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Grandly Opens the Third National Bundes Shooting Fest

Author of "Son of Wolf" Describes Great Invasion

Peaceful Conquest by the German Sharpshooters

Parade Promptness

One of the Most Picturesque Processions This City Has Seen

The Goths have entered Rome! Aye, it is so. But there was no cry in the night, no clamor of hasty flight, no scurrying with household gods to the citadel. Rather, did San Francisco throw wide her gates and fraternize with her Teutonic invaders. On the other hand, these descendants of the Germanic tribesmen who swept down out of the forests of middle Europe some two thousand years ago, are quite unlike their savage forebears. They are not clad in the skins of wild beasts, and though they bear weapons in their hands, we do not fear; for they come not in war, but in love; not as foes, but as blood-brothers. And though their ancestors of old time looted many a fair city, we need keep no anxious eye upon our possessions. We have but one thing which they might appropriate, and which they surely would appropriate if they were able—and that is our climate.

It was a unique parade, that which passes through San Francisco's peaceful streets Sunday forenoon. Beneath fluttering banners and between packed rows of spectators, to the martial music of band and fife and drum, marched two thousand men, and picked men all. Not since our own "Californias" has so splendid a body of men been in our midst. And picked men they certainly are, picked from all the States, these men of the shooting clubs, these sharpshooters, these Schützenbrüder.

Men from the cities and men from the fields and forests; riflemen and sharpshooters from the Eastern centers, and hunters and fighters from the plains and mountains of the West. From Montana, Idaho, Arizona and Colorado, from Chicago, New York and Boston, and even from Europe they have come to take part in the Third National Bundes Shooting Festival. They are skillful men, eagle-eyed and steady of nerve, who have won trophies everywhere—gun experts and crowned kings of the target, to say nothing of princes and knights galore, who have demonstrated their fitness in rifle ranges the world over, and who have come together here, by the shores of the Pacific, in friendly contest.

Promptly at the target The *Examiner's* siren the parade swung into motion from the corner of Market and New Montgomery streets; and right here, in passing, it is meet to state that promptness pre-eminently characterizes these riflemen. No delays; no lagging. They achieve the impossible feat of doing everything on schedule time.

Grand Marshal Robert Weineke led the long column of many divisions, and with the assistance of innumerable aides on gaily caparisoned horses, went over the line of march in splendid order. The route was up Market to City Hall Avenue, around the Lick monument, countermarch on Market to Kearny, to California, to Montgomery and down Market to the Oakland ferry.

The banners were many and beautiful, but it was the uniforms that especially caught the eye. Gray and green predominated. And it is indeed a pretty sight, a body of stalwart men clad in the traditional hunting green, with black drooping plumes of ostrich in their dark slouch hats. But with the recent developments of the machinery of warfare in one's mind, one would not forbear looking a second time at the unobtrusive, inconspicuous grays. They would surely conceal more easily a sharpshooter's movements at a time when discovery would mean to invite a whirlwind of death-dealing missiles. And the grays were pretty, too—in fact, all the uniforms were neat and tasty.

From the ferry a special boat, and from the Oakland mole a special train, carried the sharpshooters to Shell Mound Park. And there, at 12 noon, to the stroke, Captain F. A. Kuhls, President of the Shooting Bund, made the opening address. This part of the programme took place in the big pavilion, with the furled standards swaying beneath golden eagles of victory and the marksmen leaning picturesquely on their rifles.

Grand Marshal Robert Weineke, for all that he had done, was honored by the addition of another badge to the many on his coat. But he was not alone, for the breasts of the President and the group about him on the platform were bespangled and blazing with innumerable medals. It was a martial scene, and it dissolved in true martial manner to the rattle of drums, the unisoned tramp of feet and ringing German cheers.

Then the great crowd scattered and spread over the grounds in quest of restaurants or quiet places where hampers and lunch baskets might be opened, and also in quest of that national beverage that made Milwaukee famous.

At 1 o'clock sharp President F. A. Kuhls opened the great shooting contest by firing three shots into the air. The first was "for our adopted country," the second "for the old Fatherland," and the third "for the commonweal of the National Shooting Bund."

At once followed a wild scramble for the honor of making the first bull's-eye, and the hasty firing only eased down when loud cheers proclaimed the lucky individual.

Then what seemed like an indiscriminate fusillade set in. There were so many targets and so many shooting boxes that the whole thing seemed confused and disorderly. That there was any sanity about it, an adjacent lady could not be convinced. "How does anybody know anything?" she demanded excitedly, her voice pitched high in order to get above the roar of the guns. "Who is shooting? What are they scoring? Who is judging? Who is keeping track? And where are the targets?"

Nay, she could not see them. There were no targets. Preposterous! But a young fellow in the uniform of the United States artillery calmed her apprehensions after a quarter of an hour of endeavor, whereupon she undertook the hopeless task of re-explaining everything to her grandfather.

And well might she be forgiven her minutes of anxiety lest the whole shooting contest had gone to smash. At first glance it was indeed hard to locate the targets amid the maze of timbers and uprights that studded the range. Besides, two hundred yards is not to [be] sneezed at, and a black bull's-eye at that distance does not appear over large.

What really gave the impression of disorder, however, was the smoothness with which the machinery was running. The whole trouble was subjective. There was no evidence of the mind of some man behind and directing it all; no creaking of the wheels, as it were; but gradually, as one grew accustomed, order began to appear out of chaos. Each man was firing in turn. The shooting secretaries were at their posts; and down at the far end of the range the targets were constantly being replaced, and the long-handled spotters and vari-colored flags of the markers were indicating the scores as fast as they were made.

And in this manner did the ten days' contest commence; and not only is it the greatest shooting festival California has ever had, but it is the greatest ever held in the United States. It might well put the tournaments of the Middle Ages to scorn; for in those same Middle Ages it is to be doubted if knights ever jousted for as princely prizes or for honors more highly esteemed and verily, in those days it was a rare knight who fared three thousand miles or more to a tilting match.

The glittering array of prizes in the Temple of Gifts cost not a cent less than \$100,000, while the honor that accompanies them is something that cannot be measured by worldly and commercial standards. Yes; the standards are quite different from those of old time. Here at the Bundesfest they will crown a man king. He will be a common-man king, crowned not because of what his father or grandfather chanced to do, but crowned because of the things he himself has done; and to be king of American riflemen; to possess the steadiest nerve, the keenest eye, the finest and subtlest judgment, and to be so adjudged by one's own fellows —surely this is finer and bigger than to sit vacuously in a high place because, forsooth, some greater and stronger robber-ancestor ground a people under the iron heel.

And while the sires and sons and husbands and brothers line up at the firing butts their womenkind and children are not a whit behind in enjoying themselves. All over the big grounds is frolicking and merrymaking of young and old; children in the swings and on the hobby-horses; lusty young fellows doing the giant swing on the bars or striking with the heavy mallet till they ring the bell three clips out of four; and then, since there are many men to shoot and only so many targets, there is dancing going on at both pavilions, and it must be confessed the floors are crowded with whirling couples. Everywhere is the clink of glasses to genial laughter, while over all, ringing and reverberating throughout the place, are the rifles. And for ten days without intermission, with balls, receptions and concerts in the evenings, this will continue. This is the Schützenfest.