ON THE RIVER AT HENLEY.

Mrs. Skimpley's houseboat was always one of the prettiest at Henley, as the party gathered on it was generally one of the merriest.

It is true that some of the society people who attended Mrs. Skimpley's entertainments were more amused than impressed by her pretensions to gentility, and sniggered when she spoke of "my lady's maid," but that was only their disagreeable way.

As soon as he had received the legacy left him by his uncle, "Nugget" Skimpley, of the Australian gold fields, Mr. Skimpley had sent his only son to Oxford to add to the family ton, and through him had picked up a lot of showy acquaintances.

Several of these were to be of the Henley party, for Mrs. Skimpley delighted in 'varsity men. They were so "chick" she said.

And it was to Abercrombie—familiarly known as "Crumbs"—of Magdalen that the particular adventure befell which it is my present purpose to relate, though, as the sequel will show, Miss Vernon was not wholly uninterested in the episode.

When young Frederick Skimpley had been written to at college and told that he might bring a couple of friends to the houseboat party, he at once invited Abercrombie and Wedgewood. He wrote and said so, mentioning that Abercrombie was the glorious possessor of three blues, while Wedgewood had won the Newgate.

But Tuesday morning brought a letter from her son, saying that of his two friends only Crumbs could come, and that he himself could not get away until Thursday.

Mr. Skimpley was decidedly chagrined at the news, for Frederick would have at least been able to talk about his noble friends at the 'varsity, while doubtless the other absentee would have been able to contribute somewhat to the general enjoyment in the same way. Still, there was Crunbs—

"And whichever is Crumbs?" ejaculated Mrs. Skimpley to her spouse over the breakfast table. "I do wish Fred would not use those vulgar slang terms."

"It isn't slang," explained her husband. "Down at Oxford they all call each other by short names of that sort. You're been there, and ought to remember these things."

"I thought it was the correct thing to say up at Oxford," retorted Mrs. Skimpley. "It's much worse to forget that than the other."

"Quite right, Marie," replied Mr. Skimpley, "you had me there, dear. I must remember that confounded thing, for it so riles Fred when I forget it. Though why 'up' I'm hanged if I know."

"It doesn't matter why, so long as it's the correct thing," said Mrs. Skimpley, sagely; "but if it is Abercrombie, is he the blues man or the poet?"

"Look up Fred's letter, that'll explain it," advised her husband, lighting his pipe and going out to look at the weather.

Mrs. Skimpley looked everywhere for her son's letter, but it was not to be found. So she was still in doubt whether Mr. Abercrombie was the poet or the athlete when her guests began to arrive.

None of them needs any special mention, except Miss Vernon, who was a tall, well-set-up girl, with hair of goldeny brown, a clear complexion and good teeth. She was Mrs. Skimpley's niece, and could now very properly be regarded as a poor relation.

They were all sitting chatting under the awning over the roof of the house-boat when a [illegible] very immaculate boating costume. Something told them that this was Mr. Abercrombie, and so it proved to be.

As he stepped aboard Mrs. Skimpley noted particularly that his trousers were baggy, that his shirt was of white silk and that in the button-hole of his college blazer was a beautiful blush rose.

However, the elegance of Mr. Abercrombie's get up, coupled with the fact that his face was extremely pale, was quite sufficient to convince her that it was the poet and not the athlete that stood before them.

"I am so delighted that you have come Mr. Abercrombie," she said, "but we are so disappointed that neither Mr. Wedgewood nor Frederick can come with you. Let me introduce you"—and the introductions were made, Mr. Abercrombie bowing to everybody with a grace which Mrs. Skimpley afterward declared was poetry itself.

"Have you ever been to Henley before?" asked the hostess.

"Yes, many times," replied Abercrombie, a slight look of surprise passing over his face.

"I suppose you find the river inspires some of your poems?" continued the lady; "how I envy your power to write lovely verses. You must compose something for my album before you go."

"I'm really afraid," he began, "that you do me too much honor. I couldn't"—

"Now, you mustn't say that," broke in Mrs. Skimpley, archly; "a little bird has told me all about your Newgate poem, so, you see, you are found out."

Abercrombie laughed. A light had suddenly burst upon his mind. He was being mistaken for the absent Wedgewood. "Well," he thought, "I'll try to play the part; it will be more amusing than figuring as a mere muscular animal."

And so he forthwith accepted the poetical crown wrongfully placed upon his brow, and proceeded to talk sentiment with admirable gravity.

He had quite a discussion with Miss Vernon on the subject of the superiority of mind over muscle, and lamented that so many young men should think more of winning a race than composing a sonnet.

And Miss Vernon, who thought that if Mr. Abercrombie were not quite so poetically languorous he would not at all be a bad specimen of young manhood, was moved to open wrath by his lackadaisical sentiments.

The Skimpley party dined and wined, and then Abercrombie, weary of poetical impostnre and his hostess's gushing admiration therefor, slipped quietly away for a walk and a pipe along the bank.

His thoughts were not altogether happy, although they were mainly occupied with Miss Vernon. "What a fool I am making of myself!" he reflected. "Here's a delightful girl whom I should like to please and yet I am deliberately figuring before her in a character she despises, which is exactly the opposite of my own. What perverse devil tempted me into this senseless deception?"

Abercrombie's meditations had just reached this disagreeable point when they were interrupted by a startling incident. He heard a splash, and then a loud scream rang out on the air, followed by agonized cries of help.

In an instant the dreamer became a man of action. He ran forward and found a woman standing on the water's edge, wringing her hands in terrified grief. She incoherently cried out that her child had fallen into the river, and that her husband in trying to rescue it had also sunk.

Abercrombie flung off his jacket and shoes and dived in. He found the pair at the bottom and seized the child to rescue first. But her clothes were tightly gripped in the drowning father's hands.

Abercrombie tried to drag her away, but the grasp would not relax. The desire for breath was upon him; he seized the girl with both hands, put a foot on the father's chest, and tore her from his clutch; and the next moment he drew a blessed inspiration on the surface.

