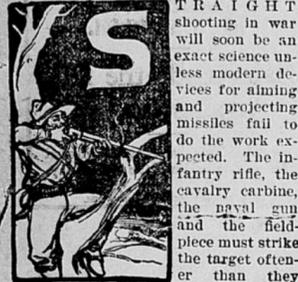


CRACK SHOTS IN WAR

THRILLING FEATS OF GUNNERY AND RIFLE SHARPSHOOTING.

A Cannon Duel at Sevastopol—The Deadliest Shot on Record—Fatal Curiosity of a Chinese "Sniper" at Peking—Famous Fatalities.

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STRIGHT shooting in war will soon be an exact science unless modern devices for aiming and projecting missiles fail to do the work expected. The infantry rifle, the cavalry carbine, the naval gun and the field-piece must strike the target oftener than they miss, or the labor and cost expended in getting accuracy will be wasted. Weapons which would now be classed as clumsy have in their time given bloody execution at close range.

Crack shooting naturally becomes a fad with soldiers when there is a new gun on trial. Sometimes it is indulged for mere sport and again in a spirit of rivalry. In the Crimean war the penchant for dueling across the lines became a vice in both armies. At the siege of Sevastopol one day while a truce was on a Russian officer said to one of the English artists: "Your 68 pounder gun you people call Jenny is a beautiful gun, but we think we have one as good up there in that embrasure and would like to have a fair duel with yours." He pointed to a gun in the Mamelon redoubt, where the English had already found a good contestant. The challenge was taken up and noon the day following the time named for the trial.

At the appointed hour all the guns on the line stopped firing. The English sailors of the gun detachment mounted the parapet and saluted the enemy by waving their hats. The Russians responded and awaited the first shot, which had been given the English piece because it was the senior in action of the two. The first shot struck the side of the Russian embrasure. This was answered by a very good shot from the Russians. The third English shot went through the embrasure, and the Russians quickly masked the opening with two gabions. Thinking they had silenced the Russian gun, the English bluejackets jumped upon the parapet and cheered. But they were mistaken. The Russians pulled away the gabions and ran out the gun again, sending a shot which struck the Jenny, but did not disable her. More shots were exchanged, and at the seventh

British shot the Russian gun was knocked over. There was no mistake then as to which was the better gun, and while the English cheered the Russians took off their hats in acknowledgment of superior marksmanship. Then the guns along the line opened savagely on human targets.

Numerous stories of crack shooting in the civil war have been handed down, but quite as often as otherwise what passes for a special shot is simply a chance out of dozens. It is said that General Sherman himself fired the shot which killed the Confederate general Leonidas Polk on Lost mountain, in front of Atlanta, in 1864. Several shots were fired from a certain Federal battery in Sherman's command at a group of Confederate officers who were boldly reconnoitering the slope of the mountain, exposed to fire. Polk was the chief of the party and was instantly killed. Perhaps the shot was aimed at him especially. At the battle of Antietam, in 1862, Captain Miller's battery of Washington artillery (Confederate) and Captain Weed's United States battery both tried to do some crack shooting of the kind on the same narrow field. Miller's guns fired at a group of Federal officers which included General McClellan, but none of the party was touched.

If General Polk was the victim of a cannon shot especially aimed at him, it was the only conspicuous instance of the kind in the whole war. Rifle bullets brought down some great men in the war, notably Reynolds, at Gettysburg; McPherson, at Atlanta; Sedgwick, at Spottsylvania; Stonewall Jackson, at Chancellorsville, and Albert Sidney Johnston, at Shiloh. Reynolds, McPherson and Sedgwick probably fell under the aim of sharpshooters who recognized their game, but the others were mere chance shots.

The long range naval and seacoast guns are counted upon to do wonders in the way of accurate shooting, but up to the present results have not been marvelous. At Santiago the American ships ran close in to the Spaniards of destruction were fired at or under 1,000 yards. When the Brooklyn and Oregon were chasing the Colon, the Oregon landed a 13 inch shell just ahead of the Spaniard and another at about the same distance in her wake. Then the Spaniard struck her colors for the sharpshooting Americans were gaining in the race, and it was only a question of time when one of the 1,000 pound missiles might blow the Colon out of the water. These two shots were made at over 9,000 yards range. The English are careful of their naval gunnery and are at present boasting of a feat at 1,600 yards range, about which there can be no mistake. The target was floating and was 12 feet square. The time allowed was two minutes, and out of 13 shots fired the gunner landed 11 on the target. At the time of firing the steamer carrying the

gun was moving at the rate of 13 knots an hour.

For deadly execution the best shot of the civil war and perhaps in all the annals of naval warfare was fired in an action scarcely known to history. The gun was a 32 pounder naval rifle which had been landed on the bluffs of White river, Arkansas, to repel the advance of Federal gunboats up stream. The United States ironclad Mound City attacked the land battery and moved up within 600 yards. Lieutenant Dunnington directed the firing of the guns of his own ship, which were on land, and after the Mound City came into unobstructed view by rounding a point in the bluffs he fired a shot which entered the port casemate forward of the armor and went straight through the steam drum. At the gun where the shell entered 8 men were killed. By the explosion of the steam drum 74 were scalded to death or suffocated in the casemate, 43 who jumped into the water to relieve their pain met death there, and 23 were wounded.

Veterans of the second attack upon Fort Fisher often recall a famous shot made by Gun Captain King of the United States armored Ironsides. After the Federal infantry had breached the walls of the fort and were fighting from traverse to traverse it became a very delicate operation to fire from the ships and not drop shells among friends. But the practice was splendid, and finally the commander of the Ironsides directed King to try a shot upon the fifth traverse of the fort, where the Confederates were holding out against the assailants, fighting almost at arm's length. It was near dark, and if the traverse did not soon give in the whole position might have to be given up by the Federal troops. King fired, and the shell exploded in the center of the traverse, completely demoralizing its defenders. With a rush the assaulting troops went forward, and the bloody struggle of an hour and a half was crowned with victory.

