

ST. JOHN, N. B., SATURDAY, DECEMBER 31, 1898.

SHOOTING AN OIL WELL.

THE DANGER AND EXCITEMENT OF STRIKING OIL.

The Shooter Called Upon to Display Nerve at Critical Moments—Fires Smooth-bore at the Risk of His Life—Carelessness in Handling Nitro-Glycerine.

'Everybody out of the derrick!' shouts a grimy figure. The warning is familiar in the Pennsylvania oil regions. A steep hillside is dotted with tall oil derricks rising above the forest trees. Save for the derricks the scene is purely one of primitive forest. The soil is virgin. None of its treasures has been sought except for the oil. When the possibility of further oil development has been exhausted some farmer of another generation will strip off the timber, giving over the land to agricultural pursuits. But no farmer of the present generation will do this. He is called 'farmer' for the same reason that a native of Kentucky is called a 'Colonel,' and is content to lease his land to the oil producer for his eight of the possible production.

The owner stands at a safe distance from the derrick watching the operation of 'shooting' the well. Down 600 feet the well has been drilled. It is not an opening large enough for a man to fall into. He could scarcely get his foot into the opening. Down almost the entire depth an iron casing runs. The well has the same diameter in cross section clear to the bottom. Above the well is the derrick, through whose floor the casing projects. At one side are the giant wheels which are in reality the reel for the cable running over the block at the derrick's top down into the derrick, where it meets the heavy tools whose raising and lowering, a half inch at a time, has drilled the well. At the other side are the engine and boiler which have furnished the power for the drilling process.

Oil will not flow into such a small cavity as that made for the pipe. It must be enlarged by an explosion of nitro-glycerine lowered in tin tubes or shells. When once the force of the underground explosion has been felt a large cavity will be made, the surrounding rock will be crushed, and the streams of the crude petroleum will flow in, to be pumped out and refined.

The little group of well-side employees is gathered at the derrick. Under the trees at a safe distance is a wagon, from which two horses have been unhitched. A large box is fitted to the wagon, with compartments, each holding a two-gallon can of nitro-glycerine. From these the 'shooter' has taken eight quarts. Three long sections of tin tubing have been filled with fluid. Each shell, as filled, is lowered to the bottom of the iron tube. The shooter has simply to light his 'quib' and drop it in the well. Constructed upon the principal of the firecracker, its explosion will set off the nitro-glycerine. As the 'quib' strikes the first tin tubing a cap will explode it. Then will come the explosion. 'Everybody out of the derrick!' again shouts the shooter, lighted quib in hand. The little knots of spectators break for shelter. They may be drenched with the oil that always gathers in a well prior to shooting, and flying bits of rock have been known to strike people at a well-shooting.

The shooter waits for a moment, then, hurling his quib into the open mouth of the well, he runs for the wood. He looks back. The gas in the mouth has taken fire. When the oil comes derrick and machinery will be destroyed. He hastens back. All this time the quib is descending. Presence at the well side at the moment of explosion means death. He throws his hat over the opening. The gas flame is extinguished. He has saved his employer a tidy sum of money. He then seeks his own safety. He is twenty feet away. A light report, a roar then a loud report follows. The ground is shaken. From the mouth of the well a shower of oil spouts. It grows. It is thirty feet in the air above the derrick. It hovers a moment, and then dies away. Fragments of rock and bits of tin tubing have accompanied the rushing flood of oil.

Back comes the shooter to the derrick. He gathers together the cans which once contained the glycerine. These he heaps together and explodes, as the law requires, lest some incautious wanderer should come to grief through inadvertently kicking one. His work is done. With his team he drives to the magazine in the remote forest, where, taking on a new cargo, he

prepares to shoot another well. The well he has just left is now ready for the jumping rig which when once fitted, enables the owner to add from three to ten barrels of crude oil, according to the capacity of the well, to his production.

A shooter driving along a lonely road is frequently blown into space by his load of nitro-glycerine. Shooters are of only two kinds, the careless and the careful.

The careless joke with death at every turn. They knock the cans together, laughing at the bystanders' terror they bump their wagons over rocks and stones. A strict regard for the truth compels the statement that very seldom are they blown up. It is usually the careful man whose own nervous fears make a nightmare of his life, who gets killed. Yet the men in general are so accustomed to this life, with its possibility of death at any moment, that they refer to it in a matter of fact way.

