

## FRENCH SPORTS.

**Pugilistic, Rowing, Running, or Walking Contests Unknown in France.**

**The Drafting of the Young Men Into Military Service the Chief Cause for This.**

**Fencing, Billiards, and Lacrosse—The Paper Chase—Pounding Bismarck's Head.**

[NEW YORK CORRESPONDENCE.]

Not far from the Bleeker street station on the Sixth avenue road is a little court whose name, if it ever had any, has been blown away and forgotten. It is in the very heart of the so-called French quarter. When the infrequent snow-storm of a New York winter finds the ground cold enough to retain the flakes unmelted, the little court becomes the dumping place of the snow from the neighboring sidewalks and the overhanging roofs. And when the days and the thermometric mercury elongate simultaneously, and the snow becomes slush and disappears into the soil, the sewer, and the atmosphere, the French boys of the quarter bring out a big iron frog, and stand it up in the further end of the court, and pitch pennies into its mouth for hours at a time, for fun and profit. It is one of their most popular games, and, to a certain extent, is typical of French sport. For it seems that what Americans understand as sport is little known in France, and little admired by the French. Not all their recreations are colored with gambling, but very few are calculated to develop muscular prowess, or require it. Contests for a champion-belt in pugilism, or the badge of championship in rowing, or in walking, or in running, or in any of the scores of exercises so popular on this side of the water, are practically unknown in France. Nevertheless, the French residents of America have furnished some of the best-known contestants in several fields, and the undisputed champions in the one or two departments of sport that they pay considerable attention to at home. Monsieur Alphonse Dumont, a Parisian who is visiting this country, and spending a part of his time in this city, said on this subject:

"The Frenchman cares little to contest in anything where mere muscular

ability is at an advantage. He pursues sport as he does art—striving to develop its fine points, aiming to become expert, and admiring only the skill that may be attained in the exercise. We have no such thing as a national game; nothing that approaches to your base-ball, or polo, or the English cricket. Sport with us means, as a rule, horse racing, and undoubtedly our jockeys, of whom we think highly, would compare favorably with the best that this country knows. The exercise that really occupies our attention as a national institution is fencing, and that probably arises from the military character of the national life. Much of the energy that the American youth puts into play and physical contests is absorbed by the government in recruiting the army. Here the boys of the village have to provide their own amusements, their own exercises, and have to depend upon themselves for acquiring the discipline that is so essential to really successful sport. With us the government provides the exercise and the discipline, and if the young men can get any amusement out of it, so much the better for them. It is the next war that is always uppermost in every Frenchman's mind. It is the necessary preparation for this terrible event that makes the nation one without a typical game, for the required service in the army takes all the young men into the military field at just the time when they would naturally be tossing a ball on the diamond, or straining at the oars on the river; and when the few years of army life are at an end, if no war comes along to keep the enrollment at its highest, those who return to the ranks of civilians find themselves under the stern necessity of making a living, and all the less is their time available for play; and moreover the discipline of the army tends to make a man averse to taking up any new department of physical activity. He has already learned to do certain things, and may be regarded as beyond the age when it is desirable to spend any more time in learning accomplishments. So I think we shall remain as we have been, without a national game, and without any special activity in sports.



AT THE BATHS.

and are open only on the payment of an admission fee. That there is actually an interest in swimming, apart from the limited opportunities of the Seine bath-houses, was evidenced just before I left France at Clichy. There is an island in the river there that is from a mile and a half to a mile and three quarters in circumference. Two butchers, famous in their locality for their skill in the water, agreed for a wager to swim round the island in the night. Several gentlemen interested in sporting events were notified, and, in addition to the wager, a purse was offered; the wager, by the way, was that the circuit could be made in an hour. At 10 o'clock at night they dove into the river. The men who backed them followed in a boat, and I am told that upward of twenty thousand francs were put up on the question whether either of the contestants would finish on time. They came to the finish precisely at the same instant, having accomplished the circuit in fifty-seven minutes. The prize money was divided between them. When they were taken from the water the weather was so cold that ice formed on their trunks before they could be got under shelter. One of them became dangerously ill, but the other suffered nothing from his hardy adventure.

