

WOMAN SOLDIERS.

I notice on the billboards around the city an advertisement of "the first American woman soldier." I have been informed that one MOLLY FITCHER fought at the battle of Monmouth, N. J., in the Revolutionary War, taking the place of her husband, who was killed in that battle.—Letter in Yesterday's TIMES.

Captain MOLLY wasn't the only one. We must not forget NANCY HART of Georgia, gun in hand, driving her ten Tory prisoners into the American camp. But NANCY, prodigious fighter as she was, was not technically a soldier, whereas Captain MOLLY was made a Sergeant on the Monmouth battlefield and subsequently put on the list of half-pay officers for life by act of Congress. She had the right to wear the uniform, and compromised by wearing an artilleryman's coat over her dress and a cocked hat on her red hair. But DEBORAH SAMPSON of Massachusetts was the real woman soldier of the Revolution; she enlisted in the Continental Army, her sex being unsuspected, fought in battle after battle, was wounded, was commended for bravery, and headed mili-

tary expeditions. She was 21 when she enlisted. Despite her wounds, she managed to escape detection until a serious illness and detention in the hospital revealed her secret, and her comrades were astonished to learn that "Private Robert Shurtleff" was Miss DEBORAH SAMPSON of Uxbridge. General KNOX gave her an honorable discharge; the Massachusetts Legislature voted her an honorarium, Congress put her on the pension roll, and after her death voted a sum of money to her heirs, declaring that "the whole history of the American Revolution records no case like this, and furnished no other similar example of female heroism, fidelity, and courage."

The War of Secession, however, was full of such cases, one of the best known being that of FRANCES HOOK of Illinois, who at the age of 22 enlisted under the name of Frank Miller. Her brother enlisted with her, keeping her secret, and was killed by her side at Shiloh. FRANCES was taken prisoner in the Chattanooga campaign, when the Confederates discovered her sex. They exchanged her for a man. There were many others, FANNY WILSON of New Jersey, MARY OWENS of Pennsylvania (who went with her husband, saw him killed, was wounded in the same fight, and took part in three battles), and Major BELLE REYNOLDS of Illinois, who got her commission for bravery, but she made no effort to conceal her sex. Most famous of all was Major PAULINE CUSHMAN, the Union scout and spy. On the Confederate side the best known was Captain BELLE BOYD, who got her commission at the hands of STONEWALL JACKSON after an exploit which saved his army from destruction. Next in celebrity on the Southern side was Mme. L. J. DE VELAZQUEZ, who disguised herself as a man, entered the army under the name of Harry Buford, and became a Lieutenant through her bravery in action. After it was learned that she was a woman the Confederate Government employed her in secret service work.

Perhaps the advertisement meant "the first American woman soldier in this war." Even then it is open to doubt. One imitator of DEBORAH SAMPSON and FRANCES HOOK got nearly to France before she was discovered, and there may be others. How many enlisted in the War of Secession will never be known, for usually the fact was never revealed until the woman happened to be wounded. In THE NEW YORK TIMES of July 13, 1863, among the local items is the account of the arrest of a woman named MARY SEIZGLE for wearing a soldier's uniform. It turned out that she had a right to wear it, having just returned from the battle of Gettysburg, in which she had taken part with the 41st New York Volunteers. In THE NEW YORK TIMES of May 22, 1863, is a letter from a soldier telling of the surprise of his comrades of the 1st Kansas when they found that a Sergeant, who had just died, and "by the side of whom they had marched and fought for almost two years," was a woman. She had fought, he said, in a dozen battles and skirmishes. "She was as brave as a lion in battle, and never flinched from any duty or hardship that fell to her lot." No one, of course, ever learned her real name. Death revealed her. Who knows how many others went unrevealed?