Incidents.

No.36, Volume 9.

Subject:

Gen.Benj.F.Butler, anecdotes.

Anecdotes of General B. F. Butler.

(A)

The first anecdote I heard of General Butler was certainly characteristic of the man. After indulging in the satisfactory belief of it for half a century, a young lawyer assures me that the ancedote itself has some impossible features in it.

Be ~~it~~ that as it may, I am disposed to make the record as I heard it.

In the olden time in Mass. the most aristocratic gentlemen, who were said to have worn kid gloves, belonged to a Massachusetts corporation. Now, there was a corporation in Lowell, which kept sevefal large factories in operation. In one of them a young girl who was employed, answered, rather sharply, her overseer one day, when he had put an impertinent question to her; she made ~~making~~, as he claimed, a disrespectful retort. The overseer immediately discharged this young employee and refused to pay her a month's wages which she had earned, and which were due at the date of discharge.

The young woman carried the case to B. F. Butler then a young lawyer in Lowell, and Mr. Butler called upon the head of the corporation and demanded an immediate settlement,-- a payment of the account and costs. Butler received from this dignified chief an indignant refusal. Mr. Butler young as he was, hardly changed countenance except to cast his eyes knowingly as he always did, to the right and left: and then with a polite bow he said: "Well sir, I have a way to make you pay this debt."

He then went immediately to the court and got out

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warrant of attachment, (how directly or indirectly he came ~~about~~ to this I do not know), what he actually did was to have the sheriff levy and attach the waterwheel of the factory; and this attachment was sufficient to stop the waterwheel from running, and to cripple the whole concern.

As soon as this action was reported to the corporation, the young woman immediately was paid in full a sum of money which included the young lawyer's fee.

310 words

Some of our members of

B. A Good Turn to Gen. Howard.

General Butler once did me a good turn and I am glad now to make a record of it. He was a member of the House of Representatives in 1874 when some charges were preferred against me on the floor of the house. Charges which originated in General Bellknap's office of the war department. It seemed to be cut and dried that a court of inquiry made up of army officers should be required by a joint resolution of both houses ~~of the court and~~ to investigate my affairs; naturally General Bellknap who was then secretary of war would have the selection of the officers to compose the court. The resolution was introduced in the house and referred to the military committee who reported it back to the house recommending the resolution. It prescribed seven general officers for the court. As soon as the resolution was reported I felt that my chances for a fair investigation of the charges preferred were very slim. It appeared to me that my accuser was to select his own court and so condemn me out & out. Before, however, I could say anything to any friend of mine in the House of Representative, General Butler rose in his place and said: "I understand it, so there is prejudice against General Howard on account of his friendship for the colored people and his continuous work for them. I move that the court consist of officers, the majority of whom have served with colored troops; that with such an unprejudiced court; and further that General Howard have the right of challenge". Some one replied to him that General Howard already had a right of challenge according to law. General Butler Replied: "I know that, but I want this right emphasized. The friends of Bellknap were very much disconserted by General Butler's attitude and they hastened to have the resolution

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sent back to the committee. Meanwhile I was informed that President Grant himself would appoint the court. Having full confidence in General Grant I went to General Butler ~~to ask~~ and asked him to let the resolution ~~when~~ it returned from the committee, ~~pass~~ go through. The Honorable Fernando Wood said in the hearing of others, probably in the lobby, that he would bet $15,000 against $1500 that General Howard would never suffer that resolution to go through the Senate. I hastened to the Senate and told General Logan who was chairman of the military committee of the Senate, of the circumstances and that I would be glad if the resolution appointing the court would go through. It promptly passed both houses and General Grant made a careful selection of the officers for the court. General W. T. Sherman ~~being~~ was the chairman. I have always felt that the voluntary action ~~of~~ General Butler saved me from being subjected to a prejudiced court and so ~~from such~~ for investigation. The findings (which were final) of the court of inquiry ~~,~~ were all that anybody could have wished and were approved by the President himself.

470 words

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