

## The Rifle Season.

(From the N. Y. World, April 23.)

The rifle season of 1875, which opened yesterday, promises to be an important one, and before its close next fall many important results will have been attained. There have been regimental practice days thus far, but no badges have been shot for, nor any of the fixed prizes competed for. During some of the shooting already done the show has driven so lively as to practically cut off the view of the targets. Under such conditions, it is hardly possible to carry on any outdoor work, particularly the fine, delicate work of rifle-shooting at the long ranges, where an error of one one-hundredth of an inch in elevation or windage would spoil one's chances of success.

During the two years that Creedmoor has been thrown open, and the association controlling the ground have been labouring to popularize rifle practice, and impress upon the public the necessity of more attention to the matter, the riflemen's support has been mainly drawn from the members of the National Guard, and a few marksmen in and about the city of New York. The interest, however, has been spreading. It was found that the National Guardsmen of other States besides New York were almost at the lowest ebb of inefficiency as marksmen, and that the rifles placed in their hands were valueless and in cases of emergency without target practice. Private gentlemen also took the subject up as a sport, and tests of skill and range were established here and there, from Maine to California. Probably not less than one hundred of these shooting butts are now in service. Representatives of these ranges appear at Creedmoor ready drilled and fit to do good work. The want of this reserve fund of riflemen has been a serious obstacle to the committee having the selection of the international teams. The choice has been from too limited a number of applicants. Creedmoor should be, as it is fitting to be, the Wimbledon of America; but there must also be scores of minor local ranges to do the work of training riflemen to give to Creedmoor its national character.

The past winter has not been an idle one, either to marksmen or gunmakers. The one class have been busy studying out the theory of correct shooting and doing a large amount of aiming drill.

The care and tireless endeavour at accuracy new taken in turning out the long range breech loaders is remarkable. In the essential parts they are as carefully made as fine watch work.

## THE INTERNATIONAL MATCH.

The great event of the season of 1876, on either side of the Atlantic, is the Irish-American rifle match on June 29th next. The interest both here and in Great Britain is increasing, and people who were supposed to have no manner of care for rifle shooting are watching the chances and the reports eagerly. Mr. A. T. Stewart who has already given \$500 for the use of the team, has promised that in case the Americans win the amount will be doubled. Beside this great battle the other matches fall into comparative insignificance, though there are many very important ones. The match already decided upon between a company in the First Regiment N. G., State of California, and a crack rifle company in the Twelfth Regiment in this city will doubtless be the precursor of many inter-State military matches.

Among the military organizations of the First and Second Divisions using the Creedmoor range regularly many teams are in process of formation. Private rifle clubs are organizing, and prizes almost innumerable are offered, the Eighth Regiment possessing about a dozen of these incentives to effort in the field.

## THE "KANUCKS."

The Canadian challenge will give the American team a difficult task to accomplish. The "Kanucks" have a most relentless way of running up a string of bull's eyes, and are decidedly ugly antagonists to meet on a rifle range. The match, too, is with the Victoria Rifle Club, the most select in Canada, but the contest is to come off at Creedmoor, and that gives a slight advantage to the American side.

The badges which have been shot for during past seasons, and which are still open for competition, are the *Turf Field and Farm* badge, a short range trophy, to be won three times. Messrs. O'Kelly, Wingate, Madison and Collins having each been twice successful in securing it, a spirited struggle will take place to determine who shall be the permanent possessor.

The Scottish American and Irish American rifle clubs embrace numbers of both nationalities. The Shamrock and the Histle are each well championed, and some lively bouts are looked for. The Scotch Club have already a little match to settle with a Scotch club at Boston.

Of matches yet to be announced, there promises to be an abundant supply. During the summer there will probably be from one half to three quarters of a million shots fired on the Creedmoor lawn, and the embarkment, already estimated as a profitable lead mine, will become a veritable big bonanza from the quantity of misdirected bullets sent into its side.

