

NAPOLÉON'S SOLDIER.

A Veteran of the Imperial French Army of 1806.

NINETY-THREE YEARS OLD.

A SPECTATOR OF THE ERUPTION OF VESUVIUS IN THE LAST CENTURY.

From the Philadelphia Times.

For many years past the regular theatre-goers of this city have noticed in the orchestra an old man, with white hair and whiskers, who plays the violin. He has been connected with every theatre in the city, and his face is a familiar object to those who study the musicians as well as the music during the often tedious waits between the acts. The small gold earrings he wears have often been remarked, and the manner in which he handles his instrument shows that it is an old friend. For some time he has been a member of the Chestnut Street Theatre Orchestra, under the direction of Simon Hassler, where he has made many friends, who have been astonished to hear from the quiet little old man occasional reminiscences of an unusually adventurous life. Yet some of his most intimate friends, who have only heard him conversing on the great musicians and singers he has heard and known, do not know that the humble musician is a veteran of the army of the great Napoleon and participated in the battles under his command when this century was young. The old gentleman is not given to boasting and speaks modestly of his experiences, but there are occasions when, surrounded by his family or a little circle of chosen friends, he fights the battles of the "grand army" over again and tells of deeds he has witnessed that are now matters of history. One of these rare occasions was on Friday last, when Pierre Solidore Molin, Chevalier of the Legion of Honor, the veteran soldier and musician, celebrated his ninety-third birthday at his humble residence, on Julianna street, below Calowhill.

AN OLD SOLDIER'S BIRTHDAY.

The day was spent in visiting and receiving the congratulations of his many relatives and friends, and in the afternoon, while seated around the cheerful fireside, he was prevailed upon to give some reminiscences of such a career as few living men have experienced. The room was characteristic of the man. On the walls hung pictures of Napoleon and Washington and a portrait of Cherubini, the composer. On the little old-fashioned piano rested a huge pile of music and a picture of a veteran of Napoleon's Guards, whose motto was: "The Old Guard Dies, But Never Surrenders." Everything was scrupulously neat and clean and showed the care and attention of a tidy housewife. The old gentleman, who scarcely appeared to be more than sixty-five years old instead of being within a few years of his centenary, was bright and cheerful and evidently in a good humor for talking, so that when a visitor suggested that a brief sketch of his life would be interesting he signified his assent. Although a resident of this country for sixty-two years, he still retains his native Piedmontese accent in a marked degree, and the fact that he has lost all his teeth rendered it difficult at times to catch his meaning. He is in full possession of all his faculties and in perfect physical health, while his mind is remarkable for its keenness and accuracy. It scarcely required a moment for him to remember an occurrence of seventy or eighty years, and in every case when reference was made to some particular date he was invariably correct.

REMINISCENCES OF THE LAST CENTURY.

"I was born," said he, in answer to a question, "on this day ninety-three years ago; that is, on November 19, 1787. My birthplace was Nice, which now belongs to France, although when I first saw the light it was in Italy. They used to say, 'Nice is the garden of Italy and Italy is the garden of Europe.' My father was a doctor, who attended the Marquis of Rochambeau and accompanied him to America during the Revolutionary War. My grandfather was chamberlain to the Duke of Savoy. I was educated in Naples first and then in Paris, and was living in the former place when the eruption of Mount Vesuvius took place in 1796."

"Do you remember anything about the eruption?" was asked.

The old gentleman laughed heartily and shrugged his shoulders expressively as he said: "Why, I was only nine years old at the time, and it has been so long ago. But I remember that it looked like a big fire and everybody thought that they were going to be burned up. I also recollect that a few days afterwards I went with my parents to visit Torre del Greco, a town at the foot of Mount Vesuvius, which had been destroyed by the burning lava. Right in the town there was a nunnery and the volcano in its eruption cast out a huge rock which blocked up the door so that no one could go in or out. That is all that I can re-

member about the eruption. There have been several since, but I believe this was the worst.

NAPOLÉON'S CORONATION.

