SAVONAROLA IN FLORENCE.

A Modern Priest's View of the Great Mediæval Italian Revolutionist.

FLORENCE, Sunday, Oct. 16.—While in Rome the concourse of pilgrims from all parts of Italy were paying their homage in St. Peter's to Leo XIII., the advanced patriots of Florence were making a public demonstration in honour of Savonarola and laying a crown at the foot of the statue just erected to him in the great hall of the Palazzo Vecchio. The still "more advanced" Radicals at Rome had intended to make a still more significant demonstration in honor of the Dominican Bruno, and that, too, in Rome's most public place. But the noise already made by the sacerdotal agitation consequent upon the disorders of the night of July 13, and the evident anxiety of the Depretis Ministry not to displease Spain and to conciliate Austria, afforded the Roman municipal authorities sufficient ground for refusing to sanction the intended ovation to Giordano Bruno. Nevertheless, as this Ministry only draws the breath of life from these anti-clericals and radicals, and inasmuch as the municipal authorities of both Rome and Florence only subsist by the grace of the Ministers, the new Mayor of Rome, Count Pinchetti, is to preside in a few days at the celebration in honor of Giordano Bruno.

The societies, or fractions of societies, which took part in the demonstration here assembled in the Piazza San Marco, before the church and convent where resided Savonarola in the same century Fra Angelico, St. Antonino, Archbishop of Florence, and Fra Girolamo Savonarola himself, (you would think, when the reign of the Grand Dukes and exiled in Florence and the new masters of Italy had made the beautiful city the seat of Government, that on the spot where now stands the statue of Gen. Fanti they would have erected the statue to Savonarola. Outside of Italy very few know Gen. Fanti, and they will be puzzled to know what victories earned for him the distinction of standing aloft in front of the church whence Savonarola's words shall never cease to resound over both hemispheres.

The procession went on its way quietly enough to the Piazza della Signoria, where it halted while a deputation waited on the Mayor, Prince Corsini, and obtained permission to proceed to the great hall—*la Sala del Consiglio*—to render their homage to the illustrious Dominican monk. In the great hall, which was about three-fourths filled, the united societies placed in the hands of Signor Rizucci, a member of the city Government, a crown, which they had carried with them in procession, and on which was an inscription charging Pope Alexander VI. with having condemned Savonarola to the stake. Let us allow the procession to depart as it came—in peace. Too many memories, connected with the eloquent and ill-starred reformer to whom it was the intent of the speakers to pay homage, are in my mind, to allow me to attach any undue importance to the procession.

All who have visited Florence, or who have read its history, know that this same hall was planned and built in 1494-95 under the direction of Savonarola himself, while he was head of the theocratic republic of Florence after the expulsion of the Medici in the former year. The architect who planned the Colosseum of Rome, he has by name of Cronaca, one of the very best of Florentine architects, a devoted follower of the great preacher. It was destined to be the council hall of the republic, for Savonarola, in drawing up the Constitution of the new commonwealth, had placed the Government in the hands of a popular council of 1,000 members, all elected by universal suffrage, Christ alone being declared to be King of Florence. To this day there is a monumental slab over the grand entrance to this noble hall, bearing the lily of Florence in relief, once gilt, but now without a trace of gilding, support the circular monogram of the holy name I. H. S. surrounded by rays. Beneath Niccolo Capponi had caused to be inscribed the following words: *Jesus Christus Rex Florentini Populi, 1527, Decretum.* "Jesus Christ, King of the Florentine People, chosen as such by a decree of the Senate and People." To these words Cosmo I., who became Grand Duke in 1559, substituted the words beneath the monogram, *Rex Regnum et Dominus Dominantium, Decretum Senatus et Populi Florentini.*

It is impossible for any one who has studied with hearty interest the history of Savonarola and brave old Niccolo Capponi, as well as the unceasing struggle for liberty kept up by the Florentines from the year 1494 to pass away heedlessly or suddenly from before that entrance to the Palazzo Vecchio, and yonder inscription in its altered state. The monogram is in a shield surrounded by rays. On the door of the chapel of Mezzeratta, at the very entrance to the villa at Careggi, where I spent a portion of two summers, is this same monogram, sculptured, some people say by the hand of St. Bernardine himself, and in the convent of Saint Paul of the Mount, a little beyond our grounds, and one of Bernardine's favorite places, is a reserving tablet which the missionary used in his travels.

Happy had it been for Savonarola had Bernardine been his model, or, nearer at hand, St. Antonine, who had been in 1450 the prior of San Marco before he became Archbishop of Florence, or Savonarola himself have taken warning from another Dominican monk of the thirteenth century, Brother John of Vicenza, one whose career resembles in all but its tragic ending the career of the Florentine reformer. John of Vicenza's life (1200 and 1263) also took place in the times when Italy had to wage a desperate war for independence against the Hohenstaufen Emperors. Catching his inspiration from the tomb of St. Dominick in Bologna, Brother John's eloquence effected in the cities of Italy what Savonarola's enraptured fancy pictured the angels doing in Florence in 1497.

