THE CORONER'S OFFICE.

ITS ORIGIN AND ITS WORK.

"AYE, MARRY IS'T CROWNER'S QUEST LAW."

Attention has recently been called by various important incidents, notably the Park Place disaster, the trial of "Frenchy, the Ripper," and the inquest which led to the indictment of the New-Haven Railway directors, to the workings of the Coroner's office; and it is thought that the story of the Coroner and his duties would be interesting to the readers of The Tribune.

The office of Coroner is an ancient one under the old common law, so called according to Coke, because he had principally to do with pleas of the Crown. The Lord Chief Justice of the Queen's Bench is said to be the principal Coroner of the Kingdom, and may, in any

M. J. B. MESSEMER.

place, exercise the jurisdiction of the Coroner. The duties of the office, however, are now practically confined to holding inquests in case of sudden or violent death.

The office is, and always has been, elective, even in England; the appointment being made by the Freeholders of the county assembled in county court. By the statute of Westminster the First, it was ordered that none but lawful and discreet knights should be chosen as coroners, and in one instance a person was actually removed from office for insufficiency of estate. Lands to the value of £20 per annum (the qualification for knighthood) were afterward deemed sufficient to satisfy the requirements as to the estate which ought to be insisted upon in case of a Coroner. The commentaries of Blackstone show the transition of the office from its original dignified and honorary character to a paid appointment in the public service.

"Now, indeed, through the culpable neglect of gentlemen of property, this office has been suffered to fall into disrepute, and get into low and indigent hands; so that, although formerly no Coroner would condescend to be paid for serving his country, and, indeed, they were by the aforesaid statute of Westminster expressly forbidden to take a reward, under pain of a great forfeiture to the King; yet for many years past they have only desired to be chosen for their perquisites, being allowed fees for the attendance by the Statute 3, Henry VII., c. 1, which Sir Henry Coke complains of heavily; though since his time these fees have been much enlarged."

The mercenary character of the office, thus deprecated by Coke and Blackstone, is now firmly established, without, however (it need hardly be said), affording the slightest ground for such reflections as the foregoing. The Coroner is in fact a public officer, and like other public officers receives payment for his services. In England the person appointed is almost invariably a qualified legal or medical practitioner, the duties of the office being supposed to require some acquaintance with the learning of both of these professions. The property qualification formerly insisted upon now appears to be virtually dispensed with, the county being liable for any penalties that may be incurred by the Coroner.

In England the appointment is held for life, but is vacated by the holder being made sheriff. He may also be removed by the writ de coronatore egonerando, for sufficient cause assigned, as, for instance, that he is engaged in other business, or incapacitated by old age or sickness, etc. By 23 and 24 Vict., c. 116, the Lord Chancellor may remove any Coroner for inability or misbehavior in his office.

The Coroner is primarily an officer of the county, elected by the freeholders. In certain liberties and franchises, the appointment is made by the Crown, or lords holding a charter from the Crown. By the Municipal Corporations Act, in any borough having a separate quarter sessions the Council may appoint a Coroner; in other boroughs the Coroner for the county has jurisdiction.

The remuneration of the county Coroner is now regulated by the Act 23 and 21 Vict. c. 166, above mentioned. The system of payment by fees, established by an earlier act of the same reign, is abolished, and payment is to be made by salary calculated on the average amount of fees, mileage, and allowances usually received by the Coroner for a period of five years, and the calculation is to be revised every five years. The Home Secretary is to decide between the Coroner and the justices when they cannot agree. Borough Coroners under the Municipal Corporations Act are to be paid by fees.

The duties of the office are ascertained by the 4 Edward I., st. 2: "A Coroner of our Lord the King ought to enquire of these things, first, when Coroners are commanded by the King's bailiffs, or by

FERDINAND LEVY.

honest men of the county, they shall go to the places where any be slain, or suddenly wounded, or where houses are broken, or where treasure is said to be found, and shall forthwith command four of the next towns, or five, or six, to appear before him in such a place; and when they are come thither, the Coroner, upon the oath of them shall inquire in this manner, that is, to wit, if it concerns a man slain, whether it were in any house, field, bed, tavern, company; and if any, and who were there, etc. It shall also be inquired if the dead person were known, or else a stranger, and where he lay the night before. And if any person is said to be guilty of the murder, the Coroner shall go to their house and inquire what goods they have, etc."

Similar directions are given for cases of persons found drowned, or suddenly dead, for attachment of criminals in cases of violence, etc. It is the duty of the township to give notice of violent or sudden death to the Coroner; and the inquisition is held before him and a jury of not less than twelve persons, constituting a court of record. Their charge is to inquire how the party came by his death. The inquisition must be super visum corporis; if the body be not recovered, the coroner can only sit in virtue of a special commission. By 6 and 7 Vict., c. 12, it was provided (in remedy of the inconveniences of the common law) that the Coroner only within whose jurisdiction the body shall be lying dead, shall hold the inquest, although the cause of death may have happened somewhere out of his jurisdiction. And in case of any body found dead in the sea, etc., the inquest, in the absence of the Deputy Coroner for the Admiralty, shall be held by the Coroner of the place where the body is first brought to land.