"I went to Paris about 1800 and studied vocal and instrumental music at the Conservatoire, where Cherubini was a director at that time. Yes, that is his portrait on the wall, and it is a very good likeness, too. He composed many operas about that time and they were very successful, as you know. I was taught in the French school of music, which is to first learn to sing and then to play every instrument. I can play everything except the horn, and I haven't wind enough to perform on that. I was engaged at the Grand Opera House as repetiteur of the orchestra in 1804. I remember the first production of 'La Dame Blanche' at the Grand Opera House at that time. The composer himself (Boieldieu) led the orchestra and I was repetiteur or assistant conductor there."

"Do you remember who were the singers upon that occasion?"

"Oh, no, no. I cannot remember that. I only recollect that Boieldieu conducted the orchestra and that the opera was a great success. I was engaged at the Grand Opera House when Napoleon was crowned Emperor at the Church of Notre Dame in 1804. Ah! that was a grand sight. I shall never forget it. Soon after that I entered the army."

"How came you to join the army? Were you conscripted?" was asked.

"Oh, no," replied the old professor, with a laugh; "I volunteered. But let me show you this," and the old man took down from the wall a frame containing a paper bearing the dingy hue of age and written in French. It was a certificate similar to the honorable discharge of an American soldier and showed that Pierre Solidore Molin had entered the Second Regiment of the French Infantry of the line July 4, 1806. Then followed a full account of his various promotions, from a private to a captain and paymaster, together with the campaigns through which he had served and the battles in which he had been engaged. Above the paper in the frame was the faded red ribbon and cross of the Legion of Honor, and on one side of the certificate was a detailed account of the gallant service rendered by Sous-Lieutenant Molin in capturing a cannon from the Russians at Polotsk, for which he received the decoration. The certificate was signed by the Baron de Wimpffen, colonel commanding the Second Regiment of the line.

THE FIRST CAMPAIGN.

"Le Baron de Wimpffen," said the old professor, "succeeded Colonel de Lavalatte as commander of the regiment. The latter was an old soldier and was with Napoleon in Egypt. He received a wound in the leg at the battle of Wagram and died from the effects two days afterwards and the Baron took his place. My first duties upon joining the regiment were in the paymaster's department and consequently I did not see any fighting until we entered Swedish Pomerania. Then came the campaign against the Prussians. Ah! I remember that well and the passage of the Jena, in which I gave a peasant forty gold pieces to pull me out of the water on the other side. Then came the Austrian campaign of 1809, during which you see I was made sergeant major, having successfully been appointed corporal, sergeant and fourier or paymaster's secretary."

"Do you remember Napoleon's appearance?" asked a visitor.

"Perfectly," said the old man, springing from his chair and his face lighting up with enthusiasm. "I saw him many times, and have been as near to him as I am now to you. I remember his stern, resolute face and the way he used to fold his arms and stand this way," and the veteran assumed the familiar attitude which is said by historians to have been the "Little Corporal's" favorite pose.

"Yes, my friends, I have seen Napoleon, the great Napoleon, standing before the camp fire with a piece of black bread in one hand and a morsel of cheese in the other, eating it with all the relish of a common soldier. Ah! he was always one of us. He loved his soldiers and his men loved him," and the old man's voice trembled as he spoke.

"Then came Russia, the march to Moscow and the retreat. Oh, that terrible, winter, with its snow and ice! I have read many histories and descriptions of the cold and misery we experienced, and I have them in French, German and English. Not one of them can begin to describe the horrors of that cold. If a man were to live for a thousand years he would never forget it. This is what the cold did for me," and the veteran held up his hand, from which the ends of four fingers were missing. "Besides my fingers I lost nearly all my toes by the dreadful frost."

"When we entered Russia we had the grandest army Europe had ever seen. Five hundred thousand men, all of them good soldiers. The Russians fled before us, but we had many engagements with them. I was made a sous-lieutenant and received the decoration of the Legion of Honor. There is what the colonel said of me; you can read for yourself."

"But tell us how you captured the cannon that is mentioned here?"

"Oh, it was nothing," replied the veteran, modestly; "it was at Polotsk.