I had also visited, again and again, that Convent of San Marco, where Savonarola, in the full plenitude of his manhood and the noon of his power, was wont to collect around him all that was most distinguished in Florence—nobles, priests, men of letters—leavening their souls with the love of all that is most beautiful in art and elevating in intellectual culture. In that little cell which was his study I showed me his Dominican robes, his hair-shirt, his crucifix, by the very incense he wrote on "Trial by Fire," an exquisite volume, in a small, clear, well-marked hand. How little he knew when he penned these pages that he was unconsciously is composing this same "Trial by Fire" was one day to turn from him and against him the great tide of popularity, on the impetuous wave of which he was then riding!

And then I remembered that within these same walls, while Savonarola was yet young, the name of Amerigo Vespucci, Fra Giorgio Antonio, Pulgh, Amerigo and Nicolo Machiavelli and the young Medici, with other sons of Florentine families, the elements of classic Greek and Latin. Here, too, amid the cloisters frescoed by Fra Angelico, and the cells on the walls of which his brush has painted many a lovely picture, the choice spirits of all Florence and all Italy came to converse with the eloquent Prior of San Marco.

It was an age of intense intellectual activity, when mighty and seemingly adverse currents of thought and passion flowed onward side by side in every Italian city, and particularly in Florence. In several life there was a large and powerful minority who yearned for the old republican liberty. But, if the truth must be told, the fathers of these same men had spontaneously laid at the feet of Cosmo, Pater Patriæ, and his sons the liberties which their descendants now wished to recover. Too many, made up of the wealthy, the noble, the pleasure-loving, for Savonarola's ideal, wanted nothing better than the restoration of the splendid court of Lorenzo the Magnificent and the life of equally splendid festivity and luxury amid which they had been reared.

If the successor of Cosmo Antonio in San Marco could have been satisfied with turning aside from pagan pleas and pagan culture the multitudes who were wont to hang entranced upon his words when he preached in San Marco, or made the lofty aisles of Santa Maria del Fiore to resound his most eloquent exhortations, how much he would have contributed to stay the current which was hurrying the Florentines onward toward unbelief in religion and political servitude!

As I write you this, the sun, which we had not seen for four days, is shedding his brightest beams on the slopes of Fiesole; on those lovely slopes amid whose olive groves and vineyards stands the now desolate convent of San Domenico, where Fra Angelico painted and Savonarola was wont to repair to write those Scripture lessons that were to thrill all Florence and all Tuscany. There is the beautiful landscape before me, stretched out like a picture before my window. The convent, alas, is as desolate as the cloisters of San Marco!

BERNARD O'REILLY.

THE DITCH OF THE SEVEN DEAD.

A Ghost Story of the Venetian Lagoons.

From the St. Louis's Gazette.

For many centuries the lagoons of Venice have been divided into districts for the purposes of fishing. These tracts of water are not distinguished by any boundaries visible to the eye; but their limits are well known to the fishermen who make their living upon them. In the shallower parts of these districts, where the receding tide leaves a large space bare at receding tide, the fishermen have marked off a certain portion. This they surround by a palisade of wattled cane. Inside this palisade the mud is dug into deep ditches, so that there shall always be water in them, even when the tide is low. These spaces are called "valli," and here the fish spawn. Each of these "valli" has a little hut belonging to it, built either on piles or on forced soil, and made of wattled cane, plastered with mud, or of bricks.

Of the Valle del Saste Morti there is a story current among the gondoliers and fishermen. There were six men fishing once in this "Valle" of the Seven Dead. They had with them a little boy, the son of one of their band. The boy did not go fishing with his father, but stayed behind to take care of the hut, and to cook the meals for the men when they returned. He spent the nights alone in the cabin, for most of the fishing was done between sunset and sunrise. One night, when the dawn was beginning across the water the men stopped their fishing and came to row home with their load as usual. As they rowed along they met the body of a drowned man going out to sea with the tide. They picked the body up and laid it on the prow, the head resting upon the arm, and rowed on slowly toward the hut.

The little boy was watching for them, and went down to the edge of the canal to meet them. He saw the body of the seventh man lying on the prow, but thought that he was asleep. So, when they came near, he cried to his father, "Breakfast is ready. Come along!" and with that he turned and went back to the hut. The men followed the boy, and left the dead man on the prow. When they had sat down, the boy looked round and said, "Where is the other man? When I call you bring him in to breakfast, too?" "Oh! isn't he here?" cried one, and then added, with a laugh, "You had better go and call him; he must be asleep." The boy went down to the canal and shouted, "Why don't you come to breakfast? It is all ready for you." But the man on the prow never moved nor answered a word. So the boy returned to the hut and said, "What is the matter with the man? He won't answer." "Oh!" said they, "he is a deaf old fool. You must shout loud, make signs to him." The boy went back again and cried, "Come along, you fool; the others are waiting for you." But the man on the prow never moved nor answered a word. Then the boy ran back to the hut and said, "Come, one of you, for I can't make him up." But they laughed and answered, "Go out again and shake him by the leg; tell him we can't wait till doomsday for him."

