

the 24th the Canadian troops under Gen. Middleton received a severe check at Fish Creek, near Batoche.

April 4, 1887, Colonial Conference opened in London.

April 29, 1891, first of the C. P. R. steamers arrived at Vancouver from Yokohama.

April 17, 1892, death of Hon. Alexander MacKenzie.

April 26, 1900, great fire in Ottawa and Hull.

April 9, 1903, death of Sir Oliver Mowat, Governor of Ontario.

The first turbine passenger steamer to cross the Atlantic, the "Victorian," 12,000 tons, of the Allan Canadian Line, reached Halifax April 1, 1905. She carried 1,464 passengers, who were kept informed of the world's news during the voyage by means of Marconi wireless telegraphic messages.

[The first steamship to cross the Atlantic was the "Royal William," also Canadian, which made the passage from Pictou, N. S., to London in 1833.]

### Our Native Trees.—No. II.

By G. U. HAY.

In the last number the uses and the beauty of trees and how to tell their age were mentioned. Let us here try to tell the life-story of the tree and how it grows.

Every plant has a life history of its own. If we try to read this from the plant itself we shall find that the story is in many respects wonderfully like that of a human life. Plants are born into the world from parents; they are fed in infancy from a store of food laid up for them by the parent plant; they have to struggle to maintain themselves against hunger, cold, disease and the attacks of enemies; and they die—the common lot of everything living. We may plant the seeds of a bean, pea, or sunflower and learn the whole story in one season of a few months. If we plant the seeds of a parsnip, carrot or evening primrose, the story will appear in two chapters, broken by a long winter. If we plant the seeds of an oak, elm or maple, it may take very many years to complete this life story.

#### THE STORY OF A RED MAPLE.

Suppose we try to read the life-story of a Red Maple, Canada's emblem. Its bright red flowers, appearing in early spring, and its leaves crimsoning the forests in autumn must be known to everyone.

In June hundreds of its two-winged fruits\* may be seen on a full grown tree. These soon drop to the ground, or a strong wind may carry them some distance from the mother plant, to drop them in the forest; or on the grassfields, where a tough mat of leaves and roots prevents their sinking into the soil; or on ploughed fields, where if they grow they will be torn up as weeds by the farmer. Many may become the food of birds. Only a few out of many thousands reach a spot favorable for growth. The wings wither away. The rains beat the little fruits containing the seeds into the yielding earth and the seed coverings gradually soften and break away. The germ, or little plant within the seed, under the influence of moisture and sunshine, uncurls itself. It is a wee thing, consisting of a tiny stem and two crumpled leaves, in which is a very small store of precious food, for the mother-plant had to be saving in fitting out thousands of her young brood. From one end of the stem a little root is pushed forth and finds its way into the ground,—a tiny anchor for the new-born plant. The crumpled food-leaves straighten out as they quickly push up into the air and sunshine, and a small green point, the bud, appears between them, shooting upward and sending out the first green maple leaves. The plant has now root, stem and leaves, all the parts needed for its growth and to enable it to make its own living. If the young shoot is not crowded out by other plants, if its young and tender leaves are not eaten off by browsing animals, and if it lives in spite of accidents and the frosts of winter, it may grow to be a strong and beautiful tree. But how many "ifs" enter into the young life of a tree!

Boys and girls should plant maple trees in boxes and study their growth. If the plants are cared for and watered during the summer holidays, they will be tiny maple trees several inches high by September.

#### HOW TREES GET THEIR FOOD.

Let us go out and look at a Red Maple tree. Its trunk, forming a support for the branches and leaves, is held securely in its place by strong roots which run in every direction and take a firm hold of the soil beneath the surface. Branching from these are rootlets and root-hairs which suck in the water. All through the roots, stem and branches are little passages through which the water, con-

\* The popular idea of a fruit is that it is something good to eat, but in plants the term is applied to the seed-vessel and whatever may be joined with it to assist in protecting or scattering the seeds.