The Russians were retreating and I encountered two of them dragging off a cannon. I charged them and they ran away, so I brought the cannon to the regiment. Marshal St. Cyr decorated me with his own hand and promoted me to a lieutenantcy. Then we turned back, and on the retreat I was captured. I was weak and suffering from my frost-bitten hands and feet, and twelve leagues from Wilna I was taken prisoner. They brought me to Wilna, and I laid down by the fountain expecting to die. A woman came up and said to send me to the hospital, but it had been abandoned; so they kept me at Wilna and then sent me to Tomboff, where I remained until the war was over; then they set me free. I returned to France, and arrived two days after the battle of Waterloo. They put me on half pay and sent me to Nismes, where I was made adjutant."

A SOLDIER'S VENGEANCE.

"Why did you leave the army?" asked a listener.

"Ah! it is better to say nothing about that," was the reply, as a shadow passed over his face. "I was on patrol one night when a man insulted me and slapped my face. I drew my sword and ran him through and he died. I went to my commander and reported the occurrence. 'You must not stay in France,' said he; 'you must leave the country.' I had heard of America from my father, so I went to Marseille and took passage on the bark Cleopatra, of Salem, Massachusetts. I arrived in Boston in 1818 and stayed there two or three days and then went to New York. First I became a traveling merchant. I got what you call a wheelbarrow and bought goods, which I sold to the small shops. While I was doing this I made the acquaintance of Major Noah and painted his portrait, and also a picture of Napoleon crossing the Alps. He was much pleased and introduced me to the father of General McClellan, who interested himself for me to get scholars and teach them music. I had forty-two scholars at one time."

SINGING WITH GARCIA.

"I sang also in concerts and afterwards in opera. I had a tenor voice and when Garcia came to this country I sang with him in 1822. I sang the Prince in Rossini's 'Cinderella,' and Roderigo in 'Otello,' and in other operas. Afterwards I wished to travel and see the country and I went as far north as Halifax. I visited Red Jacket and lived with the Indians for nearly a year. Then I traveled to South America and visited every large city down almost as far as Terra del Fuego. I taught music and played and thus supported myself and saw the country at the same time. I have done that ever since and have traveled all over North and South America. In New Orleans I had a fine orchestra and was married there. Then my wife died and I came North and have now been living in Philadelphia for twenty-three years. I have been at all the theatres and led the orchestra at the old Chestnut Street Theatre years ago. I was married a second time years ago and have four children, two boys and two girls, all of whom are married except one."

"You have heard many famous singers in your time, Professor, who do you consider the best?"

"To the musician there is no best. Each one excels in some particular manner. Those who have risen from the ranks have generally been superior to the others in some respects. Garcia played the bass viol in an orchestra in Milan before he sang in opera. Ah, I could fill a book with reminiscences; but it is getting late and I must go to the theatre."

John Guy and General Cass.

In years gone by there dwelt in Washington John Guy, a character in his way, in connection with whom Col. Forney tells the following anecdote:

Guy kept the National Hotel in Washington, and among the guests was General Cass, then Senator from Michigan. Guy dressed like Cass, though not as portly, his face, including the wart, was strangely similar.

One day a Western friend of the House came in after a long ride, dusty and tired, and walking up to the office, encountered Gen. Cass who was quietly standing there. Mistaking him for Guy, he slapped him on the shoulder and exclaimed, "Well, old fellow, here I am! The last time I hung up in your shanty, one of your clerks sent me to the fourth story, but now I've got hold of you, I insist upon a lobby room."

The General, a most dignified personage, taken aback by this startling salute, coolly replied: "You have committed a mistake, sir. I am not Mr. Guy; I am Gen. Cass, of Michigan," and angrily turned away. The western man was shocked at the unconscious outrage he committed; but before he had recovered from his mortification, General Cass who had passed around the office, confronted him again when, a second time mistaking him for Guy, he faced him and said: "Here you are at last! I have just made a devil of a mistake; I met old Cass, and took him for you, and I'm afraid the Michigan man has gone off mad." What Gen. Cass would have said may well be imagined, if the real Guy had not approached and rescued the innocent offender from the twice assailed and twice angered statesman.

A COQUETTE.