At the siege of Petersburg artillery duels were so frequent that they came to be looked upon as pastime for the gunners and idle troops in the trenches. As the opposing lines were close the temptation to see what a well posted gun could do in a crisis was very great. The artillerists in "Fort Damnation," as the Confederate Fort Mahone was popularly called, and the Federals in "Fort Hell," just opposite, were solely responsible for the nicknames of sulphurous suggestion attaching to their batteries. A favorite trick with the gunners in "Fort Hell" was to shoot down the flagstaff of "Fort Damnation." A battery of the famous New Orleans Washington artillery manned the guns in "Fort Damnation," and its captain learned from a deserting bounty jumper that a party of general officers frequently met for consultation in the tents which could be seen on the parade grounds of "Fort Hell." The exact hour of the meeting could be determined by a group of saddle horses hitched in the shelter of the parapet back of the fort. Two guns were trained on the target and the best marksman in the battery selected to demolish the tents. A crowd of interested spectators looked on through the embrasures and ports of "Fort Damnation," and when the tents flew into the air like feathers under the force of the exploding shells there was a wild cheer, which brought the gunners of "Fort Hell" to their pieces, and a savage fire was kept up the rest of the day. The fun and glory cost the lives of five officers, and another was disabled for life.

An American soldier bore off the palm for crack rifle shooting in China. The feat was performed at the siege of the legations in Peking and was a combination of strategy with sure aim. At the west end of Legation street a Celestial sharpshooter fixed his lair in the ruins of the Dutch legation and made it warm for any of the besieged



FATE HANGS ON A SINGLE SHOT.

who raised as much as a hand above the low parapet of the foreign barricades. The curiosity of the Chinaman was his weak point, for every time that he made a good shot he did the "rubber act" to see the result. Private Turner watched the heathen for a long time and finally concluded to draw a bead on him when he was "rubbering." The Chinaman fired from a loophole in a chimney and could not be taken in the act, but once, when he had winged a foreigner way down Legation street, he peered out from around the angle of the chimney to gloat over his work. Turner was ready and pumped five bullets into the corner. The head drew back all right, but a moment later the Chinaman's body pitched forward into full view.

GEORGE L. KILMER.

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ROYAL NEIGHBORS ELECT.

Mrs. Watt Again Chosen Supremacy Oracle of the Order.
Springfield, May 17.—The supreme convention of Royal Neighbors of America elected officers for the ensuing two years as follows: Supreme oracle, Mrs. E. D. Watt, Omaha, re-elected; supreme vice oracle, Mrs. Susie M. Roas, Carthage, Mo.; supreme recorder, Mrs. Winnie Fielder, Peoria; supreme receiver, Mrs. Myria B. Enright, Kansas City; supreme marshal, Mrs. Eva Child, Hanover, Wis.; supreme physicians, Dr. Susan McNyder, Council Bluffs; Dr. E. Frank Morrell, Chicago; Dr. Elenora Gilson, Whitmore, Blue Rapids, Kan.

Double Track to Chicago.
Missouri Valley, Ia., May 17.—Work will soon be begun here on the extension of the Northwestern's double track system which now terminates at this city. For the past week the company has had land agents buying land along the east side of the present main line. When the stretch east of here is completed the Chicago and Northwestern will have a double track from Chicago to Council Bluffs.

Home Missionary Jubilee.
Boston, May 17.—The diamond jubilee of the Congregational Home Missionary society closed yesterday evening with addresses by Rev. Joseph Twichell of Hartford, Conn., and Rev. C. B. Jefferson, D. D., of New York. The concluding address by Rev. Alexander McKenzie, D. D., of Cambridge, called for the prevalence of the puritan spirit in American life.

Nebraska Railroad Taxes.
Lincoln, May 17.—The valuation at which railroad property in Nebraska will be assessed for taxation this year has been raised approximately \$75,000 by the state board of equalization. A portion of this amount represents the value of the new property of the Omaha Bridge and Terminal company and an extension to a railroad in the western part of the state.

Salt Lake Theater Collapses.
Salt Lake, May 10.—The north wall of the Salt Lake theater, corner of First and State streets, collapsed yesterday. So far as known no one was hurt. The building, which will probably have to be torn down, was built nearly 40 years ago, in the days of Brigham Young, and was one of the landmarks of the city.

SPARKS FROM THE WIRES.

The stock brokerage firm of Gurley & Johnson in Washington has failed. Andrew Carnegie has given £100,000 to establish district libraries in Glasgow.

France is negotiating with Ecuador for the purchase of one of the Galapagos islands.

E. J. Finney of Cleveland was nominated for governor by the Ohio prohibition state convention Thursday.

Robert D. Wagstaff, marine editor of the Detroit Free Press for the past 10 or 12 years, died Thursday from tuberculosis.

Colonel J. K. Thompson of Rock Rapids has definitely decided to become a candidate for the Republican nomination for lieutenant governor of Iowa.

Rev. William H. Connor, believed to have been the oldest negro preacher in the country, died at his home in New London, Conn., Thursday, aged nearly 101 years.

The Cumberland Presbyterian general assembly met in West Point, Miss., in its 71st annual session Thursday. Moderator H. Clay Bird of Uniontown, Pa., presided.

Francis T. Hord, a prominent attorney of Indianapolis, was found dead in bed Thursday. He had been suffering from insomnia. Mr. Hord studied law in the office of the late Benjamin Harrison.

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