At the inquest the evidence is taken on oath, and the Crown or any party suspected may tender evidence. The medical man attending the deceased person, if any, may be ordered to attend, and the Coroner may order a post-mortem examination. If the jury are not satisfied they may name any properly qualified practitioner, who shall be required to attend and give evidence, or make a post-mortem examination. The verdict must be that of twelve at least of the jury. If any person is found guilty of murder or other homicide, the Coroner shall commit him to prison for trial; he shall certify the material evidence to the court, and bind over the proper persons to prosecute or give evidence at the trial. He may in his discretion accept bail for a person found guilty of manslaughter. Since the abolition of public executions in England, the Coroner is required to hold an inquest on the body of any criminal on whom sentence of death has been carried into effect. The question of reopening the Coroner's inquests after verdict is given was discussed in a recent case. The Queen's Bench, on a suggestion on the part of the Crown that there was a probability of fixing the suspected crime by further investigation, ordered the verdict to be quashed and a new inquest held.

There has been of late years much discussion in England on the subject of the Coroner's office, and legislation at no distant time may be expected. The points on which reform is generally asked for may be briefly indicated. It is desirable that the qualifications for the office should be fixed, and that it should be a legal and not a medical qualification. The duties of the office are mainly judicial; such medical information as may be necessary can be had from experts; while, of course, a knowledge of the technical rules of evidence is essential to the efficient discharge of the Coroner's duties. Again, that the election to a judicial office, wholly unpolitical in character, should be by the freeholders of the county is generally felt to be an anomaly. A county Coroner recently declared that the expense of contesting the county amounted, in his own case, to several thousand pounds. Payment depending directly or indirectly on fees often produces unfortunate results. It leads occasionally to disputes between the Coroner and the justices and exposes the former to the suspicion of holding unnecessary inquests for the sake of increasing his income.

The system of fees worked precisely the same evil in this country, and the Legislature made the office a salaried one in the city of New-York. It was no uncommon thing in the case of a drowned tramp to drag him from one Coroner's district to another and every Coroner had a "whack" at the unfortunate. These doings are, however, past. As a significant fact, the expenses of the Coroner's office to-day under the salary system are no more than they were years ago under the fee system, when there was but one Coroner for the entire city. In this respect, the Coroner's office is one of the most economical departments in the city government. In any circumstance the propriety of holding an inquest may be a question of great delicacy, and a slight mistake on either side may subject the officer to unmerited obloquy. In some cases the present state of the law involves the great evil of too much inquiry. Besides the Coroner's inquest there are, in cases of a criminal character, the public examination before a magistrate and the private examination by the Grand Jury. But it may also happen that not merely one but two or more inquests may be held in the same manner. In the case of a railway accident or a collision at sea, the victims may die in different jurisdictions, and if there is a suspicion of criminal negligence, the accused person must practically stand his trial several times over. He may even be acquitted by one jury and condemned by another. It will be seen by the foregoing that the English rules applicable to the Coroner have been closely followed in this country.

There is no corresponding office in Scotland.

When in the City of New-York any person shall die from criminal violence, or by a casualty, or suddenly when in apparent health, or when unattended by a physician, or in prison, or in any suspicious or unusual manner, the Coroner must subpoena one of the Coroner's physicians, who shall view the body of such deceased person, externally, or make an autopsy thereon, as may be required. It is the duty of the physician to whom such subpoena is so issued to make the inspection and autopsy required, and to give evidence in relation thereto at the Coroner's In-

DANIEL HANLY.

quest. The testimony of such physician, and that of any other witnesses that the Coroner may deem necessary, constitutes an inquest.

Four Coroners are elected in the City and County of New-York in the same manner and at the same general election as sheriffs; hold their offices for the same term, and are removable in the same manner.

Each Coroner of said city shall, on assuming office, appoint a qualified physician, who shall be a resident in said city, and shall be known as a "Coroner's physician." Any vacancy in the office of Coroner's physician shall be filled by the Board of Coroners. The Board of Coroners, for cause, may remove the physicians appointed by them.

