

the manner of hitching up the horses to the apparatus, which exercise, with the intelligence and intuition of the horses, enables this to be done in a time so slight as to seem incredible. New York may, indeed, congratulate herself upon having one of the most complete, efficient, and well disciplined fire departments in the world.

## LXVIII.

## FIRST DIVISION NATIONAL GUARD.

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NEW YORK has always had occasion to be proud of her military organizations. Since the Revolution there has been a corps of volunteer soldiers, on whom the authorities have relied to enforce law and preserve peace. For many years New York was without police. A few watchmen patrolled the streets at night, most of whom were laboring men through the day, and added to their scanty income by guarding the city at night. In all cases of brawls, riots, and all disturbances of the peace, the magistrates relied entirely upon the military. This force were voluntary soldiers, in every sense of the word. They purchased their own uniforms, when they had any, and their arms and equipments. They paid for their armories, and the expenses for music and parades were borne by an assessment on each member. Yet for eighty years the city military has been sustained, and when the new organization took place in 1862, the volunteer city troops numbered

thirteen thousand men, some of them in the highest state of discipline, with expensive armories, uniforms, and equipments, and the whole division was unequalled by any volunteer organization in the world.

#### FORMATION OF THE DIVISION.

At the close of the revolutionary war the city troops were organized as artillery, and were designated as the First Division of Artillery. The commandant had under him all the ununiformed militia of the city. Till 1867 there had been only three commanders of this division: General Stephens, who organized the division of artillery, General Morton, and General Sanford. General Sanford held his position for thirty years, and was the oldest commissioned officer in the state. In 1846 the old military system was abolished, and the First Division of uniformed troops created. The commander of the First Division of Artillery, outranking all others, took command of the new military district, including the city and county of New York, with Staten Island. In 1862 the law was again changed, and the city troops became the First Division of the National Guard. It is composed of four brigades, and musters thirteen thousand men. Under the new construction the arms and uniform are provided by the United States. The city of New York appropriates five hundred dollars a year to each regiment for an armory. Parades, music, and other expenses are borne by the troops. To keep such a body of men together, to subject them to the proper drill and discipline, to make them bear their own expenses, which the First Division has done for eighty years, to keep the peace at all

hazards and under all forms of excitement, to quell riots, shoot down their fellow-citizens when ordered so to do, to take their lives in their hands when called upon by their commanding officer to expose themselves,— to do this because they choose to do it, and to uphold the laws on all occasions, reflects great credit on the commanding general and the troops.

#### THE MILITARY AS A POLICE FORCE.

Till the coming in of the Metropolitan Police, the city troops held the quiet of New York in their hands. With the exception of a few riots, the city has always been celebrated for its good order and quietness. It is full of desperate men, ready for plunder, robbery, and arson. It is the headquarters of the crime of the country. It is easy to hide in the multitude of our people. The dens, dark chambers, underground rooms, narrow alleys, and secret retreats, render criminals more safe in the city than in any other part of the land. But for the presence of the military nothing would be safe. Banks would be plundered, men robbed in the streets; no man could sleep safely on his own pillow; property and life would be as insecure as they were in Sodom. There is something very remarkable about the New York military. It represents every phase of life, from the highest to the lowest. It embraces every nationality. The Seventh Regiment is essentially New York. The Sixty-ninth is wholly Irish. In the time of the Know-Nothing movement, the Seventy-first Regiment became American, *par excellence*, and no man was allowed to join it unless he was born of American parents. Besides this, there were German

regiments, regiments heterogeneous, regiments composed mainly of Jews; yet the whole division has been a unit in preserving public peace and enforcing law. Questions have come up that have agitated the whole community, and men have risen against the law. From thirty to fifty thousand men have filled the Park, defying the authorities, and threatening to destroy public property; Wall Street has been crowded with maddened men, assembled to tear down the banks; mobs have gathered on political questions,—and on every one of these exciting topics the city troops have had as much direct interest, or indirect, as any of the rioters, and, as individuals, have been as much excited; yet, as soldiers, they have never shrunk from their duty. They have promptly obeyed every call of their officers, have been under arms night and day for many days, placed their cannon in the street when ordered to do so, and were as reliable in any crisis as if they had no interest in the city and not a friend in the world. There is not a rogue in the Union that does not know that should he overpower the civil authorities, a few sharp taps on the City Hall bell would bring ten thousand bayonets to the support of law; and that the city troops would lay down their lives as quickly to preserve the peace as they would to defend the nation's flag on the battle-field.