A dozen willing hands—for the scream had attracted others to the scene—helped him with the child to the bank, then he dived again and easily recovered the body of the father.

He swiftly set to work to restore consciousness to the latter, noting that the child was already in skilled hands. His efforts were presently successful, and the man began to show signs of returning animation.

When he reached the houseboat he found the party still chatting and laughing amid the soft light of Chinese lanterns.

He hoped that the condition of his clothes would pass unnoticed, and that he would be able to change without attracting attention, but it was not to be. The sharp eyes of Mrs. Skimpley noted his dripping vestments, and her vivacious tongue immediately made the fact public.

"Why, Mr. Abercrombie is soaking wet," she cried, "have you been trying to get water lilies for Miss Vernon? I heard her say that she wanted some."

"At any rate, my search has been vain," replied Abercrombie, coldly, for he was annoyed at being found out, and vexed at the allusion to Miss Vernon.

Abercrombie vouchsafed no explanation of the cause of his wetting, and even the lively hostess had sufficient tact not again to refer to the mishap when he returned to the company in dry attire.

It is curious how these things get about, but next morning nearly all Henley had heard of the gallant rescue of the night before. The local purveyor of eggs told the Skimpley's man, and he told his master, and much speculation was indulged in as to the identity of the heroic unknown, whose modesty seemed on a par with his courage.

After breakfast a stroll along the banks was proposed, and Abercrombie took good care to secure Miss Vernon for a companion. They chatted idly about the regatta for a while, and then Miss Vernon referred to the rescue.

"What a noble thing to do," she said. "How I should like to meet the man that did it!" (Abercrombie felt a thrill at the words.) "It would have been a brave deed in daylight, but at night, when the river looks so terribly dark and deep and mysterious, it was a splendid act indeed. Don't you think so, Mr. Abercrombie?"

"I think the gentleman probably caught a bad cold," responded Abercrombie, "and after all, it's only a question of being able to swim, and there's not much in that."

"Swim, indeed," retorted Miss Vernon, "and do you suppose that every person that could swim would have done what that man did?"

"Quite a subject for a poem," ejaculated Abercrombie sententiously, but looking with admiration at the flushed cheeks and glistening eyes of his fair companion.

"Well, Mr. Abercrombie," she said, "you may not mean all you say, and I hope you are not so—so puerile as you choose to appear. I don't suppose that my opinion is anything to you, and, of course, poetry is all well in its way. But if it were a—a brother of mine I would rather that he did one such deed as that of last night than write fifty prize poems!"

The color had faded from her cheeks and her eyes flashed as she spoke. As Abercrombie looked into their depths, his own ordinary impassible face showed signs of emotion. He uttered a happy little laugh and straightened himself up with an unconscious gesture.

They had walked on and on while the others had turned back, and were now quite near the scene of the previous night's episode. As they approached it they saw a group on the bank eagerly talking.

Among the colloquists were a man and a woman, holding a little girl between them. Abercrombie recognized them in a moment. The child looked pale enough, but the man appeared none the worse for his narrow escape. As Abercrombie and his companion slowly passed the woman looked earnestly in his face and then ran forward and seized his arm.

"You're the gentleman who saved my [illegible] broke hysterically.

The man stepped forward and took off his cap and the others gathered around.

"Was it you, sir?" he said, seizing Abercrombie's disengaged hand, and looking him earnestly in the face. "Yes, I am sure it was. Oh, sir, take a father's blessing—she's our only one, sir, and it'd a broke our hearts to lose her."

Abercrombie stood the picture of embarrassment. Had he really been a poet he would doubtless have been charmed with the situation, but being a mere athlete it was rather too much for him.

"Don't say another word," he managed to remark. "I'm as happy as you are to have been able to help you. After all"—and he smiled at the recollection the words called up—"it's only a matter of being able to swim. And how are you, my dear, after your ducking?" and he bent down to kiss the child's pale forehead.

They reluctantly let him go with a fervent "God bless you, sir," and as he and his companion began to retrace their steps an excited member of the family group called for a cheer for him, and its echoes followed the pair as they walked away.

As for Miss Vernon, she was in a pitiable state. She had seen and heard all, and her mind was filled with nothing but the thought of the ghastly, egregious mistake she had made.

"Mr. Abercrombie," she said in a choking voice, "you have treated me shamefully, and I'll never forgive you."

"Do not say that," he rejoined with an earnestness that seemed to make it right and proper for him to take her hand. "I assure you it's not my fault. It is just an absurd misunderstanding from beginning to end. Mrs. Skimpley mixed up Wedgewood and me, and I was silly enough to humor her mistake."

"But you have deceived me," said Miss Vernon.

"If you will forgive me, I swear to you that I will never do it again," pleaded Abercrombie, still prisoning the hand that sought to be free.

More than a year has flown since this little episode occurred, but if you chanced to be at Henley last July and happened to pass Mrs. Skimpley's houseboat, a tasteful thing in green and gold, with a striped awning and a profusion of flowers, you may have noticed on it a tall and sweet-looking girl with a delicate complexion and golden brown hair.

If she was ungloved you will have noticed on the third finger of her left hand a diamond ring, and in all probability you also saw near at hand the donor thereof—a pale fellow in most immaculate flannels.

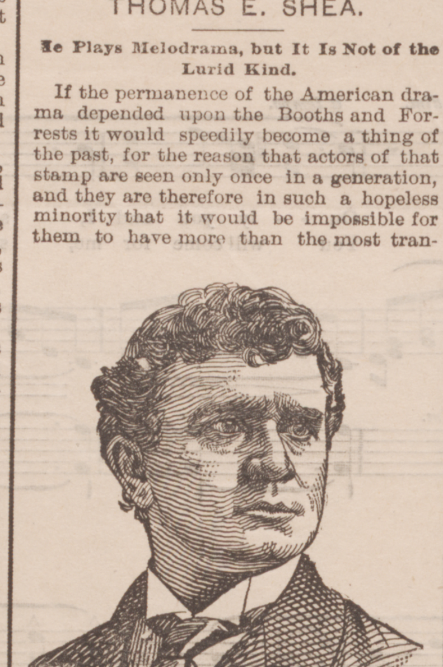
A CANADIAN CARIBOU HUNT.