Should the Coroner deem it necessary, he may call a jury to assist him in this investigation, or should a citizen demand that a jury should be called he shall proceed as directed by Part IV, Title 7, Article 1, of the Revised Statutes. Any citizen of this State, not over seventy years old, and being at the time a resident of the county, may be summoned to serve as a juror upon a Coroner's inquest; and any person who shall wilfully neglect or refuse to serve as such juror when duly summoned shall, upon conviction, be adjudged guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be punished by imprisonment in the county prison not exceeding one year, or by a fine not exceeding $500, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

It shall be the duty of any citizen who may become aware of the death of a person who shall have died in the manner stated in the last section but one to report such death forthwith to one of the Coroners, or to any police officer, and such officer shall, without delay, notify to the Coroner such death; and any person who shall wilfully neglect or refuse to report such death to the Coroner shall, upon conviction, be adjudged guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be punished by imprisonment in the county prison, not exceeding one year, or by a fine not exceeding $500, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

Any person, except the Coroner, who shall wilfully touch, remove, or disturb the body of any one who shall have died in the manner described in the last section but two, or who shall wilfully touch, remove, or disturb the clothing, or any article upon or near such body, without an order from the Coroner, shall, upon conviction, be adjudged guilty of a misdemeanor, and shall be punished by imprisonment in the county prison not exceeding one year, or by a fine not exceeding $500, or by both such fine and imprisonment.

If all the Coroners be absent, or be unable for any excuse to attend, their duties, so far as they relate to holding inquests and their action consequent thereupon, may be performed by a police justice, but by no other officer, with the same authority, and subject to the same obligations and penalties as apply to the Coroners.

It will easily be seen that the office of Coroner is not only an ancient and honorable one, but in a great city like New-York a most important one. It is his province to follow up any clew, examine any witness, and take any step necessary to establish the crime and discover, if possible, the criminal.

As a magistrate the Coroner can discharge a suspected person upon the verdict of a jury sustaining such action by their belief in the innocence of some suspected person. It is usual for the Coroner to hold the accused to await the action of the Grand Jury, yet there is no doubt of the Coroner's right to discharge a person accused of homicide after the verdict of the jury acquitting the accused man.

The question has been frequently suggested as to some change in the manner of holding inquests upon persons coming to unnatural deaths—that the Board of Health or the Police Departments have jurisdiction in such matters. Such suggestions would seem impracticable for many reasons; chiefly that both departments are sufficiently burdened with business already assigned to them by the Legislature without undertaking to discharge new and difficult duties. While every other department of the city government has been increased, the Coroner's office remains as it was over twenty years ago.

The office of Coroner has existed for ages, and thus far no different method has been devised better to perform the duties of investigating into the matter of unnatural deaths. The better plan would be by legislative enactment to strengthen the office and better equip it for its important work. The authority of the Coroner in cases of suspicious takings off should be increased, and the efficiency of the department strengthened.

As a matter of fact, the expense of running the Coroner's office to-day is about what it was when the city of New-York contained only a half a million of people. There has been no increase in the number of Coroners or their deputies with the increase of population.

As to the actual workings of the department, it would be difficult to find a busier office in the city. In the building, No. 124 Second-ave., a one-time palatial mansion, the Coroner's Office is situated. The clerks are crowded together in what was formerly the front parlor, and a court-room has been improvised hurriedly in the back parlor and extension rooms. The chief clerk, Edward F. Reynolds, is a model officer. He is thorough, efficient, painstaking, a good organizer, and with adequate clerical force could make his a model department, having every qualification necessary for his work and thoroughly understanding it. All day long the office echoes to the stories of mothers seeking to ascertain if there is some record of absent ones, and fearing to learn the truth that they are cold and stark at the Morgue; a policeman comes in with the story of a drowned man on a pier; a hotel clerk, to announce a suicide; a man shot in a brothel; a child fallen down an elevator; a coroner wanted right away to take the ante-mortem statement of some man with a stab; a woman dying of malpractice; let-

LOUIS W. SCHULTZE.

ters from all parts of the world, through foreign Consuls in the city, inquiring for missing relatives; requests to dig up dead bodies; orders to replevin goods from the Sheriff—and so it runs all day long. Despite all that may be said to the contrary, the Coroner is a busy man, if he thoroughly performs his duty. Night and day he is on guard.

The present Board of Coroners for the City of New-York as it is at present constituted is as follows:

Ferdinand Levy, who is the oldest Coroner of the Board, is familiar with the duties of his place and dispatches business with clearness and rapidity. He is a prominent Grand Army man and a member of many social and charitable organizations. He has at times been spoken of as a probable police justice, a place he would fill acceptably.

Mr. J. B. Messemer is a physician—a graduate of Bellevue Hospital Medical College. He is a member of the Society of Medical Jurisprudence, of the Pathological Society, and in fact nearly every important medical society in the State.

Dr. Louis W. Schultze is a graduate of the College of Physicians and Surgeons of New-York, and was resident physician and surgeon of the Commission of Emigration for six years. His most famous trials were "Frenchy, the Ripper" and Peakes, the man who was roasted to death on the telegraph pole. He is very popular and was re-elected by an unprecedented vote, running far ahead of his party ticket.

John B. Shea took his seat as Coroner on January 1, 1892, in place of Daniel Hanly, who had won considerable praise for the clear and intelligent manner in which he discharged his duty as Coroner in the Park Place disaster. Coroner Shea was a Member of Assembly for four years and was a member of the Board of Aldermen in 1891, when he resigned and was made Superintendent of Streets.