She rambles through the meadows wide,
So richly gowned with dew;
Her hair was bright as golden light,
Her eyes were azure blue.
And oh! there, the former lad
Betrayed his love and won;
She passed him by
With head held high,
And coldly answered, "No!"
She wandered to the woodland pool,
By flow'rs all bright;
She saw her beauty in its depth,
And smiled—the pretty flirt!
And there the curate told his love,
"Thy hope was almost dead;
But though she sighed,
She nought replied,
She only shook her head!"
She lingered by the broad park gate,
The old lord lingered too;
He sought the maiden for his bride,
And knew, too, how to woo,
And though he feigned Love's aid despair,
Her answer he could guess;
But could not spy
Her triumph high!
She smiled, and whispered "Yes!"
—Temple Bar.

BRODERICK AND TERRY.

From the New York World.

The defeat of one out of several Presidential electors in a State is an extraordinary occurrence which has just been officially declared to have happened in California. David S. Terry is the Democratic elector thus "let out in the cold." Had the pending election been as close as that of 1876 Judge Terry's defeat might have changed the complexion of our history for four years at least. There can be but little doubt that the causes of this defeat lie far back of the pending election, and must be traced to the killing of Senator David S. Broderick in a duel years ago by Judge Terry. Many old residents of the Eighth ward remember David S. Broderick as a young Democratic "boss" in that part of New York thirty-five years ago. "Dave," the "fire laddie" and stonemason's apprentice, just before he left New York for San Francisco owned a popular liquor saloon which was the headquarters of the Tammany boys of Houston, Spring and Varick street neighborhoods. The immediate cause of "Dave's" leaving on the first attack of the gold fever of 1849 was his unexpected defeat for Congress in a Democratic district, for which undoubtedly he was himself responsible. He had become a thorough political organizer, and in his new home as a fireman and ward politician he almost immediately acquired an ascendancy in Democratic politics. No sooner had he secured a residence than he was chosen State Senator, and by an accident during his term he was made acting Lieutenant Governor. "Dave" immediately aspired to be United States Senator, and actually spent seven years in a persistent and undaunted struggle for the prize. Three times—in 1851, 1855 and 1856—he prevented a choice by the Legislature rather than see a rival chosen. In 1852 Jno. B. Weller beat Broderick by only two majority. In 1853 no election for Senator occurred. In 1854 Broderick hit upon the ingenious plan of choosing himself in advance of the vacancy and nearly succeeded in the scheme. Believed to be in 1856 as dead politically as Dennis Kearney now is, and actually so unpopular as to be kept under watch by the aristocratic vigilance committee of that period, Broderick, in 1857, by bold political moves was chosen United States Senator, and had so much power as to be able to dictate who his colleague should be, after obliging that colleague, Senator Gwin, in a memorable letter, which afterwards became public, to agree that Broderick should enjoy all the patronage. This was an agreement which President Buchanan refused to acknowledge, and this led to a rupture between the President and Broderick who, on one occasion, on the floor of the Senate, averred that "the President's policy towards Kansas should be ascribed to the fading intellect, the petulant passion and the trembling dotage of an old man on the verge of the grave." The rupture led to the defeat in California of the Broderick Democrats at the Congressional elections. During that canvass David S. Terry, the recently rejected Hancock elector, made campaign speeches, although, like Judge Noah Davis, he was a Justice of the Supreme Court. Broderick having declared in a stump speech that he was following in the lead of Douglas, Judge Terry retorted by saying that "it was the lead, not of Stephen but of Fred Douglass." Broderick was breakfasting in the International Hotel of San Francisco, with Mr. Perley, a friend both of the Senator and of the Judge, when the speech was read out from a morning paper. Broderick was much nettled, and impulsively said: "I have said that Terry is the only honest man on the bench, but I take that back." Perley spoke up sharply at this, and left the table to go and pen a challenge, which Broderick declined on the ground that he had no quarrel with Perley, and that if he had Perley was not his equal. Then Terry stepped into the gap, and resigning his judgeship for the purpose, sent Broderick a challenge, which was accepted. The duel was fought ten miles out of San Francisco, on the morning of September 13, 1859, with dueling pistols, at a distance of ten yards. Broderick's ball struck the ground a few paces immediately in front of Terry—Broderick's hair trigger failing him—while Terry's ball lodged in Broderick's left lung and killed him within a few days. His death was regarded by the anti-slavery Democrats as an assassination—a sentiment which the late General and Oregon Senator, E. D. Baker, made the topic of a celebrated funeral oration over "Dave"—as his admirers

