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The Stroke Oar

By WILLARD BLAKEMAN

A number of young men, mostly collegians, were sitting in a group on the forward deck of a North river steamer. They were going up to Poughkeepsie to a boat race of college crews on the Hudson.

"Your talk takes me back a good many years. I pulled in the race of 186—between Harvard and Yale, a race never to be forgotten by me on account of a curious culmination connected with it."

"What was that, sir?" The man hesitated. Presently he said: "I'll give it to you, but understand that I don't put any interpretation on it."

"I was at Harvard the year I have mentioned. Yale had beaten us for several years. We had lost several consecutive races, and this year we were especially anxious to break up the run of ill success and get some encouragement into our supporters by winning a race. Those who could go back in college affairs said that there had been no success since Wilkins had been captain of the crew and stroke at the same time. We hadn't the coaches in those days you boys have now and were more dependent upon some single member of the crew."

"I was captain of that crew of 186 and made it up myself. I expected to give the stroke, but a couple of months before the regatta I was taken ill and when the race was about to come off had not sufficiently recovered to row at all. I had a hard time to find a man to take my place in the crew, and as for getting one who could give the stroke and carry the crew to a possible success—it was impossible."

"The evening before the regatta I was sitting in my room at the House alone and feeling very blue when there came a tap at my door. I said, 'Come in' and a young man entered who was one of the most striking fellows in appearance I ever saw. He was very thinly dressed, and the muscles stood out all over him. The only thing against him for strength was that he was very pale."

"'Going to get licked tomorrow?' he said. 'I suppose so. Who are you?' 'I'm a Harvard man. I reckon I'll have to help you out. Can you use me?'"

"I asked him a lot of questions about what class he was in, what course he was taking, when he had entered, when he would graduate, and could get nothing definite out of him. He said that he was an expert oarsman and if I would put him on the crew and any one after the race attempted to prove that he had no right to be there it would be time enough to be more explicit. The college needed a victory, and after a victory it would pluck up."

"I fully agreed with him as to the necessity of a victory and arranged with him to be at the boat-house as the boat was about to be put into the water. He was there, all right, and when in rowing togs his frame was a sight to behold. I've never seen better biceps in my life. When the crew entered the boat he took the stroke."

"What a sweep he gave that oar of his! It seemed a feather in his hands. And his stroke was so perfect that, though there was not a man behind him who had ever been in a boat with him before, there was no difficulty in all of them keeping perfect time with him."

"The boat shot out into the middle of the river, where the faces of the crew were not very plain to those on shore, and I was glad of it, for I had my doubts about my stroke's right to be there. The boats lined up and made a start at the first signal to go."

"There was a noticeable difference between the work of the two crews. Now and again some Yale man would send up the spray, but not a man in the Harvard boat struck a cupful of water on the rower. It was all in the leadership of the stroke."

"Our fellows took the lead from the first and kept it around the stake boat and won the race by a good hundred yards. It was the prettiest won race I ever saw. When I got to the boat-house the men had carried in the boat. I looked around for my stroke, but didn't see him. One of the crew said he had just gone up the bank. I followed, but he was nowhere to be seen."

"It would take a lot of time to tell you what was said about the introduction at the last moment of a new and unknown man. There was much adverse criticism, and it fell principally on me. One thing I heard started me. Several persons who had known Wilkins when he was in college declared that my stroke was he. I wondered if he had come back and gone into the crew without letting me or any one know that he was doing what he had no right to do. I learned where Wilkins lived and wrote a line to him asking if he would kindly tell me where he was on the day of the regatta. What do you suppose was the reply? His father wrote me that he had been very ill for some time and died the evening before the race."

"Now, young gentlemen, I don't wish any comments on my story. I have none to make myself. I have simply given it to you as, according to my senses, it occurred. I may have dreamed it."

"OLD IRONSIDES" WILL BE REPAIRED

The frigate Constitution, relic of the early days of the United States, is going into drydock for the first time in nearly three-score years, according to plans announced at the Charlestown navy yard, where the old sea fighter is docked.