The deputy coroners are William T. Jenkins, William A. Conway, Philip E. Donlin and Walter J. Walsh. Each receives a salary of $3,000 per annum. Drs. Jenkins, Donlin and Conway have had considerable experience, and all are skilled physicians. Dr. Jenkins has been in service nine years. The deputy coroners view the body in the first instance and make the autopsy. They take the cases by turns of duty, one being continuously on duty from 11 p. m. to 3 a. m. and the other from 3 a. m. to 11 p. m.; the third deputy takes all the cases occurring over the Bridge. Deputy Coroner Jenkins has been appointed Health Officer of the Port of New-York. He was known in the office as one of the most capable of the deputy coroners. He was a hard working and efficient officer.

While the duties of coroner are important, they are none the less disagreeable. Taking the ante-mortem statements of persons weltering in their gore in some low-down brothel; viewing the remains of an unfortunate person with his brains blown out upon the pillows; gathering together the fragments of men and women hurled into eternity by some explosion; or that ghastly sight, a drowned man, are not pleasant duties by any manner of means.

And the jury trials at the Coroner's office often have their humorous side. It so happened that the identity of a man who was run over by a surface railroad car and killed could be only established by a hat bought of a hatter in Harlem.

"I sold his friend a hat," said the salesman, who was in the witness chair, "and although they were both in liquor I would know the man in a minute if I could see his hat."

"Finnerty," said Coroner Levy, who was presiding, to an interested spectator, "take the witness stand; the jury are anxious to know this one question and with it they can decide the case. 'Where did you get that hat?'" And yet the Coroner wondered why they smiled in his court-room.

Not long ago, while a case was going on before Coroner Schultze, the jury were much interested in the case of an accident which had taken place on the New-York Central Railroad. A valuable witness forced himself into the witness chair as one who knew all about the accident, and he proceeded to rattle off a long yarn of what this, that and the other one had told him.

The chair which is used by the witnesses is a risky one and stands dangerously and tottheringly exposed on a little platform. In fact, its occupant is either in danger of going backward into the yard through the window panes or hurled headlong among the attorneys in front of him if he is risky enough to sit in that automatic chair.

"Who employs you, anyway?" said Coroner Schultze, wrathfully.

"Holy Moses!" said the witness, as the chair upset and threw him backward on the floor.

"I mean the New-York Central, sir," replied the man, meekly crawling into the chair from which he had been so recently hurled and settling himself deterministically to give more evidence.

"You may retire, gentlemen of the jury, and write out your verdict," said Coroner Schultze.

It was a simple case, and they were out over an hour.

"Go in and see what is the matter," said the Coroner. Rap, rap, on the door by the officer.

"Struck a snag in there?" asked the attendant.

"Come in, come in," came from inside.

Receiving permission from the Coroner, the officer went in the jury-room. No one spoke; they all looked very strange.

"What's the matter?" said the officer.

"Whisper," said a juryman, confidentially; "come here," and in a low voice said, "The Coroner told us to come in here and write out our verdict—and—divil a sowl of us can write at all."

When the new Criminal Court building in Centre-st. is completed, a portion of it will be assigned for the use of the coroners and their clerks. It is hoped by that time legislative action will be made to meet the requirements of the Coroner's Department of the city government.

HIS CURIOSITY WAS SATISFIED.

YET HE ONLY CAUGHT A GLIMPSE OF THE THING—A RAILWAY INCIDENT.

In an elevated railway train last week sat a tired-looking workman and with him was an active boy of about ten years. They were going up town. At Chambers-st. a young man with a big basket got into the car and sat down opposite the pair. He put the basket on the seat beside him, and pulling a newspaper from his pocket, held it up before his face and was soon oblivious to his surroundings.

The boy was restless. He was constantly fidgeting. The man had restrained him several times; but chains and a gag would hardly have kept him perfectly quiet. His eye was instantly fixed upon the basket. He made up his mind that there was something good inside it.

"Papa, papa!" he demanded.

"Hush, boy!" said the tired man, as he leaned his head against the window, closed his eyes and tried to sleep.

"Can't I look into it, papa?"

"Don't bother me. I say."

Silence followed for a little time and then:

"Say papa, I only want to look. Can't I?"

"Look at anything you like, but don't wake me again or I'll cuff you."

The boy slipped from his seat cautiously. He kept an eye on the owner of the basket, but the newspaper still held him and the coast was clear. The basket had a strong wicker cover, which was fastened firmly with a string. He tried to untie the string for some time, but failing in this, he took a jack-knife out of his pocket and stealthily cut the knot. Taking another careful look at the owner of the basket, the mischievous lad lifted the lid slowly and putting his eye to the opening, peered in.

Then quirk as a flash the cover was knocked up out of his hand, and a brown streak shot from inside it to the top of the boy's head. The lad's first cry of surprise was followed immediately by shrieks of pain and terror. Something live was perched on the boy's head tearing his hair out in wisps and scratching his face and ears till the blood ran.