continued to call him to the day of entombing his remains beneath a conspicuous monument in Lone Mountain cemetery. Terry was indicted for murder and imprisoned, but never tried. During the civil war he was in the Confederate army. After the war he returned to San Francisco and practiced law and re-entered politics. In August, 1879, he unsuccessfully ran on the Kearney ticket for Attorney General. This year he was nominated as a Presidential elector.

THE TRAMP STILL LINGERS.

The worst result of the crash which prostrated all our leading industries in 1873, and inaugurated an era of unexampled depression which continued for five years, was the widespread ruin of character which resulted from enforced idleness and want.

It was bad enough to see credit swept away, to see fortunes disappear as snowflakes in the sea, to see thousands reduced from affluence to poverty, and our poorhouses and lunatic asylums filled with victims of hard times. But worse than this was the filling of the land with tramps, roving vagabonds, sinking lower and lower in the moral scale until they became hardened criminals, until they were capable of deliberately choosing a life of crime rather than one of honest industry.

It was supposed that the tramp would disappear when the wheels of business began to revolve again with their wonted force; that when work became plenty, the vagrants would go into the shops and factories and all their old pursuits, and that society would be fully restored to its normal condition. But this was an illogical conclusion. A life that has been wrenched and trampled out of shape cannot be restored like a piece of metal. Thousands of men who were honest, industrious and prosperous seven years ago, are now deplorable moral wrecks and will never voluntarily do a day's work during the balance of their lives.

It is true the tramp is not so numerous a person as he was two years ago, but there are still too many of his tribe, and many of the most revolting crimes are his work. We can deplore the terrible misfortunes which made these men what they are, the pinch of poverty that compelled them to take to the road, but society will not be too sentimental to protect itself. Many of the States have already enacted tramp laws. Some have set up the whippingpost. All will be compelled to employ strong instrumentalities to suppress this very dangerous nuisance.

TREASURE TROVE.

A SOLDIER WHO FOUND ONE HUNDRED AND THIRTY THOUSAND DOLLARS.

From the London News.

Ezelot, the French soldier who found the £26,000 which M. Pages lost in the Northern Railway station in Paris, has communicated to the *Courier de l'Aisne* the particulars attendant on his good fortune. They are very interesting, and show how some men are born to fortune, some achieve fortune, and some have fortune thrust upon them. Ezelot was walking through the railway station with two comrades, when they noticed on the floor a packet wrapped in a newspaper. They kicked it along before them for some distance, and when Ezelot was getting into the train, going home on short leave, one of his comrades, picking up the packet, thrust it into the canvass forage bag slung at his side. Ezelot going on his way without having perceived the little pleasantries.

Arrived at Neuilly, where his parents live, his mother, emptying the forage bag, discovered the bundle, and thinking it was a packet of old newspapers put it on a table in the kitchen. There it remained for four or five days, till a married sister, calling in and seeing the packet, was moved by unwonted curiosity. Opening it she discovered documents representing the £26,000 the loss of which M. Pages had advertised throughout Europe. The European papers are not, however, read at Neuilly, where the *Courier de l'Aisne* doubtless has it all its own way. The soldier and his parents, not knowing what else to do, followed the provincial Frenchman's instinct and had recourse to the Maire. That functionary, communicating with Paris speedily brought down M. Pages, who, gratefully paying the promised reward of £1,000, went off with his oddly-recovered treasure. It would be an interesting supplement to the narrative if we could have a record of the feelings of the soldier who thrust the packet upon Ezelot when he heard the sequel to the little joke.

OLD TIMBER.

