

with their accompanying rivers and streamlets, falls and rapids, springs and fountains, tarrans and cascades, all surrounded by a sea-coast of over three hundred miles, with its bays and creeks, islands and estuaries, cliffs and sands.

It is said that all over Ireland local customs are falling into decay. Dress, wakes, and all that was once distinctively Irish are dying out. If there is a place where they linger with more tenacity than another, it is in and around the old town of Galway. There is something really melancholy in the general stately of this once famous city, whose trade, population, prosperity and buildings are going to ruin with extraordinary rapidity. As is well known, it once had an intimate connection with Spain, and its men and women, by their tall figures and dark eyes and hair, show the intermixture of blood. Even some of the old, dilapidated buildings in the by-ways are said to be after the pattern of houses in Seville and Madrid. The lover of the picturesque should be thankful for even the smallest remains, and will welcome gratefully the blue cloaks of the women, of the same tone and make the refreshing red petticoats of almost Eastern dye. The cloth for these fabrics is woven and dyed in many a household on winter's nights. These warm and graceful Commanan cloaks, which a few years ago were so popular with ladies, and are not yet out of fashion, are almost an exact copy of these garments.

The upper illustration on page 844 shows one of the ancient customs that still linger in that picturesque region. The stalwart but graceful maid washing the family linen in a shallow stream is a sight familiar to every traveler in the West of Ireland, and it also recalls the fashion which still obtains on the banks of the Seine.

DEATH AT THE OAR.

This great boat-race between the St. John and the Tyne crews, which took place on the Kennebecasis River on the 23d of August, was marked by a melancholy incident—the death of the celebrated oarsman, JAMES RENFORTH, whose portrait is given on this page. The course—of which we give a sketch below—was over a stretch of the Kennebecasis River, and a finer one probably could not be found in any part of the world. This river comes out of the rocks and pine woods to the northeast of St. John, New Brunswick, and joins the St. John River about three miles above the mouth of the latter stream. Until near the end of its course it is an insignificant creek; but where it meets the tide it spreads out into a very pretty and placid lake, with water of a rich brown color, and rocky shores, dotted with here and there a farm-house, and checked with green upland meadows and patches of elder and dwarf pines. This lake is some twelve miles long and from two to four wide, and midway in its length is a high island four miles long, rising from the water in some places in precipitous rocky cliffs, and in others in gentle slopes of pasture land. Between this island and the eastern shore of the river was the race-course. The stream at this place is about a mile wide. The course was exactly three miles long, and to

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JAMES RENFORTH.

make the distance accurate it was measured upon the ice last winter. It extended from Torryburn Cove—a point seven miles from the city—up the river, in a perfectly straight line, to a point off Salmon Creek, where the stake boats were anchored, not far from the little village of Boheysey. The boats started from the cove, and the St. John crew rowed up the stream to the stake boats, which they rounded, and returned to the starting-point, making the race a distance of six miles. There is very little current or tide in the Kennebecasis at this place. Booms were anchored, extending for 200 yards from the starting lochs, and none of the steamers or sail-boats containing spectators were allowed to go up the river beyond these booms. The rival crews had thus a broad, free course, as wide as the river itself. A railroad runs along the eastern shore of the Kennebecasis, past the course, as does also a broad macadamized road from the city; so that there were abundant means of access, by railroad and river, from St. John to the course. From many places on the hills on either shore there was a fine view of the whole course,

so that the lookers-on could watch the race from beginning to end.

The great interest in the race arose from the fact that it was a return match between the crews that rowed last year at Lachine, near Montreal, when the St. John crew, who had carried off the prize at the great Paris regatta of 1867, were decisively beaten by an English crew from the Tyne. They did not rest easy after their defeat until they had arranged with their conquerors for a second contest. They had lost the Lachine race, they believed, by the roughness of the water, but others held that their defeat was owing to too great confidence and too little training.