The father grabbed his precious boy, just as the owner of the animal grabbed the monkey from the boy's head and restored it to the basket.

The lad had not had much of a look at the monkey but his curiosity seemed to be fully satisfied.

MAYOR MATTHEWS AND THE LOTTERY.

Boston, Jan. 29.—The Mayor, in his private capacity, sent the following to the Legislature this afternoon:

To the Honorable Senate and House of Representatives in General Court assembled:

In view of the statements publicly made that the present lottery laws are insufficient to secure conviction, and of the widespread influence in this community of the corrupt organization known as the Louisiana State Lottery Company, I have the honor respectfully to petition your honorable body for the passage of such amendments to the laws of the Commonwealth as will render it easier to suppress the evil in the city. Respectfully, N. MATTHEWS, Jr.

HARBOR DEFENCE RAM.

A DEADLY WEAPON NOW BUILDING.

SHE WILL BE USED TO SEND GREAT SHIPS TO THE BOTTOM OF THE SEA.

The description of the "Harbor Defence Ram," now in course of construction at the Bath Iron Works, Bath, Me., upon designs furnished by Rear Admiral Daniel Ammen, completes the list of the new vessels of the steel Navy authorized by Congress since 1883 which The Tribune began publishing a few months ago. This vessel is unlike any other of the United States Navy, and promises to be an important addition to the weapons of offence or defence. She is a twin-screw, armor-plated vessel, authorized by the Act of Congress of March 2, 1889, the contract being awarded on January 28, 1891, with the provision that she must be completed within eighteen months from

HARBOR DEFENCE RAM.

the date of the contract. If she is not ready for delivery to the Government at that time, penalties will accrue against the builders during such delay of $25 a day for the first three months; $50 a day for the second three months, and $100 a day thereafter until she is completed.

The vessel will be similar in many respects to the Polyphemus, of the British Navy, though not so large. It was at first intended that she should have no armament, but to rely entirely upon ramming for her offensive power, but it has since been decided to mount four six-pounder rapid-firing guns upon her. The bow will be shaped like a parabolic spindle, to give strength for ramming and the cross sections are approximate ovals (her deck resembling a whale's back), the draught of water being such that there will be little freeboard. The rounded upper surface will offer a poor target. The only projections above the quarter deck are the conning tower, smoke-pipe ventilators hatch coamings, and skid beams upon which the boats will be supported. She is, in fact, an automobile floating projectile of 2,030 tons displacement. Her principal dimensions are: Length over all, 243 feet; length on load water-line, 242 3-4 feet; extreme breadth, 43 feet 5 inches; breadth at water-line, 41 feet 10 inches; draught, amidships, 15 feet; indicated horse-power, 4,800; contract speed, 17 knots; expected speed, 18 knots.

The vessel is designed upon the longitudinal bracket system, with an inner bottom extending from the forward collision bulkhead to the stern. The longitudinals and girders supporting the armor deck are to be continuous, converging to the stem casting and to the stern, the frames and beams to be intercostal—that is, placed between the ribs. The vertical keel, the two longitudinals, and the armor-shelf on each side of the vertical keel, are water-tight, forming, conversely, six compartments; these being divided longitudinally by water-tight frames and subdividing the space between the inner and outer skins into seventy-two compartments. The transverse and longitudinal bulkheads between the inner bottom or skins and the deck armor divide the space into thirty compartments, making a total of 102 compartments in the vessel. The vessel will also be provided with a removable forged steel ramhead, to be accurately fitted and securely held in position on the cast-steel stem.

The materials of construction of the ship, machinery and guns are wholly of domestic manufacture. The engines are of the triple expansion, direct acting, horizontal type, each engine being in a separate compartment. There are four cylindrical, horizontal fire-tube boilers placed in two water-tight compartments. There will be a complete installation of electric lights sufficient for lighting all parts of the vessel, and arranged in duplicate so as to guard against accident. The outside strake of the deck-armor is six inches in thickness, the next strake inboard tapering in thickness in its breadth from 5 1-2 to 2 1-2 inches, the rest of the deck-plating being 2 1-2 inches in thickness, including the lower course of plating. The side-armor is two strakes in depth, the upper one six inches and the lower one three inches in thickness, with wood backing. All hatches through the armor deck have battle-plates, and the smoke-pipe and ventilators have inclined armor six inches in thickness. The conning tower is of steel plates 18 inches in thickness. The vessel will be submerged to her fighting trim by means of fourteen 8-inch Kingston valves, one in each transverse water-tight compartment of the double-bottom, and sluice valves are fitted in the vertical keel and water-tight longitudinals in these compartments.