[C. Grant La Farge in the August Atlantic.]

As we reached the open and turned northward along the western shore, Pierre Joseph and I, who were somewhat ahead of the others, saw what brought us to a halt,—fresh tracks. They led across our path straight for the nearest island. The caribou were not long gone, and we instinctively lowered our voices to whisper as we discussed the probability of their being behind the island. But no; as I looked ahead again I saw another line across the snow. We advanced; these tracks led back from the island to the shore, and were so fresh that at the bottom of each deep hoof-print the water which overlay the ice under the heavy snow was not yet frozen,—a significant fact with the temperature still well below the zero point. There was no whispering now; we raised our eyes to the shore, which was in shade and fringed with a dense growth of cedars. Too bad—they had gone up into the woods; it was past midday and too late to follow them far; if we had only got here a little sooner! But hold on! What's that? In the gloom of the dark cedars I saw a dim gray shape, motionless; then another. And now I realized that I had done a foolish thing, one that some years of experience should have taught me to avoid; I had left the cover on my rifle. Slowly and cautiously I drew it off, not daring to make a sudden movement, but breathless with the fear that the game might start, for one jump into the bush and the only chance was gone. My heart was beating so that I wondered if the caribou would not hear it, when just as I got the rifle free they started,—not two of them, but three, and not into the woods, but straight across us out over the lake, about a hundred yards away. They were running, and with a swiftness that demanded quick shooting, and that was surprising in snow which, though less deep here than in the timber, still was such that a man would be practically helpless in it without snow-shoes. They sank so deep that as they ploughed ahead the movement of their legs could hardly be seen, but was more than suggested by the flying lumps and clouds of snow that rose about them. Their thick-set bodies loomed large and dark against the dazzling surface beyond them, and contrasted sharply with their long hoary manes. I sighted on the leader and fired, and as I saw him stagger perceptibly I heard another shot. George had come up and was beside me, opening fire on the second. I kept on at the first one, shooting as long as he moved, until at the third shot he pitched forward and lay in the snow. Then as I turned my head I saw George's beast sinking, and we both fired almost together at the third, now a good long shot, but after another volley down he went, too. Luck, pure and simple after all; but then we had expended considerable skill during the past week with little to show for it, and this we considered our fairly earned reward. Then we made the tour of our quarry,—three bulls. No *coup de grace* was needed; they were stone dead. They lay upon their sides, with heads outstretched, and the tumbled snow covering up their heavy, powerful legs and big round black hoofs which carry them abroad when all other deer are fast bound by impassable barriers of snow. Their sleek sides glistened in the sunshine and we saw the color of their bodies; a hue the exactest balance between brown and gray; an absolute neutral, which, with their white heads and long-haired gray throats, makes them seem of the very essence of the northern forest and the winter time.

THOMAS E. SHEA.

He Plays Melodrama, but It Is Not of the Lurid Kind.



THOMAS E. SHEA.

If the permanence of the American drama depended upon the Booths and Forrests it would speedily become a thing of the past, for the reason that actors of that stamp are seen only once in a generation, and they are therefore in such a hopeless minority that it would be impossible for them to have more than the most transient sort of effect upon the trend of the drama as a whole. The hope of our stage lies with those men who, shunning the foreign plays of unhealthy moral teachings, devote themselves to the presentation of good melodrama, devoid of the luridness which so many persons today seem to regard as indispensable to success. In such plays the moral tone is invariably good, virtue is always triumphant and vice is as regularly punished as it deserves to be.

One of the best of the type of actors who are doing much for our native playwrights by inculcating a taste for virile and clean stage representations is Thomas E. Shea. Mr. Shea is not a novice by any means. He has been swinging around the circuit for a good many years with constantly increasing success. He has managed a theater in a small town and is perfectly familiar with the wants of those to whom he caters now as a star.

In a modest, unpretentious way he has acquired considerable wealth and not a little reputation. For six seasons he has been starring in repertory in territory including New England and many of the western and middle states. In every city where he has appeared season after season he has made many friends.

Up to this season Mr. Shea has been his own manager, but now he is under the direction of George H. Brennan, the editor [illegible] son is the "Man-o'-War's Man," an exciting drama from the pen of James W. Harkins, Jr., who wrote "Northern Lights," "The White Squadron," etc.

The "Man-o'-War's Man" is founded on the Monroe doctrine. One of the principal features of the piece is a realistic battle between two warships, the New Orleans of the United States and the Scorpion of England. The ships are in full view of the audience. There are booming of cannon and all the marks of a hot engagement until finally the Scorpion sinks beneath the waves.

It is said to be Mr. Shea's ambition to present several high grade melodramas by American authors each season.

The Credulous Stage Heroine.

R. A. Barnet has been studying the stage heroine and writes most interestingly about that erratic young person.

"If there is one thing more than another in this world of fickleness that illustrates hope undying and steadfastness of purpose," rhapsodizes Mr. Barnet, "it is the stage heroine. The hero may have been said to have committed some enormous crime and the whole world be turned against him, yet the heroine's little heart tells her he is guiltless. And then when he goes away, to be gone 20 or 30 years, and 50 people tell her that they saw him at the head of his troops fall fighting against fearful odds and 50 more people tell her that two months after he was mortally wounded they saw him flung by the villain down a fearful precipice and then ground to atoms by a train running at 304 miles an hour, yet she believes him alive and that he will return to her. It is a beautiful conception of the fin de siecle playwright that such a woman is not allowed to drag out her lonely existence unrewarded and that the hero cometh back in the last act unharmed and the only rightful heir to properties innumerable. And it usually happens that the day that marks the execution of the villain is celebrated by the marriage of the unkillable hero and the ever trusting heroine."