The boy went down to the water once more. He got into the boat and shook the man by the leg. Then the man turned and sat up upon the prow and said to the boy, "What do you want?"

"Why on earth don't you come? Are they all to wait till doomsday for you?" "Go back and tell them I am coming." So the boy went back to the hut and found the men laughing and joking. "Well, what did he say?" they cried.

"It all right," answered the boy, "he says he is coming." The men turned pale and looked at one another, and sat very still and laughed no more. Then outside they heard footsteps coming slowly up the path. The door was pushed open, and the dead man came in and sat down in the boy's place, the seventh at the table. But each sat with his eyes fixed upon the seventh, their guest. The second not moved a speak. Their gaze was fastened on the dead man's face. The blood flowed either side of his chin in their veins fill, as the sun rose and flashed along the lagoon, there were seven dead men sitting round the table in the room.

ELEPHANT POINT.

Describing a Fossil Glacier and Its Exuberant Vegetation.

From the San Francisco Bulletin.

OONALASKA, Oct. 4.—On the home voyage, all the hard Arctic work done, the Corwin stopped a week at the head of Kotzebue Sound, near Chamisso Island, to seek a fresh supply of water and make some needful repairs and observations, during which time I had a capital opportunity to study the various and interesting ice formations of the shores of Escholtz Bay. I found ice in some form or other at intervals of from a mile to a few yards exposed on the tide-washed front of the shores bluffs on both sides of the bay, a distance of about fifty miles. But it is only the most conspicuous mass, forming a bluff at Elephant Point, on the south side of the bay, that seems to have been observed hitherto or attracted much attention.

This Elephant Point, so called from the fossil elephant tusks found here, is a bluff of solid ice, 150 feet high, covered on the top with a foot or two of ordinary tundra vegetation, and with tall grass on the terraces and shelving portions of the front wherever the slope is sufficiently low for soil to rest upon. It is a rigid fossil fragment of a glacier running down into the north sea, mostly in shadow, and covered lightly with glacial detritus from the hill slope above it, over which the tundra vegetation has gradually been extended, and which eventually formed a thick leaf-like protection against the sun's rays during the summer. Thus it has lasted until now, wasting only on the exposed face fronting the bay, which is being constantly undermined, the soil and vegetation on top being precipitated over the raw, melting ice front and washed away by the tide. Were not that the tide does not reach to the extreme, the accumulation of tundra moss and peat would finally rebury the front and check further waste. As it is, the formation will not last much longer, probably not more than 1,500 or 1,000 years. Its present age is perhaps more than this, when taken as an inside estimate.

Walking along the base of the formation, which is about a mile or so in length, making one's way over piles of rotten humus and through spongy bog mud of the consistence of watery porridge, mixed with bones of elephants, buffaloes, and musk oxen, &c., the ice so closely resembles the winding sheet of a glacier, with its jagged projecting ridges, and ledges, and small dripping, tinkling rills, that it is not easy to realize that it is not one in ordinary action.

A striking result of the shaking up and airing and draining of the tundra soil is seen on the face of the ice slopes and terraces. When the undermined tundra material rolls down upon those portions of the ice front where it can come to rest, it is well buffeted and shaken, and frequently lies upside down as if turned with a plough. Here it is well drained though resting on melting ice, and, though not more than a foot or two in thickness, it produces a remarkably close and tall growth of grass, four to six feet high, and as lush and broad leaved as may be found in any farmer's field. Cut for hay it would make about four or five tons per acre. Only a few other plants that would be called weeds are found growing among the grass, mostly a senecio and artemisia, both tall and exuberant, showing the effects of this strange system of cultivation on this strange soil. The vegetation on top of the bluff is the most beautiful that I have yet seen, not rank and cultivated looking, like that on the face slopes, but showing the finest and most delicate beauty of willowness, in forms, combinations, and colors of leaf, stalk, and fruit. There were red and yellow dwarf willows, and arctic birch, and willow, and low dwarf huckleberry, with lovely grays of sedges and lichens. The neutral tints of the lichens are intensely beautiful; not a square yard but would make a charming picture, and not a particle of dust on it, so pure and fresh is it. Red cranberries, with shaded sides like apples, put on in clusters at the ends of shining glossy sprays; huckleberries, with delicate blue bloom on their cheeks; black cranberries and arbutus berries, thronging in large flocks, the young nearly full grown, wandering over the fruitful wilderness and revelling in abundance.

A Defect in the Constitution.

From the San Francisco Post.

We regret to inform our fair correspondent, Mrs. McSlatterly of Seventeen street, that after diligent search we find there is no clause in the Constitution of the United States making it a penal offence for Mrs. McSlatterly to get a share in the McSlatterly linen in hand and dry. It is just these backstairs endeavors to prevent the free and equal rights of citizenship that are always so surely bringing about the downfall of this alleged republic.