Some oil men once stood upon a hilltop near a road along which a shooter was shortly expected to pass. Suddenly there was an explosion from a part of the road obscured by the trees of such violence as to throw every man in the party to the ground.

'Well,' remarked a driller, arising and dusting his clothes, 'that must have been Bill Agnew. He was expected 'bout this time.'

CURIOSITIES OF THE PEERAGE.

Some of the Privileges Conferred on Peers are Quaint and Interesting.

Even to the casual student the British Peerage bristles with points of interest and curiosity; while to the more profound investigator it would yield material sufficient to fill a library of books of absorbing interest.

It is more than a little astonishing to notice the disparity in the number of titles which different peers enjoy. The Duke of Atholl is so richly endowed that he could give a title to each of twenty-one different men, while still retaining his dukedom.

The Duke of Argyll ranks second in the list of men of many titles. In addition to his title as duke, he holds seventeen titles as baron, viscount, earl and marquis, together with a knighthood over 600 years old.

The Duke of Hamilton has sixteen titles to spare; and the Duke of Buccleuch and the Marquis of Bute could each spare fifteen, while retaining the rank by which they are known.

On the other hand, the Venerable the Rev. and the Earl of Devon has no second title of peerage; and the Duke of Somerset even has only one barony to add to his strawberry leaves.

In spite of the unlimited range for choice of a title, many of our peers have titles which they share with several others. No fewer than five noblemen are Lords Howard, and the same number are entitled to pose as Lords Hamilton. There are four Lords Grey, and the same number of Lords Stuart or Stewart; while of Lords Bruce, Boyle, Hay, and others, there are at least three.

This confusion of titles is the more difficult to understand as there are so many countries still unappropriated. Embryo peers may have a choice of the countries of Dorset, Gloucester, Hampshire, Middlesex, Monmouth, Oxford, and Shropshire.

Scotland has nine unattached counties; Ireland has six; and Wales two; no fewer than two dozen counties thus being available for new creations in the peerage.

Of towns patiently awaiting selection by ennobled brewers and others, there is an embarrassing number, including London and Liverpool.

In many cases a man's accession to a title brings no new dignity to his family. Although the young Earl of Rothes succeeded his grandmother in the title five years ago, his mother still remains Mrs. Leslie, and his sisters the Misses Leslie.

For some time after his succession the Duke of Portland's mother remained plain Mrs. Bentinck.

The brother of the last and the uncle of the present Earl of Caithness cannot prefix 'the Honorable' to his name; and although the Earl of Londonderry succeeded to six baronies in addition to his earldom, his father remained Mr. Charles Abney-Hastings until he in turn was ennobled.

There are several curious cases in which a younger son has become a peer before an elder one, and a son even before his father.

When the Duchess of Sutherland died, ten years ago, her second son became a peer, as Earl of Cromartie, four years before his elder brother, the present duke, was entitled to sit in the House of Lords.

When Susan Baroness North died in 1884, her son succeeded her in the barony and took a seat in the House of Lords while his father, Colonel North, was sitting in the Lower Chamber.

The Marquis of Granby, as Lord Mansfield of Haddon, sits with his father in the House of Lords; Lord Curzon is a peer as well as his father, Lord Scarsdale; and Lord Campbell sat in the Glided Chamber with his son, Lord Stratheden, who inherited the title from his mother.

While some of our peers were born 'when George III. was King,' and while Earl Nelson has worn his coronet two years longer than our Queen has had a crown, the Duke of Leinster has not yet reached his teens, and Lord Carbery is a little boy of six, the age at which Sir Arthur Kennard succeeded to his baronetcy.

Some of the privileges conferred on peers are quaint and interesting. The right of Lords Kingsley and Forester to retain their hats in the Royal presence is well known. It is less known that Lord Inchiquin, who traces his descent beyond the Conquest, is entitled to deck his servants in Royal livery, a privilege dating from the days of Henry VIII.

A much prouder privilege is that which has been for five centuries the prerogative of the Dymoke of Scrivelsby, who furnish the champion clad in mail, with visor closed and lowered lance, rides into Westminster Hall and challenges the world to dispute the title to the Crown. This quaint relic of the days of chivalry is one of the most picturesque links with the past, and has survived the changes of 800 years.

VEELEY'S VALUABLE RAT'S NEST.

The Government to Pay Him \$500 and Interest for Thirty Years for It.

