

BRIC-À-BRAC.



STRANGER IN CITY.—Begorra, an' the man that lites the fire in these little shoves shud be discharged. I've tried to warrum me hands this half hour, an' the devil a taste of hate there is in thum, at all, at all.

A War Reminiscence.

It was during the winter of 1864-65, which will long be remembered by the soldiers who took part in the campaign in the Valley of Virginia, as one which tried men's souls and their heels also, that the thrilling scene occurred which I am about to describe.

The old Fourth Cavalry was on a forced march down the Valley to meet a column of the enemy which was advancing, and after a hard day's ride went into bivouac just at night-fall on the road-side. We did not have the "cigars and cognac," as the old song says, with which "to bivouac," so after a hasty "bite of something to eat," and picketing and feeding horses, we soon rolled ourselves, head and ears, in our blankets and lay prone upon the frozen ground. To a tired soldier sleep comes quickly, and with it almost entire oblivion,—he rarely dreams,—so hardly more than a minute elapsed after the lying down before the entire camp was as silent as the grave. While preparing for rest we had been notified of a coming snow-storm, not only by the black clouds which hung heavily in the north-east, but by heralds in the shape of cutting snow-flakes

propelled by the wintry blast. It was fearfully cold—so bitter was it indeed, that it was thought expedient to dispense with the usual camp guard so as to enable all to obtain whatever of comfort was possible under the circumstances. The regiment at that time numbered between six and seven hundred men who, soldier-like, caring only for the present, and unmindful of the morrow, slept soundly and, I may add, rapidly.

I had slept as I had supposed only a few minutes when I suddenly awoke to consciousness, being made aware of an immense pressure upon me accompanied with almost intolerable heat. In attempting to move I found myself, as it were, packed tightly in a mold which I fitted exactly, and I was unable to turn either to right or left. I soon found that I was covered with a very friendly blanket of snow. With a vigorous push, I threw my blanket off, and a most curious spectacle presented itself to my astonished gaze. The black clouds had passed away and the bright morning moon shone down upon the ground covered with a white mantle of eight inches of snow. Looking around me, as far as my eye could reach in every direction, I saw nothing but the unbroken snow covering what appeared to be mounds or graves in every conceivable position. I was sitting upright in my own grave in the middle of a huge cemetery. Not a human being could I discover anywhere, while everything was as still as death itself.

While I was wrapt in the contemplation of so wonderful a scene, the bugle at head-quarters, a quarter of a mile off, sounded the reveille and lo! what a change! In an instant the quiet cemetery was alive—all the men arose at once from their snow graves, and what was the stillness of death but a moment before was now bustle and activity. Instantly the text flashed through my mind "The trumpet shall sound and the dead shall be raised." Words fail me in describing my feelings at the moment of the occurrence. Had I had any idea of the time I would have called some of my comrades. As it was I am fortunate enough to be probably the only person who has really seen a prototype of the resurrection.

WILLIAM M. PEGRAM.

The Word "Bit."

SAN GABRIEL, CALIFORNIA,

EDITOR SCRIBNER'S MONTHLY.—The writer of "The Money of our Fathers," in "Bric-à-Brac" of your July issue, says "we never hear the term three bits, or five bits, or seven bits." Here, in California, where the word "bit" is used almost without exception, a merchant would be as likely to tell you the price of an article was "three bits," "five bits," or "seven bits," as "two bits," "four bits," or "six bits." I have also heard such expressions as "a dollar and a bit," "a dollar and five bits."

ECILA.