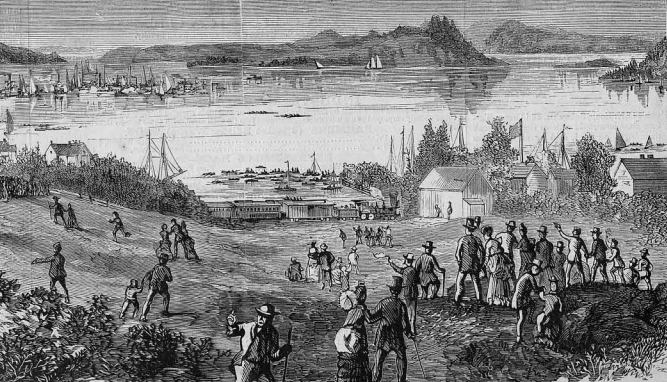
By the articles of agreement it was stipulated that the race should be rowed on the 23d of August, between 7 and 10 a.m., if the water was perfectly smooth;—if the water, in the opinion of the empires, or, in case of disagreement, by the decision of the referee, is not smooth, the referee shall be empowered to postpone the race to the same hours on the day following, and so, from day to day, until the state of the water

is favorable." The St. John crew was to row without a crosswin, and Renforth's to row the option of rowing with or without one. The race was to be for £200 a side and the championship. The St. John crew bound themselves to pay Renforth's men £200 in consideration of the expense of the journey across the Atlantic.

The race was set for the early hour of seven in the morning on account of the probability of still weather at that time, as later in the day, at this season, there is danger of a stiff land breeze. The morning was beautiful, and probably 25,000 spectators were present. The water was smooth as glass. The choice of position fell to the lot of the Tyne crew, who took the inside course. At the word "Go" from the referee both boats flew away, the St. John leading slightly. The Tyne crew then made a spurt, and the St. John crew fell behind; but the steady stroke of the St. John's held, and gradually they drew ahead, keeping the lead, although the distance was every now and then shortened by the mighty spurs of the Tyne. When three-quarters of a mile was reached the St. John led three lengths, when suddenly Renforth dropped his oar and fell over in the boat, apparently in a fit. The boat was turned inshore, and he was taken back to his quarters in a coach. The St. John quietly pulled over the course.

Renforth revived a little after reaching the hotel, but soon commenced failing, and in less than half an hour from the time of landing he died. He was a man in the prime of life, having been born in 1842, at a place called Rabbet Banks, not far from Gateshead-on-Tyne. From early youth he exhibited a fondness for athletic sports, and that wonderful fund of physical strength, energy, and determination which won for him, in after years, the distinction of Aquatic Champion of England. For a time he was a soldier, and served in the East. He was next heard of as an expert swimmer. Previous to 1866 he was unknown as an oarsman; and it is said he discovered his immense powers at the oar by conveying back and forth the workmen engaged in removing the old Tyne bridge. His first appearance in a boat was in 1867, when he won easily; and from that hour until his death his career as an oarsman was marked by a constant succession of triumphs.

Renforth was a fine, broad-shouldered, deep-chested man, five feet seven and a half inches in height, and of great muscular strength. His sudden death, in the very prime of life, was due, it is said, to apoplexy, brought on by overexertion and excitement. The manner of it recalls the fainting of Geoffrey Delamay at the foot-race. In WILKIE COLLINS'S "Man and Wife," and brings up again the question of physical training, and the extent to which it may be carried with safety. To all appearance JAMES RENFORTH was the most powerful member of the Tyne crew. His muscular development was the admiration of all who dealt in physical prowess; and yet, in the moment of trial, he was the only one of the oarsmen to succumb. In his case muscular power had been developed at such an expense of vital energy that exhausted nature gave way when put to a test which far weaker men endured without injurious effects.



THE BOAT-RACE BETWEEN THE ST. JOHN AND THE TYNE CREWS ON THE KENNEBECASIS RIVER, AUGUST 23, 1871.—[FROM A SKETCH BY J. W. GRAY.]