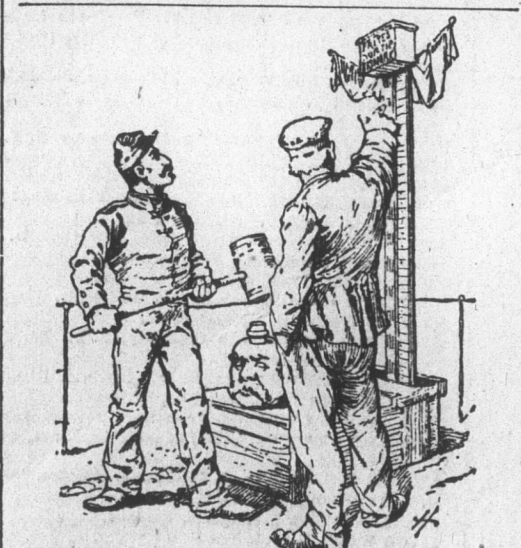
"Fencing I suppose everybody knows about. The French are the acknowledged masters in the art, and every educated man in the country knows how to handle the sword. The war department does everything possible to encourage the general cultivation of this exercise. General Boulanger is himself a famous swordsman, and frequently goes out of his way to act as judge in a public contest. These contests are numerous, much more numerous, I am inclined to think, than the sparring exhibitions that take place in New York. And this, it need not be said, is distinctly a sport wherein mere muscular power is at a discount; it is skill that counts.

"The French are also experts at billiards, and, in short, will be found the peers of any nation in games of skill. We have had some good wrestlers, also, notably Chrystol, Perrier and Regnier, but the wrestler with us is not lionized to the extent that a champion would be in America."

"Is there no general interest in aquatic sports?"

"Yes," responded M. Dumont laughing. "The wealthy have their yachts as you have here, and there is a form of canoeing that, though highly entertaining, would hardly pass for sport in the sense you mean. Canoeing is a popular recreation of a Sunday, and in fact those addicted to it like it so well that they often spend the entire day at it. That is more than your boat club men do on the Harlem, is it not? But the canoeist on the Seine is almost invariably accompanied by the lady whom you Americans would denominate as his best girl, and he not infrequently takes along a cargo of lunch. Ah, yes, canoeing is good sport, but I do not remember that I have heard of a championship contest. And on our holidays it is not a game of base-ball that attracts the crowds; they go to the Tuileries and listen to the music and roam about the gardens, and now and then an irregular kind of football is indulged in. It is not the Rugby game by any means, more a kind of indiscriminate kicking.

"In the northern part of France they



POUNDING BISMARCK'S HEAD.

play a variety of lacrosse, but it is considerably different from the game known to Americans. Lawn tennis is played by the same class of people who play it here, and in the winter, when the weather allows, there is some skating, but it is an intensely aristocratic sport, not at all the popular thing it is

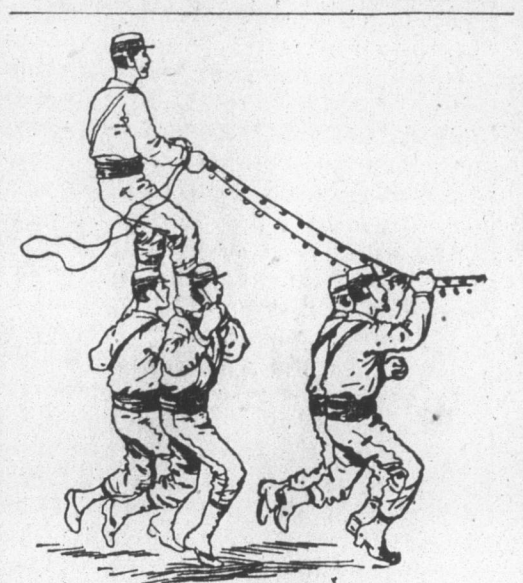
here. Our champion skater, by the way, so far as we have one, is an American, George Frost. More than that, I believe he is a journalist. Speaking of aristocratic sport reminds me to say that our sport is mostly of that character. Such great games as we have are played mainly by the titled persons and the military. The leading one I think of is a paper chase on horseback, conducted in very much the same way that the English and Americans play hare-and-hounds. With us, two of the most intrepid horsemen start from a given point at a set time, and mark their course by scattering bits of paper as they go. They stop not for barriers of any description and disdain roads. The pack, also on horseback, pursue them and catch them if they can. This game is always accompanied by a considerable concourse of spectators in carriages, who keep up with the pursuit as best they can by driving along the roads. It is a great game, and calls for the exercise of no little nerve and vigor. The courses are from fifteen to twenty miles in length."