#### THE MILITARY AND RIOTS.

One of the earliest riots was known as the Abolition riot, in which the houses and stores of leading abolitionists were attacked and sacked. The military were called out, and a general conflagration prevented.

During the great fire in 1836, which swept all New York, from Wall Street to the Battery, and from Broad Street to the water, the military were on duty three days and three nights. The day Mayor Clark was sworn into office, he received a letter from the presidents of the city banks, informing him that the banks were to suspend specie payments, and that they feared a riot. The mayor was terribly frightened, and sent for General Sanford, who assured the mayor that he could keep the peace. The next morning Wall Street was packed with people, who threatened to tear down the banks and get at the specie. The First Division was called out. There was probably not a man in that corps who was not as excited, personally, as the maddened throng that surged through the streets; yet not a man shrank from his duty, or refused to obey his commander. The First Division were marched to the head of Wall Street, except the cavalry, who were stationed around the banks in the upper part of the city. General Sanford planted his cannon on the flagging in front of Trinity Church. The cannon commanded the whole of Wall Street. He then sent word to the rioters that his fuse was lighted, and on the first outbreak he should fire upon the rioters, and that peaceable citizens had better get out of the way. The announcement operated like magic, and in a few minutes there was not a corporal's guard left in the vicinity of the banks. The citizens knew that the troops would do their duty, and that silent park of artillery was an efficient peace corps.

## THE SEVENTH REGIMENT AND THE ASTOR PLACE RIOT.

This famous corps, of which the city has always been so justly proud, came prominently into notice during the Astor Place riots. As the military was composed of citizens taken from the banks, stores, shops, and places of mechanical toil, people regarded the troops rather as holiday soldiers than men organized for sanguinary conflicts. Within the lifetime of the generation that organized the riot, the troops had never come in contact with the citizens. It was not believed that they would fire on their friends if ordered so to do, and the threats to call out the military were received with derision. If called out, it was presumed that they would fraternize with the people. The friends of Macready, the English actor, and of Forrest, had succeeded in creating a high state of excitement about these two men. Clinton Hall was then an opera house. Macready had an engagement, and was to appear in that place. A riot ensued. The Seventh Regiment was called out to quell it. They marched to their position, and, in obedience to orders, they fired on the mob. From that moment they took their high place in the confidence of our citizens as the conservators of peace, which position they have never lost. Their discipline, soldierly bearing, full ranks, and splendid marching, have been the theme of universal praise. On the first visit of the corps to Boston, the Bostonians received with much allowance the eulogiums on this fine corps. On reaching the city, an immense concourse greeted the regiment at the station, and followed it to the Common, where thousands of

citizens were gathered to look on the soldiers, the boast of New York. The regiment formed in line on the great mall. The mighty concourse were hushed to silence, as not an order was given. The regiment stood in exact line, like statues. Soon the clear, ringing tones of the commander shouted out the command, "Order — arms!" Down came every gun, as if moved by machinery. Boston was satisfied. Shouts, bravoës, and clapping of hands rent the air. With the second order, "Parade — rest!" the regiment was nearly swallowed up alive.

## MAYOR WOOD'S RIOT.

On the formation of the Metropolitan Police, with Simeon Draper at its head, Mayor Wood organized an armed resistance to the force. He shut himself up in the City Hall, closed the iron gates, and filled the inside of the hall with the old police, with Matsell at its head, gave orders to resist unto blood, and to admit no one. Recorder Smith had issued warrants for the arrest of the mayor, and the new police, under Captain Carpenter, were ordered to serve the warrants. The Park contained not less than thirty thousand men, the larger part of whom were friends of Wood, and were resolved to sustain him in his resistance to the new order of things. Wood's police were armed with clubs and revolvers, with orders to use both if it was necessary to resist an entrance into the City Hall. The location of the new commissioners was in White Street, and their friends were assembled in full force around their quarters, as Wood's friends were assembled in the Park. The day before, General Sanford had served