Audiences' Lack of Sympathy.

"Did you ever notice what a lack of sympathy there is between the audience and the actor?" asked Thomas W. Keene recently of a party of well known managers he was entertaining at his pretty home on Staten Island. "There may be sympathy with the situation in a play that the actor is representing, but not with the actor himself. Let an actor slip in his lines or stumble on making an entrance, do you think the audience will show any consideration for his plight? Not a bit of it. It will laugh at him, hiss him or hint that he is drunk. That is the invariable remark when things go wrong with an actor. He is drunk. Other men have illnesses, they have accidents, they have trials and crosses, but an actor has only one difficulty in the minds of your sympathetic audience—he is drunk. I am tempted to smile when I hear people talk of the rapport between the actor and his public. The public pays its money to be entertained, and it is bound to get it if it takes a life. Long observation of this peculiar phase of human nature leads me to believe that the general public is absolutely without feeling or mercy where an actor is concerned."

A Good Story of Ollivier.

J. E. Dodson loves to tell the following story about Ollivier, a famous French actor: The latter, it seems, possessed incredible powers of mimicry. He could assume the voice, gestures and facial expression of any person he chanced to meet. One day he called on his tailor to ask him for a little more time on an account that had been running on for three years. At that moment he saw a customer enter the shop and pay for several articles of clothing which were immediately delivered. Then the actor heaved a deep sigh of pain.

"What is the matter with you?" inquired the tailor.

"Alas," replied Ollivier, "there is a man I shall never be able to imitate!"

"Did you get rested?" Fogg asked of Fenderson on the latter's return from Europe.

"Yes, I did," answered the traveller. "Got into Liverpool Friday morning, reached London in the afternoon; went to Paris next morning, left for Switzerland the day after that; stopped there for two hours; then started for Berlin and did it up in a forenoon; back to England next day and caught the steamer just in time. Rested? By Jove, I feel like a new man."—*Boston Transcript.*

Mr. Fussy—I don't see why you wear those ridiculous big sleeves when you have nothing to fill them.

Mrs. Fussy—Do you fill your silk hat?—*Up to-Date.*

CAYLOR'S BALL GOSSIP

The Pitched Ball Penalty and the Forearm Exception.

REMINISCENCES OF CURT WELCH.

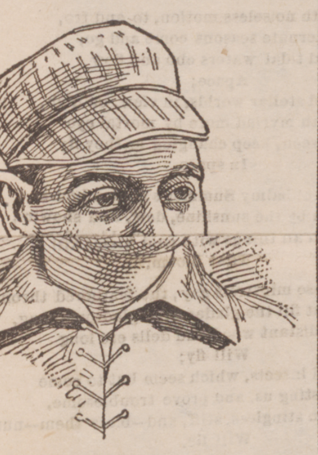
Other Men Who Made Use of Superscientific Methods—The "Trapped Ball" Trick—Baltimores May Make a Championship Record—Slump of the "Reds."

There died recently at East Liverpool, O., an ex-baseball player whose name was almost forgotten, although less than ten years ago he was a public idol. It serves to illustrate the skyrocket character of a ball player's popularity. But the death of this star player of the eighties recalls the fact that he was one of three men of his profession who was the cause of special baseball legislation which is today part and parcel of the playing code of the national game.

There is a rule which gives a batsman a base when he is hit by a pitched ball. If the ball touches any part of his clothing or uniform, he is entitled to the base just the same as when it hits him with full force. But there is one exception, and it is that exception for which the dead player, Curtis Welch, was responsible. If the batsman be hit on the forearm or hand, the rule does not apply. Hundreds of spectators have marveled over the apparent injustice of this exception. In the same game they have seen a batsman trot to a base because a pitched ball grazed his shirt without even making its force felt and have seen another player's hand, wrist or forearm badly bruised without the penalty attaching therefor. Anybody who has knowledge of the nerve distribution in the human body need not be told that a bruise on the hand or wrist is more painful and will cripple a man quicker and for a greater length of time than a similar bruise on the upper arm or other parts of the body. James Stafford, left fielder of the New York team, has just resumed his place on the nine after an enforced absence of two months caused by one of the small bones in his right forearm being fractured in two places by a pitched ball. Yet for that blow he didn't get a base because of the strange exception to the rule which exempts the forearm from the penalty. For that exception Curtis Welch was responsible.

When the rule was first adopted which gave a batsman a base on balls for being hit with a pitched ball its intent was to check a dangerous habit which some pitchers had of intimidating batsmen by purposely trying to hit them or by seeing how nearly to it they could come. Mullane was a chief offender in that method, and he soon had imitators. Hence the rule was made to penalize the practice and protect batsmen, and when the first rule was drawn up and adopted there was no exception of any part of the batsman's body. But Curtis Welch, then one of the brightest stars of Comiskey's famous four times winners, the St. Louis Browns, invented a system of "beating the rule." He would stand, leaning well over the plate, as if ready to bunt the ball and then, as if trying to get his arms out of the way of the ball, would let it graze his wrist or the sleeve of his shirt. He had this practice "down so fine" that his calculations seldom missed it by the smallest fraction of an inch and nothing more serious than a slight external bruise, and seldom that, even came from his practice. But many a close game was won for the Browns by the trick. Then the lawmakers of the American associaion got together and by this bit of special legislation put a quietus on the Welch "wrist trick." The National league adopted the amendment for the sake of uniformity and there it stood, even after Welch, the only player who ever used the practice, retired from the profession, and there it stands today.

That was one of three special rules aimed at what one might call superscientific playing. One of the other two is the rule which makes an attempt to bunt a strike when the ball goes foul. Before this rule was adopted several players could always get a base on balls by simply fouling off every good ball which were put across the plate till four wide ones were sure to come. Here also Comiskey's famous Brown Stockings were again the offenders in beating the rule. Latham invented the trick and Comiskey was a close imitator.