ON THE WAY TO DAMASCUS.

DAMASCUS, Sept. 29.—A city which holds the ashes of Saladin and Buckle, and is the home of Abd el Kader—which had the glory of St. Paul's conversion and the honor of Mohammed's most Oriental compliment—is not to be seen in a day, nor dismissed as a mirage of the desert. If it had not once been the capital of the Arab world, the Paris of the Orient, its claims as the elder beauty of the Abrahamic exodus from Mesopotamia into the Holy Land would give added sparkle to each drop of its rivers, canals, and fountains, below every atom of its dust, and gild every object upon which its fierce sun shines.

When, therefore, we left behind the blue sea and the promontory of Beyrout yesterday, and wound our way over the bare hills on hills, and bleak mountains on mountains which had no bither; and when we bade farewell to the heights and vales of that Lebanon by the sea, so much beloved, and the glory of its cedars, palms, mulberries, fig trees, and vineyards, and began our long ride among the rocks, mountains, and plains of the Lebanon beyond the sea, we knew that there was a generous recompense in store for our travel. If our road was elevated and our path zigzag, were we not repaid by the shadows and splendors of the Lebanon ranges and the peerless magnificence of Mount Hermon? If our companions were of an alien race, were we not repaid by views of mountain vales and cones, and the wide, verdant plain at their base, not to speak of the ever-recurring vista of that Biblical sea which met our gaze through mountain defiles, and which ever lifts itself up as in a Psalm? What a prospect we have from these mountains of Lebanon! What memories!

Yonder in the southwest is or was Tyre, and there, somewhat nearer, was Sidon; and to the north, lined by a broad belt of sky and sea, which seem to mingle as one, are the ancient castles of Crusader and Paynim, and mountains round about, which seem self-withdrawn, in perpetual grandeur! How could we bring our vision down to the details of the journey—the immense herds of cattle, goats, and sheep, and the caravans of camels, donkeys, and men—when at every movement we must turn to the infinite marriage of sea and sky, under the white veil of the distant clouds? How can we condescend to tell of the beautiful kiosks, the Maronite monasteries perched on mountain summits, the picturesque fig gatherers and raisin curers, or the annoyances, the cost, and delays, when from the glen of Hummâna, with its bowering orchards and its vestures of vineyards to the sublime gorge of the Abana, across the tawny plain of Sahra (Sahara), there is a gallery of pictures whose natural features are illuminated as well by the light from sacred truth as by the sweetest of suns, tempered on the mountains by the most genial of airs! You may call it enthusiasm which takes the pilgrim hither and over three ranges of the two Lebanons; but is it not with a striving to see the summits of these hallowed hills of the Bible? Are these bare heights, bursting in grandeur, although only here and there clothed with vegetation—are these dark gorges between lofty peaks and castellated walls—are these Druze principalities, all red with Christian blood, these streams silvery with the lymph which makes the fissures and plains fruitful in grape and fig—are these Syrian temples of Roman and Herodian times, these wild retreats and verdurous belts, these precipices of tanned earth and rock and terraces of blushing apricots and pomegranates—are these fountains of sweet waters bursting from cliffs of limestone—all nothing, that we should regret the heats and dusts of our way to the city of our promise and hope?

"Promise and hope?" Yes. When a boy, I read Lamartine's "Pilgrimage to the Holy Land." His stately poetic prose and lordly enthusiastic personality made a vivid impression. His picture of Syria as "calcined with desolation" did not detract from the aureole of holy light which he threw about these very mountains of Lebanon!

I wonder whether Lamartine saw these mountains in the spring, when they are said to be green and beautiful, or at the end of summer, as is our case, when all is umber and rock. But it is said that even when the terraces are tricked out in their finery of vines, olives, and mulberry, still the mountains look brown from below as you are ascending; but otherwise when descending, when the terraced walls are not observed. However that may be, we have now something of that contrast wherein lieth much delight. When the water supply here is full, then the spring and summer are rendorous of their grases and goodness. But it is not to be imagined poetically pretty, as our Hollister Minister, Lowell, in his heyday of inspiration, once sang—that

> The harvest alone that is given away,
> The only fit merchandise for the exalting
> Whose fragrance is the incense of the soul,
> And dew may be had by the poorest comer.

No heavy beauty, no lavish summer, no leafy June, is to be had here gratis. There is a price which is paid in hard labor for all that the Lebanon gives to its stewards and tillers, either in loveliness or reward.

Something more than rhapsody is required to tell how we passed the day on the road to Damascus.

There is a good road, well macadamized. It takes fourteen hours, in the French diligence. We started at the early hour of six. Our seat was not a high one, but at first, as we were in the "interieure," and with us two Arab women, with child, food, and baggage, and two men. When daylight came I found my neighbor was a very fine man, and insensibly sleeping upon my fraternal shoulder. We soon rectified our position, but we had to be content for the most part with us in the wrong place. Being elevated to the banquette, we had a better view of the gorgeous scenery, and more comfort.