## SELECTION OF THE AMERICAN TEAM.

The first public rifle match of the season came off at Creedmoor yesterday. There was no formality, but the first of the series of competitions to determine who shall constitute the team and represent this country at the match in Ireland was of sufficient importance to bring down a large number of spectators and others interested in rifle shooting. The day was such a one as would test the best skill of the most expert riflemen, and such as is supposed to prevail more or less on the Ballymount range, near Dublin, where the international match of 1875 is to be contested. The wind rose and fell continually, now blowing the smoke, after a discharge, back to the rifleman's face, and at the next shot perhaps sending it down the range towards the targets. Cross winds came, and the several streamers and flags on the range flag poles at times blew about with a most perplexing variation. When between two shots it was found necessary by some of the shooters to shift the wind gauge eight points, corresponding to a lateral movement at the target of thirteen feet, some idea may be formed of the character of the breeze under which the riflemen worked. The sun shone brightly, especially before lunch, when the 800 yards rounds was shot. Towards the close the darkness preceding the storm came on suddenly and hurried matters causing some misses which more leisurely work would have saved.

The result of the day's work, while far from being a satisfactory exhibit in the aggregation of the scores, is valuable in its plain presentment of where the weak point of the American riflemen lay.

## Wimbledon Meeting, 1875.

The Council of the National Rifle Association has just issued the regulations for the ensuing meeting at Wimbledon, which will commence a week later than has been the case hitherto. The council is so well satisfied with the experiment of last year in substituting canvas for iron targets, that no change will be made in that respect. There will be six distances for individual shooting—200, 500, 600, 800, 900, 1,000 yards. The size of the targets will be. At 200 yards, a circle of 40 in. diameter; at 500 and 600 yards, a circle of 70 in. diameter on a square frame; at 800, 900 and 1,000 yards, 6 ft. by 12 ft.; and at 400 yards, for volley firing, 6 ft. by 12 ft. The value of hits, except in volley firing, will be—bull's eye, 5; centre 4; inner, 3; and outer, 2. In volley firing—bull's eye, 4; centre, 3; and outer, 2. Respecting the patron targets, the size will be—200 yards, 40 in. diameter; at 500 yards, 60 in.; at 600 yards, 70; and at 800 yards, 10 ft. by 6 ft. In the marking several alterations are made: "A red disc will be shown on every occasion that the target is struck, or whenever the marksmen find it necessary to examine it; but the showing of this disc will not necessarily imply, that the shot will be marked, or that a hit has been made. If a shot is not signalled and the officer in charge of the firing point be satisfied that the shot has struck the target, he will signal by telegraph to the non commissioned officer in the butt to examine the target. The result of such examination, as signalled by the non commissioned officer, shall be final. If, on a canvas target being raised the spotting disc should manifestly disagree with the value given by the marking disc on the "dummy," the register keeper shall stop the firing at that target, and shall report the circumstance to the officer in charge, who shall forthwith examine it with a glass, and shall be empowered to correct the register, such decision to be without appeal." In volley and rapid firing, the marking will be carried out as follows. "When the number of hits counted on the target exceeds the number of shots allowed in the competition, three marks shall be deducted for every such hit in excess of the number of shots, unless it be proved that such hits on the target, in excess of the number of shots allowed could only have been by competitors in the squad firing more than the authorized number of rounds, in which case that squad shall be disqualified." The rifles to be used are classed as follows: Class I.—Military breechloaders. (A) .577 bore; weight not to exceed, without bayonet, 9lb. 12oz.; length, maximum, 56 in., measured from the muzzle to the butt when placed on the ground; pull of trigger, minimum, 6lb.; sights, strictly in accordance with that of the Government Snider rifle. (B) Weight not to exceed, without bayonet, 9lb. 4oz.; length, from 8 in. to 55 in., measured from the muzzle to the butt when placed on the ground. Sights: Back sight to be attached to the barrel in front of the lock. No transverse adjustment except a hinged flip and a sliding bar, to be moved by hand only, without any mechanical appliance. The sliding bar to be with or without vertical lines or apertures, and the upper edge straight, or with a V of angle similar to those of the service arms. Foresight to be the same as that of the Government Martini Henry, Class II.—Maximum weight, 10lb.; sights of any description, except telescope, magnifying; and pull of trigger, minimum, 6lb.