The ward-room officers' quarters will be on the after berth-deck just abaft the engine-room bulkhead, in which there are seven staterooms and a pantry. Abaft the officers' quarters is the berthing space for a portion of the crew, the forward berth-deck being designed entirely for the crew. It is provided in the contract that should the speed exceed an average of 17 knots an hour during the two hours' official trial the contractors will receive a premium of $15,000 for each quarter of a knot above the guaranteed speed; but should she fail to make 17 knots then the vessel may be rejected.

The war value of this old new arm of destruction, the ram, was fully appreciated by Admiral Ammen. It was first used in March, 1862, when the Confederate ram Virginia (Merrimac) going at a four-knot speed struck the frigate Cumberland twice and sunk her at anchor in Hampton Roads. Ram tactics were tried on the following day against the Monitor, but they were not successful as naval history has repeated so often. In July, 1866, at the battle of Lissa, the Austrian admiral ordered the Ferdinand Max to ram the Italian ironclad Re d'Italia. The first ramming careened the Italian vessel until her gunwale went under, and at the second ram the Re d'Italia went down carrying a large number of her officers and crew with her. And the Austrian was a wooden ship with five inches thickness of plating only; but she was not injured. There are other instances of proof of the value of the ram bow.

The only other vessel authorized by Congress, and not yet begun, is the "Torpedo Cruiser No. 1." Bids were to be opened for the construction of this vessel on February, 1891, but none were submitted, and it is doubtful if she will be built, unless the limit of cost is increased beyond $750,000. She was to be 230 feet in length, 27 1-2 feet beam, 9 feet draught, and 800 tons displacement.

NATIONAL GUARD AFFAIRS.

THE MILITARY ATHLETIC ASSOCIATION AGAIN—NOTES OF INTEREST.

As the time grows nearer for outdoor sports again the interest in the proposed National Guard Athletic Association increases. If the iron was ever at a white heat and in good condition to be struck it is in exactly that shape now. Many of the members of the National Guard are sick of being under the domination of the Amateur Athletic Union when they have nothing in common with that organization. They would hail with delight an organization like that proposed for the National Guard, to which the men could look to first, and then if they wished to take part in any other contests they would be incidental only to the Military Athletic Association. At present the conditions are exactly reversed, as the action of the union demonstrated, by pretending to disqualify members of the 7th Regiment Athletic Association while holding games in their own armory to which none except members of the regiment were admitted in competition, for violating a rule of the union.

No necessity whatever exists for calling attention to the advisability of athletic training for soldiers. The better athlete a man is the hardier and more valuable soldier he will make. Under the present system, however, there is one serious defect which is evident to any one who has given the subject even a passing notice. This is the fact that there is a strong tendency to train "record breakers" to the detriment of the man of average physical development. The scheme of the proposed National Guard Athletic Association was founded on this all-important principle of training the average man. At present only those of high physical development stand a chance of being anywhere near the head of the column in an athletic contest, and those who are not inclined to spend a good share of their lives training or are not naturally powerful in any particular direction soon become discouraged and decide to give up athletics altogether.

To correct the existing condition of affairs it is proposed to give medals to all those reaching a certain standard in the annual or semi-annual contests, which will be held under the auspices of the state. As has been shown in rifle practice, this will induce men to take much-needed outdoor exercise who never take it now, and make better soldiers of them at the same time. Not only personal glory, but pride in their organization, will induce the men to compete for these state decorations.

There is another important consideration which seems to have been lost sight of to a considerable extent. That is the interest which the general public would take in the contests, and the impetus which they would give to the National Guard in numerous ways. For example, attention only need to be called to the large and brilliant crowds of spectators which go to see the athletic games of the 7th Regiment, Troop A, the 12th Regiment, and in fact nearly every National Guard organization in this city and Brooklyn. How much greater the interest would be should all these organizations unite in contests out of doors. For the non-participant, rifle-shooting is pretty dull sport. There is nothing to see except a lot of targets, which represent nothing to the spectator, and it has been clearly demonstrated that this necessary adjunct to the National Guard never can hold the attention of the public for any great length of time. There may be periodical bursts of enthusiasm, but the spectators soon grow weary and stop going to Creedmoor. These truths have been demonstrated in the history of Creedmoor for the last eight or ten years. Suppose there should be a carnival of sports at Creedmoor, made up of the picturesque features of military obstacle races, the main outlines of the tournaments given by Troop A, besides all the regular contests of bicycle races, running and walking matches, etc., which are seen at all the games, not forgetting the shooting matches, can any one doubt that it would draw a crowd to Creedmoor such as has never been seen there before? With so many prominent athletes as there are in the military organizations throughout the state, can any one doubt that these would be the most important athletic games held in the country each year? And under such conditions can any one doubt that the National Guard would attract all the sturdiest and best young men in the country to it? Instead of being led around by any other organization in athletic matters, each of the others would have to cater to it. It may be asked by some doubting Thomas:

"Is such a thing practicable? Is it not visionary?"