In going out of Beyrout, the scenes are so thoroughly Asiatic, with the square stone houses and terraced roofs, the palms, plum trees and the cactus hedges, the figs and the vineyards, the cisterns of water and the caravans of camels, that we felt, more than at Brousa, that we were within the realms of the Orient. We left, too, that sea where on the encircled waters of the Holy Land.

Watching and waiting, gazing through dust and heat, we long for a glance at the city of our hope and promise; how can we help but anticipate? This emerald setting in the rough cliffs, between the ever-retiring desert and the limitless sea? When shall we see thy seven rivers? When look upon Abana and Pharpar, "better than all the waters of Israel?" We are athirst for the vision!

Passing walls on walls of rock at the head of the gorge, we know that we are in the midst of our Rocky Mountain range in Colorado, but decorated with vines in terraced culture; passing patient camels, horses, and donkeys in endless processions, overladen, as it seems, and trudging slowly up the steeps and down the windings; gazing at turbaned Arabians in khaftans, with their large and unique wooden ploughs and lazniest of ox teams, driven by the old goad; peering into strange, bronzed Bedouin faces and veiled womanly eyes; and watching long companies of sealed metallic wagons, guarded by horsemen, fresh and neat, as if in a circus tiring, we at length reach the plain of the classic River Leontes, now known as the Litany. Here are proofs of moisture in green fields and fruitful orchards and vineyards.

Our halting place is Stora, where there is a hotel kept by a Greek, Andrea, which we find quite a comfort. Out of the coupé of the diligence leaps a splendid-looking man. He is an Arab, and all rush to greet him. A company of soldiers, Christians and Turks in uniform, receive him. With quiet, elegant manner he salutes some and salutes others. Who is he? Can it be Rustam Pasha, the Italian, the Pasha of the Christians, the ruler of the Lebanon? We go within the hostelry of the Greek, and begin our late breakfast at noon. A crowd entered with the Governor, for he is a Governor of the Lebanon. Tomorrow we hope to realize the vision. Shall we be disappointed? S. S. COX.

PROUD OF HIS MARE.

One of the Descendants of the "Daughters of the Crooked."

From the American Gentleman's Magazine.

Sontamm ben Sontamm of the tribe of Anezza has probably had more experience with horse-flesh than any other child of the desert. From boyhood up he has passed his life among the horses of the Orient, and on more than one occasion he has been obliged to trust himself to the fleetness of his courser to escape from the bands of wandering hordes while traversing the desert. Some time since, Sontamm was seen leading a mare of extraordinary beauty and symmetry through the streets of Damascus. Upon being questioned upon the breeding of the mare, he pronounced her to be the famous Sherifa, of the get of Abereh Sheyrak, four years old, her dam being Hazar, and her sire Kehilan Ajuz.

I asked him to tell me about the breeds of Arabian horses.

"Our father, Ismail ben Ibrahim (Ishmael, son of Abraham)," he replied, "found two foals of the wild horses by their dams, whom he had shot with an arrow, and he put them in a sack and carried them on a camel till they were strong enough to walk wherever their backs were curved in to meet the saddle, and they were called *Bint el Akeyl* or the "Daughters of the Crooked." As they grew up he rode them, and the wild horses followed them. From these two foals, both fillies, came our horses. Whereever we Arabs reckon all our pedigrees from the dam, not, as the fools of Franks do, from the sire."

"Are there any of the original breed left?"

"Abd el Kader—on whose head be all blessings—tells us that he still found among our brethren in the Sahara. And I have heard that in Ued, in Arabia, is another strain of that blood, called Zaid el Muselar. Who can tell? God knows."

"Which are the best for speed?"

"The best noted for speed is Kehilan Ajuz; for Kehilan has forty breeds, of which Kehilan Ajuz is said to be the swiftest, though its mares are swan-necked and long-legged. There are six breeds of Seglawi, of which Seglawi Sheyli is the best."

"But Kehilan is the best?"

"No, no. I have not said so. Kehilan alone is nothing. It is the second name which shows the breed. Kehilan Ajuz is the swiftest, but Kehilan alone is no breed. Abeyan is noted for beauty, Saadan Tuaiz, Hamdan es Sinnf, and Seglawi Sheyli for speed and bottom. All these are good, and this is a mare to be proud of, my son."

"And Franks think all Arab horses are alike. How little they know!"

Sontamm's pipe cried. "The Franks have no horses. One of them sent a long-legged creature to Damascus. He called it a 'thoroughbred,' and truly it could run fast. But what of that? It could not run a hundred miles a day on a few handfuls of barley, as our horses can, and it had a head like a block of wood. No Arab would send his mare to such a Kadish as that. Bah!"

"But I have heard my father say that the English once sent one of their mares that they call a thoroughbred to Egypt to run races with your horses, and that was beat them all, the best in the Pasha's stable. How is that?"

Sontamm smiled again.