CURTIS WELCH.

I remember seeing Latham foul 13 balls which Will White put over the plate for him while he took one "turn at bat" in a game at Cincinnati. It was a grand struggle between a pitcher with good control and a player with a wonderfully good eye. Latham won out, for after the thirteenth foul a ball was pitched which went wide, and it gave him the hard earned base. The following winter the foul bunt strike rule was adopted, and the Latham practice was killed.

Only a few years ago the National league adopted a new rule, which provides that whenever a runner is on first base, with not more than one out, any fly ball batted to the infield shall put the batsman out whether it be caught or not caught. This was the death warrant of the trapped ball play invented and so successfully made by McPhee, second baseman of the Cincinnatis. Several other infielders initiated him, but none ever succeeded in making it so sure as did McPhee. It gave him such an advantage that the magnates of the other clubs enacted this special bit of personal legislation to destroy his superscientific trick.

The McPhee trap ball trick was so perfect that he had base runners "cinched" no matter what they would do. If there were runners on second and first and not more than one out, a fly ball to McPhee meant a double play, and nothing could prevent it. If the players left their bases to run—depending on McPhee trapping it—a fellow fielder would give the second baseman a tip just before the ball reached his hands, and he would catch it, forcing one of the runners out before he could get back to the base he had left. Should they hug their bases, he would let the ball fall at his feet, smother it with his hands and force both runners out before they could reach the bases ahead of them. Thus, like the darky's coon, he "kotched 'em a-goin an a-comin."

Barring almost impossible accidents the Baltimores will win the championship of the National league this year for the third successive time. No club has ever won the pennant four years in succession since the National league was formed. The Chicagos won it in 1880, 1881 and 1882 and the Bostons in 1891, 1892 and 1893. Prior to the formation of the National league the Bostons were winners four years straight—namely, in 1872, 1873, 1874 and 1875, while the club was a member of the National association. It, therefore, will be a matter of much interest next year to see whether the Baltimores can beat the National league record and win the fourth pennant "hand runnng."

The great "slump" of the Cincinnati team on its eastern trip has been one of the baseball freaks of the year. After an entirely unexpected and most wonderfully successful season the team began its last eastern engagement at Boston on Aug. 17 by winning the game. Then followed a chain of 11 consecutive defeats, two in Boston and three each in Washington, Baltimore and Philadelphia. No club in the League, excepting St. Louis, which scored 75 straight losses, made such a disastrous showing during the season. The result is to spread belief in the general assertion of experts early in the season that Ewing's men were going beyond their "form." Whether they end second or third in the race, the result of these final eastern games will leave an impression that they will not be a dangerous factor in next year's race.

O. P. CAYLOR.

For many centuries the Chinese have dated all their public acts, documents and chronology from the accessions of the emperors.

There is an alchemy of quiet malice by which women can concoct a subtle poison from ordinary trifles.—Hawthorne.

Artifice is weak. It is the work of mere man, in the imbecility and self distrust of his mimic understanding.—Hare.

A SMILING FACE.

'Tis nice to wear a smiling face
And laugh our troubles down,
For all our little trials wait
Our laughter or our frown.
Beneath the magic of a smile
Our doubts will fade away
As melts the snow in early spring
Beneath the sunny ray.

'Tis nice to make a worthy cause
By helping it our own;
To give the current of our lives
A true and noble tone.
'Tis nice to comfort heavy hearts
Oppressed with dull despair
And leave in sorrow darkened lives
A gleam of brightness there.

'Tis nice to give a helping hand
To eager, earnest youth;
To watch, with all their waywardness,
Their courage and their truth;
To strive, with sympathy and love,
Their confidence to win.
'Tis nice to open wide the heart
And "let the sunshine in."

—London Tit-Bits.

HE WAS SURE.

Why the Englishman Knew It Was Not a Joke.

The Englishman made a very agreeable travelling companion, even if he did ask some extraordinary questions about this country and its people. While he was pondering over some newly gained information, says the Chicago *Times-Herald*, his companion bought a magazine from a train boy and began to read. It was a humorous story that caught his attention, and his appreciative laugh attracted the Englishman's notice.

"Something humorous?" he inquired.

"Yes; one of the best things I've seen in a long time. Here, read it. It won't take you long, and it'll make you laugh, I'm sure."

Not a smile rippled over his features as he perused the article. On the contrary, his eyebrows knitted themselves and he shook his head.

"Are you sure you pointed out the right story?" he asked.

"Why, certainly; that's the one." And he placed his finger on the page.

"Well, there's some sort of a mistake. There isn't any joke in that."

"Why, it struck me as extremely humorous."

"Well, it isn't. I've read it clear through twice, so as to be sure. There isn't a single word in it printed in italics."

CYCLERS AND CYCLING.

Preparing For a Big Cycle Show In 1897.

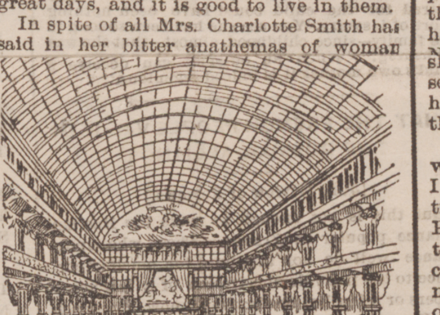
THE VALUE OF LONG RIDES.

Why Some Wheelwomen Appear Awkward. Flaws In the Racing System—Popularity of Road Racing—Odds and Ends of Gossip.

The announcement by the National Cycle board of trade that the opening of applications for space in the annual cycle exhibition will take place Sept. 19 has stirred up the interest of manufacturers and of the cycling world generally. The exhibition will be held at the Grand Central Palace of Industry, Forty-third street and Lexington avenue, New York city, during the week commencing Feb. 6, 1897. Although this date is somewhat distant, it must be remembered that a good deal of time will be required for the preparation of the displays that are projected.