Well, look at it once more from a practical point of view. Look at the high prices secured by many of the city organizations for tickets of admission to their games and then see the large and brilliant crowds which are present. On the question of whether or not these games would be self-supporting, the last suggestion obviously fully answers it. That being disposed of, the next question is one of management. Without proper arrangement such a project would be a failure without doubt. But the fact that so many men in the National Guard have a large experience in managing just such affairs as this, only on a smaller scale, leaves little or nothing to be feared in this direction. The last question is:

"Will such a scheme result in any good to the National Guard?"

If this question can be answered in anything except the affirmative, the one who is qualified to do so has not yet made himself known. General Porter allowed the scheme to go by the board last fall, because he expected at that time to go out of office, and he decided to allow his successor to carry out the plan. He will undoubtedly make a great mistake, however, if he allows this opportunity to slip through his fingers to confer an everlasting benefit upon the military forces of which he is the real, active head. The officers and men would support him with enthusiasm in carrying out such a project.

The first concert of Gilmore's band, which will be held at the 22d Regiment armory on Saturday evening, February 13, is being looked forward to with a good deal of interest. It will be followed by a similar affair on each Saturday evening for the rest of the season.

As there appeared to be no reason to believe that the request of Company B, of the 71st Regiment, to be transferred to the 22d Regiment would be favorably indorsed by the local authorities, a communication has been sent to Adjutant-General Porter, informing him of the facts in the case. His decision will be awaited with interest.

Troop A has begun to feel cramped in its quarters, and efforts are being made to secure a more commodious home. The troop has the same trouble that the regiments have in the fact that the entire organization cannot drill together, in consequence of the lack of room. One-half the men drill on Tuesday evenings and the other half on Fridays. They have some remarkable turnouts, too. Out of fifty-two men in a battalion, there are often forty-nine or fifty men in the ring on drill nights. There is some fear also expressed that the gymnasium, which is used for a ballroom when occasion requires, is not a safe place to put a crowd. The troop has just received a number of new equipments from the War Department, they being in every particular exactly like those used by the regular cavalry.

The Chilian war talk has emphasized the exceedingly poor equipment of the National Guard, together with the Army, in the matter of small arms. While the armies of nearly every other civilized country on the globe have some sort of a magazine gun, the Army and National Guard forces of the United States are still using the old "gas-pipes"; and this would be a difficult problem to solve quickly in case of war.

Company C, of the 71st Regiment, will give a reception at the Manhattan Athletic Club on the evening of Wednesday, February 10. General Fitzpatrick and a number of other prominent military guests have accepted invitations.

Colonel Greene, who was recently elected to fill Colonel Kopper's place in the 71st Regiment, is a warm personal friend of Lieutenant-Colonel Dennison and was his classmate at West Point. With two West Point men, and another, as good a drillmaster as Major Downs is known to be, the 71st Regiment ought to begin to make its presence felt.

The 12th Regiment will parade at the armory for review and the presentation of marksmen's badges on the evening of February 3. The regimental athletic games will be held on April 19.

The 22d Regiment will go to church at 3 o'clock this afternoon at All Angels' Church, Eighty-first-st. and West End-ave. The Rev. Dr. W. N. Donnell, the chaplain of the regiment, will preach.

BENEFITS OF RECIPROCITY.

HEAVY EXPORTS TO THE SPANISH WEST INDIES.

In an article published on January 7 The Tribune pointed out the great change brought about in the export of flour to the Spanish West Indies by the treaty of reciprocity, this particular clause taking effect on January 1, 1892. The duty on flour imported from the United States into Cuba and Porto Rico is now $1 for each 100 kilograms, and for cornmeal 25 cents for 100 kilograms. Previous to the new act, flour going into Cuba and Porto Rico was dutiable at $5 83 and $2 46 for each 100 kilograms respectively, and as a consequence, the flour business both for exporters and steamship lines was scarcely worth mentioning.

W. H. T. Hughes, of the New-York and Cuba Mail Steamship Company, estimated that after this act took effect the flour exports from the United States would amount to at least 1,000,000 bags in the first year. How far this is true, and probably an exceedingly low estimate at that, will be seen from the fact that exports as secured from the shippers aggregate for the month of January no less than 121,345 bags from the ports of New-York and New-Orleans alone.

New-Orleans has quickly come in for a share of the business and with one steamer a week is carrying about 6,000 bags of flour to each cargo, or 25,000 bags for the month of January. The New-York and Cuba Mail Steamship Company has carried 50,569 bags including the cargo of the Saratoga, which sailed on January 27. The Santiago and the Orizaba, for the ports of Havana, Santiago de Cuba, and Cienfuegos, will carry at least 2,000 bags more. Mr. Hughes said: "There is a fair business in carrying hardware, and some cornmeal is being used. The amount of lard the Cubans use is simply enormous. We are sending three steamers one week and two the next, and of course it requires considerable freight to load five vessels every 14 days. But the flour trade seems to be fairly regular and our cargoes run from 1,000 to 2,700 bags on each steamer, since the first rush, when we carried 21,000 bags on two steamers. The total flour exported to Cuba and Porto Rico will easily aggregate 1,000,000 bags this first year."