"The Pasha of Egypt never had a horse that was Hadad in his best days. The Shammar and Aneyza have the best of us, save those that are found in the stables of Tyzoul Abdallah, at Deraiah. Still, as I said, these English horses can run well, but only for short distances and on good food. Take them to the Desert on a gallop for such marches as we have, and they are gone on the second day."

Fatal Results of Chinese Superstition.

From the San Francisco Bulletin.

The assault upon the Chinese woman who was shot in a lodging-house on Dupont alley Thursday night, and who died last night, that the wound had accidentally spilled some water on him while washing her feet. It is believed by the Chinese that such an accident will bring misfortune to the person upon whom the water falls, and it becomes the duty of the careless person to repeat to the other a certain amount of cards and coin to avert the evil. The woman did as this strange superstition suggested, but the man was not satisfied and threatened to shoot some one in the house. Only a few hours later a shot was heard and the woman fell. She is a prevalent condition and will die.

SEVENTH REGIMENT GYMNASTS.

Skilful Athletes Among the Amateur Soldiers—A Specimen Night's Practice.

When the Seventh Regiment Armory was built the upper northwestern corner was set aside for a gymnasium. The room was fitted up by Henry Burnham with every appliance and apparatus for the exercise of the muscles of the National Guardsmen. Bars, trapezes, knotted ropes, suspended rings, and a great many other things confuse the view across the room, somewhat as the telegraph, telephone, and electric light wires now cobweb some of the down-town streets of the city.

The apparatus was used enough last winter to take some of the newness off, but during the summer the room was closed. It was opened again Saturday evening.

Practice in the gymnasium is not compulsory, and is engaged in only by those members of the regiment who have a taste that way or want to build up their muscles or decrease their superfluous weight. About 200 members of the regiment belong to the species of club that has the use of the room. Forty or fifty of these were there on the opening night, dressed, as a rule, in the gray trousers of their uniforms, white canvas slippers, and gauze undershirts. One or two wore glasses. Mr. Henry Bogart, a veteran of the regiment, and formerly a crack athlete, was present in a very small suit of brown tights. He has charge of the rooms in practice hours. Though now no longer a young man, Mr. Bogart is active, and on the parallel bars he showed by desultory exercise that he was an adept.

The scene in the room was busy and active. Here a fat man pulled industriously away at an arrangement of sliding seat, ropes, and weights, as if he were rowing an up-hill race. Three or four others were vaulting over a high bar. Other athletes hung from the ceiling by various suspended rings and ladders, and in the midst of these devoted few half a dozen wild young men were seriously hurling immense canvas bean bags all over the gymnasium. This last sport was introduced by Mr. Sprague, President of the New York Athletic Club and a member of the Seventh, as a preliminary exercise for the purpose of limbering up the young men for the winter's practice.

"It won't do to begin too rashly," panted Mr. Sprague between showers of great bean bags from all directions. After the first night's work in the gymnasium every one of us will be as lame as a bad excuse. You see—"

But Mr. Sprague didn't see in time, and a violent bean bag struck him in the region below the diaphragm so as to break off his unfinished remark and divert his attention entirely from what he was saying.

Among the members of the Seventh who practise in the winter in the armory gymnasium are many representatives of the athletic and boating clubs. On Saturday night members of the New York Athletic Club, the Passaic Boat Club, the Columbia Boat Club, the New York Rowing Club, and the Alcyone Boat Club were seen in the gymnasium. Among them are professional performers and amateurs of specialists. The Seventh Regiment boasts also of the champion team in tugs of war, a team which for three years has vanquished all comers in that exciting and arduous sport. All the members of the regiment who practise are expected to be in uniform.

Mr. Sprague makes a specialty of the dumb bells, rings, and tugs of war. Mr. Theodore Guerra has devoted himself with distinction to practice upon the parallel bars. Mr. Carter is a vaulter of note among his fellows. Mr. Barnes spent part of his evening in simply turning his hands with his feet in the air. His specialty is posturing and balancing, and it is an ascertained fact that no one in the regiment can bound higher on the springboard than he can. Lieut.-Col. Smith is a specialist on the peg pole and it is a sight worth while to see Appleton devotes himself to the rings. Mr. Felxotto is a boxer whom all the others in the gymnasium face with trepidation when he is in boxing form. Around the room on iron brackets, like so many dismounted guns, are set Indian clubs. Mr. Valentine is especially proficient in swinging them, while his many emulators attest by the bumps on the backs of their heads how difficult is the art of which he is master. Capt. Daniel Appleton has taken to springboard practice as a sort of mental treatment, and by persisting he has reached a weight which does not at all lessen the strength of the board. Mr. T. W. Boldey and Mr. Edward Price are among the general athletes of note.

In tugs of war, Mr. Sprague, Mr. James Waldron, Mr. Ellis, and Dr. N. M. Beckwith are notably vigorous. On Saturday night there was an interesting contest of three minutes. Four men on a side seized the long rope, and at a signal dropped upon the floor and braced their feet upon the foot board. At the other end of the hall taxed, puffed, and groaned for the prescribed period the umpire called "All up," and so it was for the losing side.