The bracing fall weather has increased the popularity of the long cycling tour. Men and women who reside in cities derive the greatest benefit from these journeys awheel. Business men on their vacations with their wives, and often their families, thus easily and swiftly transport themselves from place to place, all the time gaining new strength, their lungs buoyed with exhilarating air, their eyes entranced by the beauties of ever opening vistas. Small parties of excursionists, too, are often seen jaunting along merrily a hundred or two miles from home, happy and healthy and full of vigor. Ah, these are great days, and it is good to live in them.

In spite of all Mrs. Charlotte Smith has said in her bitter anathemas of woman to see than a graceful wheelwoman on her wheel. But a great many wheelwomen look awkward on their mounts simply because they do not sit well. Faulty position is an absolute bar to symmetry of motion. A great deal has been said and published on this subject, but the advice has not always been heeded. One cannot stand on the curb of a street popular with cyclists more than a moment without observing much feminine ungainliness. The chief mistake is too low a saddle, the next too high a handle bar, and a combination of both is frequent. Either causes premature tiredness and lack of proper control of the machine.



MAIN HALL, GRAND CENTRAL PALACE.

There is a good deal of talk just now about the imperfections of the present racing system. A cycling authority said recently that he considered the racing board entirely blameless in connection with recent racing irregularities that have caused complaint. "The board has more than it can attend to," said he. "The necessity for shifting the bulk of the work to state boards has been apparent for some time, and something of the sort is sure to evolve from the next national assembly."

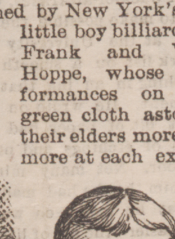
Although there has been raised a great hue and cry against road racing on the public highways, it is not probable that the racing enthusiasts will give up the practice without a struggle, for there is a fascination about it which few can resist. A well known wheelman who has been identified with the management of both track and road races says: "Some things are to be said against it. It is dangerous; it breeds that infernal nuisance, the everyday scorcher; it perverts the use of the highways and so on. But, nevertheless, road racing, seen in its true light, is a glorious sport, beside which all track racing can only appear pitifully small and circumscribed."

FRANK AND WILLY HOPPE.

Midgets Who Cause Pool and Billiard Experts to Marvel.

One of the latest sensations in the line of sports is furnished by New York's two little boy billiardists, Frank and Willy Hoppe, whose performances on the green cloth astonish their elders more and more at each exhibition of their prowess. Frank is 10 years old and Willy is 8, and yet these children play like veterans, not only at billiards, but at pool as well. To show how good they are at billiards, it is only necessary to say that Willy has during his brief career run more than 200 points in a single inning. His elder brother can do as well, if not better, than this, but Frank's long suit is at pool. Last winter this youngster defeated the amateur champion pool player of Greater New York in a 50 point game at the continuous game. These young brothers will soon begin a tour of the country, prepared to meet any one of their age.

FRANK HOPPE.



WILLY HOPPE.

Proper Pedaling.

If a cycler is ambitious to become a racer, he should apply himself diligently to the art of pedaling. Do not smile. There is no part of bicycle riding more important than this one thing. The art of pedaling is to push the pedal not more than half the circle, taking care to lift the foot immediately after it has done its effective work, so as not to burden the rising pedal. This necessitates the dropping of the heel at the top of the stroke, which helps the crank over the dead center, pushing right down to the bottom of the stroke and bringing the foot back with a clawing motion to get over the dead center at the bottom. A little practice in this line will quicken a cycler's pace wonderfully.

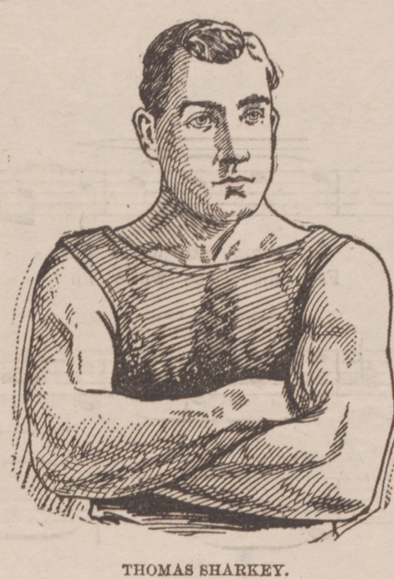
SHARKEY THE SAILOR.

Fitzsimmons Gets a Line on the Western Lad.

LIKES HIS STEELY BLUE EYE.

Is Pleased With Other Strong Points of the Tough Marine—However, Fighting Bob Feels That He Can Finish Him In Four Rounds—Corbett's Chances.

Well, I have seen the great Tom Sharkey, and I must confess I don't think he is a world beater. Mind you, I do not wish to detract one iota from his merits. He is entitled to all the credit due a brave man. And he is a brave fellow, more like that grand old lion of pugilism, John L. Sullivan, than any man I know of. He will fight and not issue ultimatums and manifestoes like many champions of my acquaintance. A man who has fought 11 battles in as many months, four of them in four months, with such men as Australian Billy Smith, Aleck Greggains, Joe Choynski and Jim Corbett, and not yielded to defeat is indeed worthy of the highest consideration.



THOMAS SHARKEY.

I had just returned from an European trip, and I found Sharkey the talk of the town. He must have magnetic power, for on the occasion of his metropolitan debut at Madison Square Garden on Aug. 31 pretty nearly all the great fighters of the world—the big fellows anyhow—were there to size him up. Among those I saw were Peter Maher, Paddy Slavin, Jim Hall, Steve O'Donnell, John Flood, the first great fighter that fought John L. Sullivan, and George Godfrey. Like myself, Maher and Slavin were there to take an accurate measurement of him with a view to future business.