A striking difference between the French and American ideas of sport may be seen in this, for in hare-and-hounds as played in this country on foot the course is rarely less than fifteen miles long. It is evidently not a sport for France. M. Dumont continued:

"At the country fairs, with which all Americans are familiar through the comic opera, for what opera ever was written that did not include as one of its scenes a country fair in France, there are various physical diversions that are more or less in vogue here in modified forms. Perhaps the most popular is pounding Bismarck's head. In this game the player strikes with a mallet on an image of Bismarck, and according to the force of the blow on the skull with which it is delivered, a bolt shoots up in a slot in an upright plank. The game is of course to see who can send the bolt up the highest. Then the chasing of a greased pig needs no explaining, I suppose. The best fun with a greased pig, however, is to be found in Paris itself. There they take a pig into one of the swimming houses in the Seine, such as I have spoken of, and having greased his tail throw him into the water. Then the swimmers who are contesting for the prize, which is the pig, follow and try to bring him to land. It is great sport, I assure you."

"You have spoken, monsieur, about the government providing exercise for the youth. In what way?"

"Hardly is a boy in school before he



IN THE GYMNASIUM.

is made to enter upon a series of gymnastics. It is a regular part of the curriculum, and increases in importance until the end of the course. Now, the peculiar feature of all this is, that although the general character of the exercise is calculated to develop bodily vigor, the main thing sought for is uniformity of action. The drilling is all in platoons. In the gymnasium the same feature obtains. You cannot imagine the curious evolutions that the future soldiers have to go through together. There is some individual work, but, as a rule, if you enter a gymnasium you will be met by a half dozen men hopping along on one foot, keeping their alignment as faithfully as if marching on dress parade, or striding in single file across the floor, their fists doubled and their arms swaying backward and forward synchronously, and you may be lucky enough to see a man standing on the shoulders of two comrades, driving with long reins several pairs of men, who hold the reins lightly in their hands above their heads. This is a favorite accomplishment of the gymnasium, and is an interesting feature of the public exhibitions. The whole influence of even physical training, you see, is military, and the French, though by no means weak, do not tend to develop muscle at the expense of skill and the mental faculties, as it seems to me the Americans do."

The theory of M. Dumont, that the governmental compulsory training kills any desire for or possibility of general games, is corroborated by the fact that though the French in this city have their annual balls, their clubs and societies; though they observe the great fete days of France by picnics, parades, and public meetings, and in other ways keep alive the national spirit, they have no gymnasium even in which to cultivate or keep intact the physical training they have received across the water.

**The Weak Feature in Labor Unions.**

What the working classes of the United States need and demand is the hire education. The laborer is worthy of his higher wages.—Burdette.

DURING the past season two naturalists, G. W. and E. G. Peckham, have found that wasps remember the locality of their nests for ninety-six hours.

## ZEPHYR POINT CAMP-MEETING.

BY W. H. S. ATKINSON.

Effi hev got ter oan up ter bein er citteren uv putnim keownty I warnt it deestintly undistood thet ime no sukkir. Fak is, par sez az heow ime rite smart konsiding ime only 20 ate kum thanxgiven an wazent bordn with er lori, sides wich i kin bete the rekud plowen klay sile.