LITIGATION OVER A ROOSTER.

The Facts in the Case of Hittell against Bennett, Home of Jersey City.

"Dat ar rooster can do berry same one dat mus' been spit'ed offen de roost of Mrs. Bennett, fo' sunah," said the venerable David Brown in Justice Paulin's court in Newark Saturday afternoon. "I knowed it by de winsin' of de off ere. A nigguh ex-cuse' ketch on to de pants in a chicken ain't worf nuffin', Fo' de Lord, Judge, I ken swar to dat rooster wid my las' breff."

Mr. Brown was a witness in the case of Hittell against Bennett. The complainant, a comely widow, sought to have the defendant convicted of breach of the peace, for calling her a chicken thief. It was shown by the testimony that Mrs. Bennett lost a white rooster last spring, and that recently she saw in Mrs. Hittell's yard what she was sure was the missing chanticleer. She essayed to take possession of it, but Mrs. Hittell forbid her. Then Mrs. Bennett became language, and all the women in the neighborhood got excited over the affair. Some folks asserted that Mrs. Bennett ought to know the fowl that she brought up from the egg; others insisted that the fact that the chanticleer stayed on Mrs. Hittell's premises for months proved that it was her property, while not a few intimated that it was strange that David Brown obtained a white rooster at the time that Mrs. Bennett's favorite disappeared.

Mrs. Hittell and Mrs. Bennett were represented in court by lawyers, and nine white women, three colored aunties, two white men, and David Brown were present as witnesses. A crowd of lawyers and politicians gathered as spectators. David Brown was certain that he recognized the rooster as the property of Mrs. Bennett. Its four times offered her $1 for it, and only bought one like it just as hers disappeared.

"Are you an expert on roosters?" asked Mrs. Hittell's lawyer.

"I reckon I is," was the reply, "ez I ketched 'em in de woods an' in de plantation."

"Could you tell your rooster from Mrs. Hittell's if they were put in a room together?"

"What yer ax sich questions fo'? Does yer think I'se got no sense nor 'sperience? Jest you pick out a coon dat can't tell his chicken from another, Fo' de Lord, I done show my chicken in de night. Go way wid sich questions. Clar to goodness!"

"I don't want any more from him," said the lawyer, "for he has no sense."

"I'se got more sense than a lawyer ez thinks a coon can't pick out de right rooster in de dark ez well ez de light."

After all the witnesses had testified, Judge Paulin dismissed the case, and advised the women to go home and be friends. They paid each $3 to a lawyer, besides costs of court, and twenty men and women were kept in court six hours. The rooster wasn't worth a dollar.

Hurrying Up Yearling Trotters.

From the Spirit of the Times.

"It is almost beyond belief," said Mr. Orrin A. Hotchkiss the other day, "that a yearling should trot a full mile, with weight on, in 2:43, and repeat in 2:43½, and yet I am fully prepared to bear out Hollie Rose, who has never been seen 2:40 at least before I left a yearling last spring. No, it did not surprise me that she was able to do the feat, as intimating as it seems. You see, the trotters now are bred to be made fast from the moment they are weaned." They can be exercised through the entire year, and the youngsters get plenty of it at Governor Stanford's Palo Alto stock farm. The regular track about a sixth or a seventh of a mile, around which the colts and fillies show their paces. The trainer, with wife and child, stands in the inclosure, and the trotters speed around alone. In the centre of the inclosed track is a stand, with about twelve revolving chairs, where Mr. Stanford and his associates take their ease and watch the progress of the youngsters. I well remember how much I was pleased with this Hobble Hoss, as we will call her, who trotted 2:43 when a yearling, and 2:40 when in the stable, fetlock deep in the corral. But it does seem wrong to have repeated for so fast. One mile by a yearling in 2:43 ought to be enough to satisfy any one.

"She is by Electioneer, the sire of Fred Crocker and Wildflower. Her dam is a very fast California mare, by Alfred Bells, record 2:29, she was by Wm. Penn, and a clay filly. The dam of Beautiful Bells is Minnehaha, who was by Bald Chief, dam Nettie Clay, by Alexander's Morgan, dam by Alexander's Arabian, by the dam of Sweetheart. You see, this filly is very stoutly bred."

Mr. Walton Offers to Fight.

From the London Sporting Times.

What especially irritated Sir John Astley, we believe, was that a day or two earlier he had backed Mellon for a very heavy stake and had lost. From something that took place, the secret of which should have been his own property, he determined to back Mellon again, but found that the American was before him, apparently in possession of the secret. Mellon, therefore, after the race, the Yankee came up to Sir John, and, showing his book, said, with that twang which the American drops into his speech, "I have won a thousand pounds over this race, Sir John, so whether the 'Sir' John should have left savage.

"I say yourself—look and yourself off to your own country." Sir John, with a look of menace, "I will punch your—! I tell you!"