A representative of Miller, Bull & Co., who are the agents of the New-York and Porto Rico Steamship Company, reported that they had carried 20,000 bags and barrels on vessels sailing and to arrive within the first 7 days after the treaty went into effect. And since that time the exports had aggregated 6,000 barrels. It was noted in the previous article that Porto Rico had imported far more flour in proportion to the population than Cuba, and this first excess must be consumed before the regular demand can be ascertained.

"The general business with Porto Rico is comprehensive and includes almost every article of food not grown on the island, as well as the articles of general consumption," said the representative of the steamship company. Waydell & Company, of No. 21 Old slip, carried 4,000 bags the first week and have reported the business as regular since that time. They issue bills of lading for the southern ports of Cuba. About 11,000 bags would probably represent the amount of their shipments of flour for the month of January.

J. M. Ceballos and Company, agents of the Compania Transatlantica, have carried flour as follows: Previously reported, 21,000 bags; on the steamer Havana, January 10, 5,000 bags; on the steamer Panama, January 18, 1,025 bags; on the Ciudad Condal, January 20, 2,200 bags; engaged for the steamer Panama, January 30, 1,470 bags, or an aggregate for the month of January of 31,295 bags.

"Besides this," said Mr. Coma, the representative of the company, "we carried on the last trip of the Havana 1,267 tierces of lard and 300 cases of cornmeal; the next vessel, an extra one, took 835 tierces; on January 20 the Ciudad Condal had in her cargo 1,750 tierces of lard consigned to Havana and 32 consigned to Nuevitas; the steamer Panama will carry 1,040 more tierces of lard on her next trip. Lard is now on the free list, and it is a wonder to me what the Cubans can possibly do with all they import from here. We are taking a great deal and the other lines must also be carrying large quantities. Salted and dried meats, bacons, hams, codfish and all kinds of hardware are in great demand too."

Although it is rather early yet to speak positively of the regular business and amount of increase in the exports of the United States to these two islands, the commission merchants and shippers generally are greatly pleased with the workings of the reciprocity act thus far. And, moreover, they entertain sanguine hopes that the trade relations that are now existing as a result of the concessions made by this Government and that of Spain will by the natural increase of business assume vast proportions before the end of the present year.

"MR. MOORE OF PHILADELPHIA"

NOBODY HAD SEEN HIM, BUT HE WAS OFTEN HEARD TO GIVE HIS NAME.

A group of newspaper men were talking reminiscences the other evening. One story was about experiences at Johnstown after the terrible flood there. This story in part related to "Mr. Moore of Philadelphia."

For some nights after the newspaper men reached Johnstown they slept in a brickyard, not especially because the clay was soft and very wet, but because it was not so cold there as out on the hillside in the damp grass. But one man made an important discovery. He found not far from the bank of the river a stable which the flood had left standing. It had a hayloft in which there was a lot of damp hay. Following his discovery the Hotel d'Ecurie was the most popular resort in Johnstown after midnight. About that time newspaper men could be heard yelling and swearing as they stumbled along in the blackness of night over wreckage and through mud holes left by the rushing river, hunting for the stable. The man who owned it charged one dollar a man for lodging, and he took as many lodgers as fortune sent his way. This hotel was not supplied with all the modern conveniences. You first climbed a perpendicular cleated ladder to the rafters. Then you got over the rafters to the loft proper, at the further end of the stable. This was always an interesting operation, for of course no lights were allowed in the stable where there was so much hay. But after the brickyard and the hillside the Hotel d'Ecurie was luxurious.

Every one found his own bed in the darkness and then lying in the hay tried to assure himself that he was a lucky man. The nights were bitterly cold and one thin blanket for two men, sometimes three, was the best which one could expect, and not all of them got that.

The first night that the men got into their new quarters they shivered like a skeleton's bones rattling in the wind. While they were trying to get to sleep some one cried out:

"Say, did you men know that the chap who let us in here locked us in?"

"Yes," came a chorus in growls.

"Well, suppose this place should catch on fire, what would become of us, locked in?"

"Catch a fire?" came a voice from one part of the straw between chattering teeth, and those who knew him recognized "Billy" Kenny, now supervisor W. J. K. Kenny. "Catch a fire! I wish it would and then we might be able to get warm," and his teeth clicked the punctuation marks.

"Say," cried Kenny from the darkness, "who are you, anyway?"

"I'm Mr. Moore of Philadelphia," came back the answer in deep tones.

It was no easy matter to find one's way over the sleeping men in the loft and in finding a clear space of hay six feet long and two wide one had frequently to walk upon twenty or thirty pairs of newspaper legs. The second night of the lodging in the new hotel, about 2 o'clock, a man endeavored to find enough hay to cover him. He walked upon several men, but they were sound asleep