Then mi ant beky she marid er sitty roostir an thay put on enuf stile fer the hull fammery.

Wel, wun summur ant beky an unkel jo, wich thare perlite names is mister and mis bodger oanly we allus kals em ant beky an unkel jo, thay tuk er kotij deown ter zeffur pint on lake ery. Bein az heow i wuz allus er prime faveright with ant beky an also godsun ter unkel jo nuthin ud do but i must make em er vizzit uv sivereal daze deown ter the pint.

It wuz with paneful fealins thet I baid fairwel ter the varus memburs uv ower fammery inloedoin the indore an outdore porshuns. Bi indore an outdore i mean the tew katz an the kinary wich air indores an the pole-tree, gobbilurs, keows, and uther annymils wich air outdore. Espechully wuz i sad at art wen biddin ardoos ter mi poney wich is sew ter speke a hairlume, hevin bin druv bi mi parients an grandparients on the peturnil side fur 3 jinerashuns. Wen i kum ter the poney, in the bewtfull langwidge uv the powit uv old, i fel on hiz nek an kist him, an ez i brusht away er manley ter mi art swelt az i notister korrispondin simperthetik moischur in the ize uv pore ole dik. Mar, she cride sum an fild mi pokkits with donuts an cheaz sangwidges an par he gev me sum advist an a 10 doler bil ovur an abuv mi ralerode tikkit. i ad a, noo gold worterberry wich par brot me frum the putnim keownty fare an that i seakrestid in wun uv mi stripid stokens az well az the 10 dolo bil, fur, az i sed, ime no fule nor no yung kolt ter be kort with charf bi thes yere smart aliks with gold brix an 3 kard monty an sew 4th.

It wuz late Saterdag evenen wen i reecht zeffur pint an afta a verri kindley welkim frum ant beky an unkel jo i reatired urly tew mi virchewus kowch. The neckst day wuz Sundy an in the mawnin i escaughted ant beky ter church, unkel jo bein undir the wethir an me allus relijusly enklind an iver redy ter wate on an unpreteckted feemail as ant beky certingly wuz on this pertikler okkashing. In the artturnne i sot urround an chood with unkel jo an sew the day parst.

Wen the kwiut shaidis uv eave fel sortly oar the weery urth, wile ovur the woters of ole lake ery the slarnten raze uv the setten sun karst a golding red shean (eckscuse mi feelens wich i kinnot kentrie at setch times) mi thorts uv hoam got the betur uv me an i wuz karrid in the sperrit ter the deery luvd wolds an fealds uv putnim keownty. In Dede i becum sew loan-sum thet i feerd ter stay with mi good relashins lest mi low sperrits shud pruve infexus. Sew wen darknis set-teld ovur everything i stroald ut tords a groav noan az the park, ware I fownd a bentch an sot me deown. Oarkum bi mi melonkilly hoamsikpnis an strainley effektid bi mi noo serowndens, espeshilly the strong air frum orf ole ery wich actid az a tonnuk an a



soaper rifik combind, i becum drowsey an wuz air long travilen frum zeffur pint ter the farey land uv dremes. Sweately lokt in the arms uv morphyus i wuz livin oar agen mi boyyuds daze in deer ole putnim keownty, wen a voyse like a steme-thratcher sowndid in mi yeres and roodly woak me frum mi pesefull slumbers.

"Yung man!" it kride in klarreun toans, "yung man, i say, at this verri mowmint i air slumbrin, aul unkons-hus uv yewer drefil dainjur, uppon the brink uv the lake uv fyer an brim-stun!" Up i jumps with er start, fer wen i fel asleep i noo i wuz seatid bi the armless woters uv lake ery wich is bi no menes fyurey nor yit brimstony. i wuz jest erbout ter kontridikt the showtir in langwidge mower forsabel than eligit wen my ize restid on a site wich maid me wundir weathur i wuz not stil in the land uv nod. Rite be4 me wuz a kroud uv pepul under a big ornin, the intire sho bein lit up bi mirriuds uv gas jetz. i rubd my ize with mi brorny fists an awl uv a suddint i rikolektid thet thare wuz er kamp-meatin in progris at the pint an this must be it. Sew i droo in ter the kroud an bein uv a batchfull an retiren dispersishun tuk a bak seat.