The Spear in the Tusk.

It seems unbelievable that a savage's iron spear point seven and a half inches long by one and a half inches wide has been found all grown over and perfectly hidden in a big bull elephant's tusk. The savage had roosted up in a big tree over a spring where the elephant came for water. Then he dropped this spear, weighted to fifty pounds, so as to strike the nape of the neck and pierce the brain. Here the spear went a little to one side of the brain and into the big open funnel end of the root of the tusk, broke off and then "grewed" up in the ivory like a nail in a tree. The spear was found when the tusk was carved.—Exchange.

Like a Circus.

Mr. S. had a peculiarly irritating sneeze. It began with a complex and terrifying series of facial convulsions, but instead of concluding with the roar of a shot lion it ended with a most lame paroxysm that always disappointed the expectant observer. "Your sneeze," said a friend after watching him through one of his stigmata, "is a regular circus." "A circus?" said Mr. S. "Yes, sir," was the rejoinder. "The performance never comes up to the advance notices."—Cleveland Leader.

MAYR'S WONDERFUL REMEDY FOR STOMACH TROUBLE

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CLUBBING OFFERS

The following clubbing offers are good for a limited time. Owing to the high prices on print paper these rates are liable to be advanced in the near future. The Review and Tri-Weekly New York World... \$2.15 The Review and Atlanta Constitution Tri-Weekly, McCall's Magazine, or Southern Farming one year each... \$2.25 The Review and Progressive Farmer, one year each... \$2.00 The Review, Metropolitan Magazine, Woman's World and Farm and Home One year each... \$2.10 The Review, Everybody's Magazine and Woman's World, one year \$2.75

Seeding Wheat.

During the past several days our farmer friends have been quite busy seeding wheat, and we learn that many acres have been "set aside" for this purpose this season. We believe that this is the proper thing to do—wheat is high—flirting with a two-dollar bill in a most disgraceful manner, and the prospects are that this flirtation will be kept up for many months. As a consequence of this activity on the part of the farmers, the tobacco breaks have not been so heavy during the past several days, though the weed is still high, while some are saying that the prices are advancing.—Madison Messenger.

November Weather.

Early cold snaps, storms and sleet, snow and slush, cause coughs and colds. Foley's Honey and Tar acts quickly, cuts the phlegm, opens air passages, allays irritation, heals inflammation and enables the sufferer to breathe easily and naturally so that sleep is not disturbed by hacking cough.

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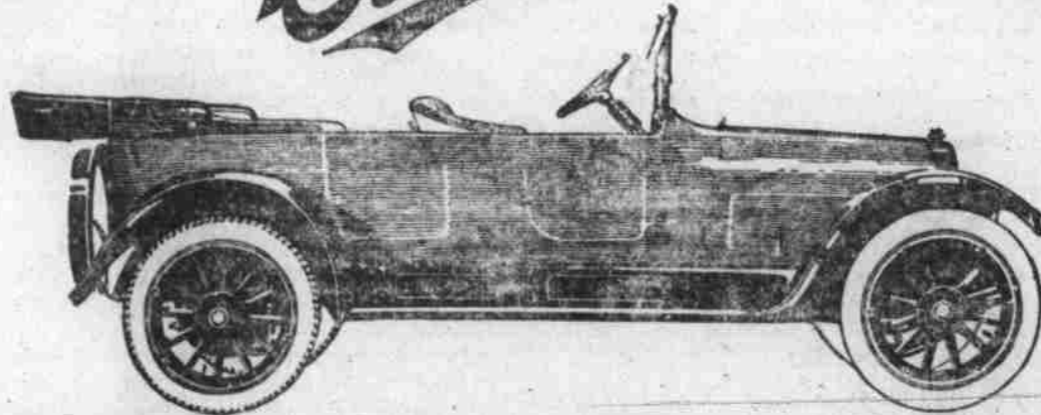
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