I can readily see how he whipped so many good men and came within an ace of trouncing game Joe Choynski and clever Jim Corbett. He is a miniature Hercules, built solidly from the ground up, hard as granite and as resolute as a bulldog. He doesn't know what fear is and is game to his heart's core. The steely blue eye and mastifflike jaw plainly show that. While not a graceful boxer, he knows more about the game than the average observer would credit him with. His idea is to take a punch or two, so as to get close to his opponent and land one in return. As he is a really virtuous chap and has never drunk spirituous liquors or used tobacco in his life and has always done hard outdoor work, he is as rugged as a rock, and ordinary punishment affects him but little. He can hit a pretty strong pile driver himself, and if the man in front of him has ever dissipated much he is bound to suffer before long from Sharkey's punches. To be sure, he could not show himself to advantage with grand old John L. Sullivan the other night, as it was a friendly bout, and the young fellow was afraid of hurting the old lion, but I got a pretty good line on him at that.

I have studied Sharkey carefully, and I have come to the conclusion that a weak puncher, or clever jabber, as it is the polite thing to call that sort of pugilist, will have a m[illegible]ard task to whip Sharkey. [illegible] skilful jabber, like the late Jack Dempsey, who first wears his man out with left hand stops and only uses his right to settle him when he gets him groggy.

I will gamble all I am worth that I can whip Sharkey in four rounds, and I think I know two other men who can also do the trick. These are Peter Maher and Frank P. Slavin. I know more about the game than Sharkey. So do Maher and Slavin. I can hit hard. So can they. And, make no mistake about it, no matter how strong or game a man may be, if he is hit with a fearful jolt on the right spot he will go down and out sure. That spot is on the jaw near the chin. There is a nerve center there which connects with the brain, and, that center struck with terrific force, oblivion follows. The recipient won't wake up for some minutes after. Corbett cannot hit such a blow—at least a blow of sufficient strength for Sharkey's iron nerves. I can, I know. So can Maher and Slavin. Corbett's only way to whip Sharkey would be by wearing him out. Sharkey fights for all the world like "Kid" Lavigne. He burrows into his man, and it will take a powerful hitter as well as a skillful jabber to keep him away.

If Sharkey whips Corbett, I will gladly take him on for a finish fight, for I am convinced that he is a gladiator, heart and soul.

There would be no need of chasing across continents to arrange a battle with him.

Peter Maher, Frank P. Slavin and Jim Hall, too, are hungry for a battle with Sharkey if he has the good fortune to defeat Corbett. I think I am entitled to first call, however, as I have beaten Maher and Hall and virtually Slavin, inasmuch as Hall, the man I whipped, has defeated Slavin. But I am counting my chickens before they are hatched. The battle has not yet been fought, and really it is not an easy thing to decide who will win it. It will be consummate cleverness against oaklike strength, deep craft against unyielding courage. Sharkey, we all know, has tremendous endurance. Corbett once had. Has dissipation impaired his stamina beyond recovery? That is a question which sportsmen are seriously considering. The way Corbett is dodging Sharkey and his backer about setting a date and battleground makes me think he is trying to gain all the time he can. He will arrange that when he feels sure he is fit and well, and it is a dollar to a doughnut he will be fit and well when he enters the ring.

Will Corbett whip Sharkey? On form he should. As stated before, however, Corbett is not a hard hitter and depends on wearying his man out with left hand jabs and finishing him with good right hand knocks when he has him groggy. Sharkey, however, appears to be an exceptionally tough fellow—a sort of human rock, like John Morrissey of old—who actually likes punishment. Morrissey, it will be remembered, whipped the two cleverest big men of his time, Yankee Sullivan and John C. Heenan, by simply letting them break their hands and hearts on his rugged body and big, bony, lionlike head, and when they were tired out turned in and beat them—at least that was Heenan's case. Sullivan, I believe, lost on a foul, but he would have succumbed in a few rounds more in any event, as his hands as well as his strength were gone in hammering Morrissey.

We may have a repetition of Heenan and Sullivan's (Yankee) example in Corbett's case. Sharkey is fully as strong as Morrissey, is equally impervious to punishment and just as game, resolute and fierce as the famous Trojan. He rushes, too, just like Morrissey and will not be denied. Can Corbett keep away from him? Yes, for a dozen or more rounds without trouble. But let the battle go on for 20 rounds or more and Corbett's hands puff up, break, give way or he becomes weak, the "yellow streak" Joe Choynski and the sportsmen claim is in him will surely show, the more so especially if Corbett finds out he is not hurting or weakening the sailor to any appreciable extent, and Sharkey will prove the winner. The issue of the event depends simply upon how much punishment Sharkey can stand and how long Corbett's courage will hold out. If the sailor is another Morrissey, he will win. If he is only an ordinary human abutment and not a rock, he will lose, as the toughest kind of stone gives way to dripping water and the hardest kind of men, if not absolutely adamantine, yield in time to constant jabbing. These are the conditions of the case exactly.

Should Sharkey defeat Corbett I will, as I stated before, gladly take him on as soon as he is ready for a world's championship battle. If Corbett wins, I will not meet him until he has defeated Peter Maher, who will challenge him to battle immediately after he shall have lowered the sailor's colors.

When these events, of which I have spoken at some length, are decided I will battle any man in the world for the world's championship whom I have not already defeated.

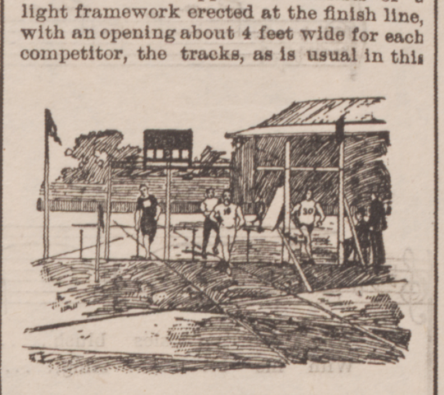
Bob Fitzsimmons

A FOOT RACE RECORDER.

Also a Mechanical Adjudicator of Cycling Contests.