Mr. Walton's only reply was, "I thought that this was a free country, and I'm free to bet with whom I please." Later in the day, in speaking of the matter, he said, "I guess I would like to have a bit out of that Sir John Astley's ear in its black eye in business hours," and subsequently he said he would fight him for a thousand.

Opinion differs as to who would have had the better of the fight. Mellon is a tall, good-looking man, with a good deal of "Corinthian" about him, and he is thought of business like, but we have heard he is a good hand at the fistic art, and that he

THE IRISH QUESTION AFRESH.

More Interesting Letters from Sundry Correspondents of The Sun.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* In some of the letters on the Irish Question in THE SUN of last Sunday the Irish are accused of swaggering and boasting of their military courage and expressing too exalted an opinion of their own merits in the field. But to do them common justice they are not exclusively to blame on this point. The estimate which they form of themselves is only a slight exaggeration of the estimate which has been formed of them all over the world. There is not a Government in Europe that has not been desirous, at some time or other, of having Irish regiments in its service. The Spaniards, the French, the Austrians, the Poles, the Sultan of Turkey, and the republic of Venice have either possessed Irish regiments or made efforts to obtain them. Prendergast tells us in his "Cromwellian Settlement:"

> Seven agents from the King of Spain, the King of Poland, and the Prince de Condé were contending for the service of the Irish troops. Don Ricardo White in May, 1652, shipped 7,000 in batches from Waterford, Kinsale, Galway, Limerick, and Baltry for the King of Spain. Colonel Stephen Malo got leave from the Spaniards to beat his drums to raise 3,000 more for the same destination. Lord Muskerry took with him 5,000 for the King of Poland. In July, 1654, 3,500 went to serve the Prince of Condé. Sir Walter Dungan and others got leave to beat their drums in different garrisons for various destinations.

Napoleon I. had an Irish legion in his service, and even the Hollanders availed themselves of their military qualities and fought the Spaniards with Irish soldiers. Lord Collingwood, in 1808, informed the Admiralty that to make the British navy invincible nothing more was necessary than to draft 5,000 Irish boys annually into British men-of-war. "Let it never be forgotten," says Wolfe Tone, "that two-thirds of the English fleet are manned by Irishmen." Thus the worst enemies of the Irish, in availing themselves of their services, have recognized in the most unmistakable manner the fine military qualities of that people.

"The Irish," said the Prince of Orange, "are soldiers the first day of their birth."

"No nation," said Henry IV. of France, "would prove such resolute and martial men were they more duly and less headstrong."

The Greeks and Romans, who knew them under the name of Celts, formed a like estimate of their valor. Strabo says that their contempt for strategy, their reliance on mere their chivalry, in a word, caused the subversion of their supremacy. "They march openly to their object," says Strabo, "and are therefore easily circumvented." When they lost their autonomy in Asia Minor, the bravest knights errant of the whole Orient, Egypt, Syria, and Pontus called them to their defence. "Such was the terror excited by their name and the success of their enterprises," says Justin, "that no king on his throne thought himself secure, and no fabled giant was imagined still able to recover his power, except with the help of the ever-ready Celts."

They invariably espoused the cause of the weak, according to Strabo.

It must not be supposed, however, that it is owing exclusively to their military courage that the Irish make good soldiers; it is owing in a great degree to their bodily strength. After all they have endured for more than 700 years, it is more than probable that they would not bear a creditable comparison with the Irish as we stand today. It is strange he can find no cheer in his narrow soul for admiration of the undying love of liberty in a trampled race!

JAMES MCBRYDE, Irish to the core

JERSEY CITY, Nov. 6.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* About the year 1846 there was an embargo laid upon Orangeism in the province of Ulster. For those counties a stipendiary magistrate was appointed by the Crown, and one Jones was sent to rule with an iron rod. He could give law, seize any or all at once, and especially Orangemen, and imprison them, at his despotic pleasure, with the military to support him. He did this to his entire satisfaction. I have seen him and his colleague slighting from their horses and cutting down the orange lilies growing in the gardens along the public highways. When Parliament was assembled, the district masters of Orange lodges in the province of Ulster were summoned before the House of Lords and made to divulge their signs and secrets, and all was published in the *Times*, to the great chagrin of that Orange society in Ulster. Now, my opinion is that landlordism will go down in God's good time, and along with it all such tyranny and oppression. It is needless to say that the one cannot go without the other. Queen Victoria is the figure head of ignorance. So are all crowned heads in Europe, including the Pope and all his officers.

The fact is that the millionaires cannot live and see Ireland free. It would hurt the earls and nobles, so called, to the core if they had to give up their hunting and live like honest men. W. MCINTYRE, Presbyterian.

NEWARK, Nov. 4.

TO THE EDITOR OF THE SUN—*Sir:* "Jersey Yankee" says in THE SUN that the Irish are always bragging about what they did in the war. The Irish did not lie down by the road, as his countrymen and others did. They did not have to be poked with the bayonet to be driven to battle. If the Irish and others did not come to this country, what would America be? England could step forward and plant her flag here. I hope this ignorant "Jersey Yankee" will