

A GHASTLY REMINISCENCE.

WE were quietly sitting at our books, one morning, when suddenly we were roused by a thundering report. At the same instant the whole building shook, we were unceremoniously lifted from the floor, while the pictures on the wall rattled violently. Then followed a dead silence. We looked at one another and saw the ghastly expression on each others' faces. An earthquake, we thought! We had never felt one in our lives, but imagined that such a shock was but the forerunner of others more serious. Would the roof come down next and would the walls tumble in and bury us beneath their ruins? A hundred similar rapid thoughts flashed through our minds in the space of that moment of silent terror, as we sat motionless in the study hall that morning.

So sudden, so terrific was the shock that not one of us thought of escape. Should any one have essayed such an attempt, he would have found it impossible, unless he tried his luck by a dash through a third story window. The door was well guarded. There stood the study master, a veteran soldier of the war of secession. With a coolness which, no doubt, he had acquired amidst the roar of cannon and the cavalry charges at Bull-Run, he leaped towards the door, surveyed the trembling students, one hand on the latch and the other uplifted in a commanding attitude that inspired awe. Not a word was spoken. Another moment and the door opened, and amidst a cloud of smoke and dust the Father Director appeared. He tried to be calm; he was so; but the pallor of his face spoke for itself. "Boys keep cool... We had an explosion... no danger... come down," were his words breathlessly uttered in haste. All made a rush for the door. A panic ensued. Smoke, dust and the pungent smell of gas soon filled the room and the excitement increased. The stern soldier at the door had to yield. Never, in his bygone days of victory, had he faced such a charge. In spite of his attempts to regulate the exit into a move-

ment of military order, he was overpowered and the descent became a rush down the smoke-filled corridors and stairs.

At this crisis, one youth, now a promising Ottawa barrister, distinguished himself particularly. While all his companions thought only of saving their persons by flight, he thought of his desk, around which he clasped his arms and tried to escape. He soon discovered to his sorrow that the four additional legs only impeded his progress and he was obliged to leave his precious load behind, so as not to be stifled by the smoke.

Generous youths as we were, our first thought, after we reached the yard, was to save the building. We knew that fire had broken out in some part of the College. But where? In our hurry we forgot to look. Some remembered that there was an old hose lying in the gymnasium. Very short it was indeed; but little we cared; our zeal would make up the deficiency in length. In our eagerness we were pulling it out, when the ringing of a bell and the gallop of horses announced the coming of the brave fire brigade. By rushed the horses and instinctively sought the flames. We followed and soon came to the scene of the fire and in a twinkling a powerful stream was directed against the destructive element. All this had taken less time than is required to tell it. The mystery was soon cleared up. During the previous night, gas had escaped in the boiler room. An explosion had to follow as soon as the gas reached the fire. Why did the blast not occur before, when the students were all at breakfast in the refectory adjoining the boiler room? Why was the engineer, who but a second before the shock, unaware of any danger walked in and out of the room, not blown to atoms? This seemed nothing short of miraculous, for scarcely had he stepped out and shut the door behind him, when he heard the report and felt the door push him violently out under the force of the explosion.

No less miraculous was the escape of