An old but very interesting story about five United States Treasury notes that were found by John Veeley, a carpenter, more than thirty years ago, in an old box car in Louisville, Ky., was revived recently when a bill for his relief, which has been pending in Congress for years, and which had already passed the Senate, passed the House. It thus becomes a law, and Veeley will get good American dollars to amount to \$500 and interest from Uncle Sam. The bill was called up by Representative Z nor of Indiana. It was the first introduced in the Senate during the Fifty first Congress on April 25, 1890, and referred to the Committee on Claims Senator Turpie secured its passage in the upper house May 17, 1897.

It is in the reports of the Committee on Claims that the story of the Treasury notes is told. According to these reports John Veeley was on Sept. 29, 1868 employed in Louisville, Ky., as a carpenter by the Louisville and Nashville Railroad company, and while tearing out the end of an old box car which was under repair, he found five United States Treasury notes, payable to bearer, of \$100 each. The notes were somewhat mutilated and appeared to have formed part of a rat's nest, but there seems to have been no difficulty in determining their character, their denomination and date and the issue and series to which each belonged. Veeley took the notes to the Louisville Custom House and they were forwarded to the Treasury Department for redemption, but the department refused to redeem them, and with the approval of the Secretary they were returned to him in February, 1869. He then sold them to one Julius Wellman a broker for \$300.

In March, 1869, Wellman sent them again to the Treasury Department and the matter was referred to the First Comptroller, who decided that they should neither be redeemed nor returned to Wellman. Wellman then made a demand upon Veeley for a return of the purchase money, and it is alleged that an officer was sent to intimidate him and force a settlement. Veeley had in the meantime disposed of the \$300, and being dependent on his daily labor, it was not easy to refund the money, but he at length did so by installments, and whatever rights were acquired by the original finding were revived in him by the repayment.

Veeley subsequently renewed his efforts to secure payment from the Treasury Department, but the request was denied, and the notes still remained in the hands of the Treasurer.

Senator Turpie's bill, as amended by the Senate Committee on Claims, directs the Secretary of the Treasury to pay Veeley the value of the five Treasury notes found by him.

The bill was favorably reported by the committee on March 31, 1897, and was passed on May 17, 1897. It was introduced in the House three days later and final action was taken to day.

THE RETIRED BURGLAR.

Grievous Disappointment Supplies a Glittering Prospect of Wealth.

'I found myself one night,' said the retired burglar, 'in the dining room of a house where they had a safe to put things in. It was a kind of an old-fashioned house, and this safe, which was painted in imitation of the wood, was built in a big, old-style sideboard, a fine, solid, substantial piece of furniture. I spread a burlap bag out on the dining room table and then turned my lamp on the sideboard and safe again, just to take another look at it slick and so'd and shipshape as it was, and then I got ready to go at the lock. But before beginning on it, more as a matter of detail than anything else, because while folks do sometimes forget to lock their safes they don't forget 'em one time in a million. I tried the knob, and I'm blest if this safe, big safe as it was, that I'd expected a lot of work over, was not locked at all! I just turned the knob and swung the door wide open.

'Well now, you ought to see the inside of that safe, lined with purple velvet and just filled with silver stuff. The stuff kind o' old fashioned, as you might have expected, but beautiful and just a-glistening when I turned the bullseye on it. The velvet that the safe was lined with was very fine and rich, too, and the bright silver and the purple velvet looked so pooty together that it seemed a pity to break 'em up; but business is business, and I put my lamp down and began transferring the stuff from the safe to my bag on the table.

'I cleaned out all the pigeon holes and cubby-holes of the silver, and a beautiful lot it was, and then I looked in with the lamp, and began on the drawers. There was quite a number of drawers, big and little, and here there was a variety of silver knives and forks, and before I knew it I'd run up against some gold napkin rings and gold spoons. It just beat everything you ever seed, and the next drawer I opened had j-welry in it—watches and that sort of thing. It seemed as though this safe must have been intended and used not only for the silver, but as a sort of family strong box to keep valuables in.