The great success of the starting machine at American race courses suggested to Mr. A. L. Baird of Sydney is the construction of a piece of mechanism quite as novel, though created for a somewhat similar purpose. The difference is that Mr. Baird's machine is not intended for use at horse races, but at foot races, run by human beings. Furthermore, it is not a starter, but a mechanical recorder of the results of a race. It was designed to do away with the human adjudicator in judging race finishes, substituting for the purpose a contrivance that will not be influenced by either partiality or excitement.

In Australia this machine has become a recognized institution and is pronounced infallible. The apparatus consists of a light framework erected at the finish line, with an opening about 4 feet wide for each competitor, the tracks, as is usual in this class of contests, being roped off, with a separate lane or way for each runner. Across each opening a string is stretched, connected by wires with sliding shutters contained in a small cabinet overhead. The shutters are numbered from 1 to 5 to correspond with the openings in the frame. Immediately the first man breaks his string the number of his track appears on the cabinet overhead, and the action of his number appearing locks the remaining numbers and prevents them from appearing, except in the case of an exact dead heat, when the two numbers appear simultaneously. Attached to this machine is a small cylinder on which the position of every man in the heat is clearly shown, and by an ingenious arrangement the distance separating each man is marked.



FOOT RUNNING JUDGING MACHINE.

Mr. Baird has also invented a scheme for judging cycling racing. This machine differs widely from the one just described. It has never been put into actual use at a race meet, but a working model has been severely tested, with very satisfactory results. Across the surface of the track, at the finish line, a trench about 2½ inches in width is sunk. This trench contains five fine steel rods, slightly rounded at the top, which fit closely against each other, the highest one projecting about an inch above the track level, each succeeding one being about an eighth of an inch lower than its neighbor. Prior to use the surface of the rods is coated with white enamel or paint, and as the first wheel crosses the finish line it receives five distinct impressions on the surface of the tire, as shown in accompanying sketch; the next wheel to cross receives four, the next three, and so on. This is brought about by a simple mechanism which, as each wheel crosses the line, releases one of the bars which falls out of sight into the trench. Numerous tests have proved that the marks made on the tires are not obliterated by the revolutions of the wheel on the track after the winning line is crossed and prior to examination by the officials.

SPORTLETS.

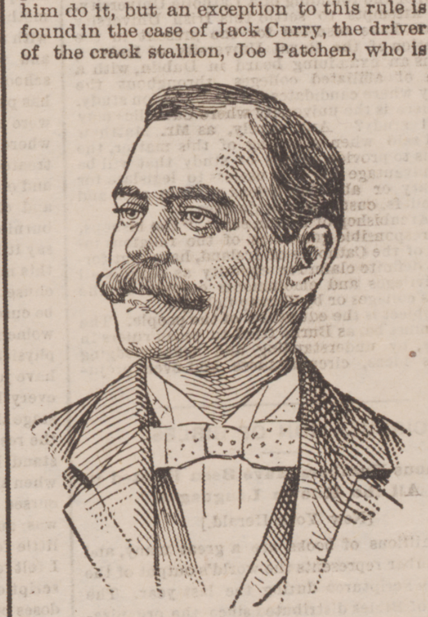
Mysterious Billy Smith has located in Portland, Or.

Maxey Haugh wants another match with Danny McMahon, the clever featherweight.

Jim Hall is said to have a bank account stowed away for the time when he will have abandoned the ring.

George Justice says that he will fight any 118 pound man in the world, bar none, for a good sized purse.

Generally speaking, turfmen are more interested in the horse that puts up a fast performance than in the man who makes him do it, but an exception to this rule is found in the case of Jack Curry, the driver of the crack stallion, Joe Patchen, who is as popular as is the turf favorite he drives. His form, at once lithe and athletic, surmounted by a huge sombrero, which shields a face strong and yet genial, with a suggestion of a cowboy dash about it, is today an inspiring feature of any horse gathering.



JACK CURRY.

He has been peculiarly identified with the Patchen horse, taking him in hand three years ago and bringing him by easy stages to his present stage in turf annals, always a prominent and often a conquering figure. He had the horse, to be sure, but those familiar with trotting methods will readily admit the large part in great performances taken by the driver. This was not his first horse by any means, nor did he have to wait for Joe Patchen to show him what a 2:10 gait was like. He is now 40 years old and in his time has "marked" Alix in 2:07¾, the trotting champion with whom he appeared in this vicinity three years ago, when she was matched to race Directum, but was prevented by Jack Frost.

Besides the trotting queen he has "marked" Prima Donna in 2:09¼, Carbonate in 2:09, the first 2-year-old to beat 2:10 and lowering the world's record twice in the same week; Seal, 2:08¼; Favora, 2:12¼; Bullmont, 2:12½; Dan McCabe, 2:13; Idolf, 2:13¼; Pactolus, 2:12½; Jimmy Hague, 2.13½, and over 30 others in the 2:30 list.

A Dangerous Musical Instrument.

It has been discovered that the oboe is the most dangerous instrument that is played on—dangerous to the player. A profound German medical authority says that it is doubtful if a healthy man playing any instrument in a correct method ever suffers through playing upon any reed or brass instrument, but those who have any weakness of the heart or circulation may be injured by playing any wind instrument.

As it is quite easy for a musician to inspire between the phrases of the music, but impossible for him to expire without overblowing his instrument, it follows that the instruments that require the least expenditure of breath are the more injurious for the reason that the player must hold his breath for long intervals.

This is the case with both the oboe and the flute. The charge is probably true that the curious tickling of the lips that is caused by the double reed mouthpiece of the instrument frequently causes cancer.

The eminent scientist who has discovered these things about the comparatively harmless oboe should now ascertain whether accordion and concertina playing does not superinduce muscular paralysis in an aggravated and incurable form.—New York Journal.

Henry James.

It is said that Henry James, the novelist, maintains that single blessedness is the only condition for an artist or genius, giving as a reason that the details of domestic life exhausts fine nerves and delicate mental fiber. He confirms his theory by living in bachelor chambers in London, entertaining his friends charmingly, and in turn being entertained by them, and yet, although surrounded by bright, attractive women, his heart still holds its allegiance to self.

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