Probably the oldest timber in the world which has been subjected to the use of man is that found in the ancient temples of Egypt in connection with the stonework which is known to be at least four thousand years old. This, the only wood used in the construction of the temple, is in the form of ties, holding the end of one stone to another at its upper surface. When two blocks were laid in place, an excavation about an inch deep was made in each block, into which a tie shaped like an hour-glass was driven. It is therefore very difficult to force any stone from its position. The ties appear to have been of the tamarisk or

shittewood, of which the ark was constructed, a sacred tree in ancient Egypt and now very rarely found in the valley of the Nile. Dovetailed ties are just as sound now as on the day of their insertion. Although fuel is extremely scarce in the country, these bits of wood are not large enough to make it an object with the Arabs to heave off layer after layer to obtain them. Had they been of bronze half the old temples would have been destroyed years ago, so precious would they have been for various purposes.

THE COLOR LINE AT WEST POINT.

General Schofield, commanding the Department of West Point, says upon the subject of enforcing associations between white and black cadets:—"In their zeal and sincere desire to carry out the policy of the Government the authorities of the Military Academy, have heretofore gone too far in enforcing personal associations between white and black cadets without regard to prejudice, especially at the mess-table. In respect to quarters the more reasonable rule had always been observed of not requiring any cadet against his will to occupy the same sleeping apartment with another. The same rule should have been adopted in respect to the mess-table. The colored cadets would thus have been saved some part of the mortification due to an ill-advised attempt to regulate their social standing by military force. Whatever just cause of self-reproach any portion of the good people of the United States may have for neglected duty towards those who had been so suddenly raised from slavery to the full responsibilities of citizenship, the officers of the Military Academy have only to reproach themselves for a too zealous attempt to accomplish what was manifestly impossible, in their desire to do all in their power for the unfortunate colored boys, who had been placed in a false position, and in their faithful efforts to carry out a policy, however ill-advised, that had for its aim to secure the newly enfranchised the fullest possible enjoyment of all the rights and privileges of citizenship.

But the Military Academy cannot, without utterly destroying its usefulness, be made a nursery for delicate hot-house plants. Its use is to develop the fibre of those of a more sturdy growth and reject all that do not possess the requisite stamina. Unless the African race is naturally superior to the Caucasian, and slavery a better school for race development than freedom, it cannot be hoped that many colored boys will succeed where two-thirds of all the white boys now selected habitually fail. It is presumed that the people of the United States do not wish to lower their national institutions to the present level of the recent slaves, but to elevate the freedmen as rapidly as possible towards the ever-rising standard of the great body of the people. Public duty requires that this subject be treated without reserve and as an important question of public policy."

A New System of Apprenticeship.

The difficulty of getting thoroughly qualified machinists, and the practical failure of the old system of apprenticeship, have led a manufacturing firm in Springfield, Mass., to devise a new plan, involving both school and shop work. For beginners under twenty years of age the term of apprenticeship is fixed at six years. In this time it is believed that an apprentice will be able to acquire the theoretical and practical knowledge needed to make him a first-class journeyman. Those who are over twenty years of age are allowed to finish their apprenticeship in five years, and those who have worked in a shop are advanced according to proficiency. The beginner is first put to drawing from sketches, then takes up projection and diagram, and advances regularly according to his ability. It is believed that in this way one year will qualify him as well to work from drawings as four or five years ordinarily. All applicants are taken from four to twelve weeks on trial, and if not satisfactory are then dismissed. For the first year's labor five cents per hour is paid to those under eighteen, six cents to those who are eighteen, and seven cents to those who are twenty and upwards; for the next years the rate is advanced to six, eight, ten, eleven, and twelve cents. The firm also pay two cents per hour additional into a reserve fund, which is paid to those apprentices who finish their full term of service; for the six years this amounts to \$400.

The organizers of this scheme, Messrs. Richards & Dole, propose to require of each apprentice fifty-eight hours a week of shop work and nine hours of study. This, we are inclined to think, is too much work and too little study to secure the best results, especially with the younger apprentices. Still the plan is well worth a fair trial. It is said that the applicants for apprenticeship already exceed the number that can be taken, which speaks well for the plan and for the young mechanics of Springfield.

A MOMENT'S work on clay tells more than an hour's labor on brick. So work on hearts should be done before they harden. During the first six or eight years of childlike mothers have chief sway, and this is the time to make the deepest and most enduring impressions on the youthful mind.