor will immediately put on the road some locomotives of less weight and greater speed for the purpose of carrying passengers, express, freight and mails. While out this trip he will establish stations to supply wood and water and leave on his return everything prepared to accommodate the several trains, which he intends to put on the road.—[Nebraska City People's Press.]

A REMEDY FOR SMALLPOX.—Dr. Frederick Morris, resident physician of the Halifax, N. S., Visiting Dispensary, has written a letter to the *American Medical Times*, in which he states that the *Saracenia Purpurea*, or Indian Cup, a native plant of Nova Scotia, is the remedy for smallpox in all its forms in twelve hours after the patient has taken the Medicine. That "however alarming and numerous the eruptions, and confluent and frightful they may be, the peculiar action of the medicine is such that very seldom a scar is left to tell the story of the disease." If either vaccine or variolous matter is washed with the infusion of the *saracenia*, they are deprived of their contagious properties. So mild is the medicine to the taste that it may be largely mixed with tea and coffee and given to connoisseurs in these beverages to drink without their being aware of the admixture. The medicine has been successfully tried in the hospitals of Nova Scotia, and its use will be continued.

HOW THE DUKE OF CHANDOS GOT A WIFE.—Riding along the road he saw a drunken groom of a neighboring nobleman unmercifully beating his wife, who was quite a young creature, and whose situation and appearance much interested the duke. The man was not disposed to acquiesce in the remonstrance made against his cruelty, so nothing remained but for the duke to buy the man's wife from him, which accordingly he did. He was a little puzzled to know what to do with his purchase, but in the meanwhile sent her to an excellent school, where she turned out a very apt scholar. In a short time the husband died of drink, from the money he had received for his wife. The Duchess of Chandos, his second duchess, also soon died. The duke married his purchase, who became an excellent and exemplary character, as his third wife and duchess.—[Ramsay's Handel.]

A SOLDIER'S WIFE OBJECTING TO AN EXCHANGE.—A private of the Twentieth Massachusetts regiment was taken prisoner at Ball's Bluff last fall, and confined at Salisbury, North Carolina. Some weeks since a friend called upon his wife with the assurance that her husband would probably be exchanged for a rebel then in our hands. "I won't have him," cried the woman in alarm; "I love Tom, and won't have him exchanged; I do not want a rebel husband." The friend corrected the poor woman's misapprehension; the absent husband was finally released, and she learned that for once "exchange was no robbery."

PATENT SERMON EXTINGUISHER.—A sufferer from long sermons suggests to the *London Times*, that after half an hour's preaching, the bottom of the pulpit should be contrived to come out, on the principle of an *oubliette*, and project the clerical transgressor into the gulf below. Another proposes that a sounding-board or cover, in the shape of an extinguisher made exactly to fit the pulpit, be suspended above it, and that at the expiration of twenty-five minutes from the delivery of the text, it should begin to descend so as exactly at the half hour to "shut up" the lengthy preacher.

LYING IN THE PULPIT.—"Father, a think you lied in the pulpit to-day," said a little son of a clergyman. "Why, what do you mean?" "Sir, you said, 'one word more and I have done.' Then you went on, and said a great many more words. The people expected you'd leave off, 'cause you promised them. But you didn't, and kept on preaching a long while after the time was up."