'Well, you know, I almost wondered if I'd ever done anything to entitle me to all this, because there was a small fortune made in a single night; but I kept on putting the stuff in the bag all the same, and pretty soon I had everything cleaned out except one little sort of a small inside safe that I was leaving till the last, and that I shouldn't have been surprised, judging from the rest of the safe, to find filled with diamonds in bracelets, and rings, and butterflies, and stars, and all that sort of thing. I was going to put that stuff in my pockets; so I tied up the bag, and got that down off the table, all ready to carry off, and then I turned to open the little safe, and I pulled that door open with one hand, holding the light with the other, to look in. And it was filled with 'em, just a glittering there, enough to take your breath away, and a moment later something happened that pooty near took my breath away for a second or two. As I swung the door open a little wider to get at 'he stuff easier I heard a click, and then the loudest and wranglest and jauglest and slambangest burglar alarm you ever heard. I slapped the door shut again, hoping 'hat that would cut off the connection and stop the bell ringing. But it only seemed to start it up louder'n it was at first. And then I

turned my back on the diamonds. I was going to let 'em go, and have the rest of it I could; and I picked up my lamp and the burlap bag and I started for the door. I hadn't taken two steps when the burglar alarm seems to break out louder'n ever, and it seemed to be right in the room where I was; before that it had seemed to be somewhere else in the house, but now it seemed to be right here in the room and in one particular spot, and I couldn't help turning toward it to look at it for a minute and see what sort of thing it was and I realized that it was my own alarm clock banging away to wake me up and let me know that it was time to get out and get to work.

GENIUS NOT INSPIRED BY THE WAR

No Songs Produced by the Struggle to Compare with the Old Favorites.

'That higher musical education hasn't really brought forth the great army of talent fondly looked for is certain,' said a bandmaster a few days ago as he puffed at his pipe. 'This absence of genius is particularly noticeable now, when a comparison is made between the few songs that have been evolved about the late war and the works of musicians of thirty years ago.

During the civil war fully a dozen patriotic anthems were written, which even to day cause a tingling of the nerves when they are heard. What loyal citizen has not felt a thrill at the swing and rhythm of the melody of 'Tramp, Tramp, Tramp the Boys Are Marching,' 'When Johnny Comes Marching Home,' 'Marching Through Georgia,' 'The Battle Cry of Freedom,' or 'Tenting To-Night on the Old Camp Ground?' These are only a few of the songs that originated during the civil war. There are others equally good. 'John Brown's Body Lies Mouldering in the Grave' is another type of composition.

'The soldiers who wore the gray also had their patriotic songs. 'Maryland, My Maryland,' is a classic, second to none in its magnificent rhythm: 'Way Down South in Dixie' will be remembered and sung for a century, while the melodious 'Bonnie Blue Flag, is one of the best songs are written in the English language.

Such songs as these form an indelible part of the history of the bitter struggle between the North and South. Compared to them the hundreds of songs that have been written on the war with Spain are in nearly every case absolutely barren of real merit from the standpoint of a patriot or a musician. Among the best may be cited the 'Manila Te Deum,' composed by Walter Damrosch and sung by the Oratorio Society a few weeks ago. This is in every respect a scholarly composition, but is dependent for patriotic sentiment almost entirely upon the interpretation of a few national songs, such as the Star Spangled Banner and 'America.' 'When Uncle Sam Goes Marching Into Cuba,' is the name of a song that possesses a certain amount of military inspiration and has attained a considerable degree of popularity. There are a few other songs that appeal to certain classes, which met with some temporary success, but have already been relegated to oblivion. Nothing has appealed directly to the soldiers in the field, who, in lieu of any soul-stirring new war song were compelled to fall upon the old timers, such as 'The Girl I Left Behind Me,' and other old favorites, or contented themselves with popular songs of the day, such as 'There'll be a Hot Time in the Old Town To-Night,' 'On the Banks of the Wabash' and several 'coon' songs, which, although bright, lively and generally pleasing, contain absolutely nothing that could be construed as patriotic or that will perpetuate them for more than a year at least.

For Croup,

asthma, bronchitis, or whooping cough, there is no remedy so sure and safe as Dr. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral. From the first dose its healing influence is manifest. The sufferer who has been kept awake by the cough falls into a restful sleep, and awakes strong and refreshed. Dr. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral is acknowledged to be a specific for all pulmonary complaints. Physicians praise and prescribe it.

"One of my children had croup. One night I was startled by the child's hard breathing, and on going to it found it strangling. It had nearly ceased to breathe. Having a part of a bottle of Ayer's Cherry Pectoral in the house, I gave the child three doses at short intervals, and anxiously waited results. From the moment the Pectoral was given the child's breathing grew easier, and in a short time it was sleeping quietly and breathing naturally. The child is alive and well to-day. Ayer's Cherry Pectoral saved its life."—C. J. WOOLDRIDGE, Worthen, Texas.

Ayer's Cherry Pectoral.