Neow a kamp-meetin in ful serwing wuz er noo centsashun fer me an wat with the showtin and weapin an singin an allylujer i got considreibly mickst up. Evrin in thet strainje an noysy asemblj mi thorts ware milze away, but i wuz starteld outen mi reverry bi the approach uv a larje solum-lukin man atyerd in preastly garb. This indevijal grastp me bi the hand an rollin up hiz ize in er way thet remind me uv er dyin duk in er thundurstorm sed, sez he:

"Mi bruthir, air a treddin the rode ter zyun?"

"Sir," sez i, "i air traddin no rode uv no kind at the presint mowmint; i air settin verri kumfiterbil."

Then he sez:

"Air u saved?"

i neow bekum panefully awair thet menny pares of ize ware restin on me, but i replide:

"did u say saved or shaved? if the latter, i air; if the formir, i du not undistand."

"Ar, pore sinner," sez he, "u du not compryend. Air u inlested undir the bannur uv the lord or air u not? O, mi bruthir, woant u jine the army ter-"



day—woant u kum inter ower ranx ternite?"

"Not ternite, Kernil," sez i, "eck-scuse me; sum uthif nite."

But he warnt ter be skweltched ser sune.

"O, u pore lost sheep—u stray lam frum the flock—unhappy man, rushin like the swyne uv old ter distruxun!"

"Sir!" sez i, mi duch bein up an me gotten riley, "deown in putnim keownty we raze sheap an lams wich air no deesgrate ter the stait fare, owly wen yew kall me a sheap u tred on mi korns. But, yew ole skaliwag, i dror the line at swyne, an ef i air hear awl alown ithout par ile lik yer ef u doant git!"

Mi eyer wuz roudz an I wood hev sooted mi axons ter mi wurdz but the ole flabburgastir axt me ter deezist, wich i did, mowwer espeshully az at thet mowmint a vizun uv bewty waz makin her way thew the ordyance tord the platform. Neow, the a batchlur an neow az a grainjur i am bi no menes impuryvus tew feemail luvliness, an i wuz awl atenshun wen this zeffur pint farey begun ter sing. She sang sew sweatly an with sew mutch eckspreshun thet wen she sed she hed "a messij frum the lawd fer yew," i koodent help but think she ment ME—an the way she glantz at me wood hev meltid a hart uv bereer stoan or eyetalyun marbil. Ar, i shell nevir forgit thet gyurl's singen! neow soft an low ez the peanimmiser tetches uv er mastir hand on a eholyun harp, rizin agen ter a shril dyerpasun, an anon swellin ter the ful granjur uv a organ peel. Frum thet mowmint i wuz hoaplisly in luv, an i noo it.

Wen this picter uv luvliniss got threw with hur singen wun uv the parsing fellers gev owt thet thare wud neow be a meatin fer those az wist ter enkwire the way ter heving—s rrt uv a side-sho in a gjasent tent. emajin mi serprize wen i wuz aprocht bi the eyedentekel yung wummun hoo had sung sew intranzenly. i kud withstan a hull trewp uv thes yere parsings an men ecksorters, but i kinfess i wuz not prufe agen the beewichin smilz an siring voyse uv this spessiment uv femmenine bewty, an wen she sed sew sweatley, "Deer frend, kin i not help yew inter the strate an narrer rode," i kud owly reply ruther kinfusidly, "Mi deer, enny help u may kondensid ter giv me will be hyley walewd"—wich i thort a verri nete speatch fer me.

Wel, nuthin' ud dew but we must go orf tew a kwiet part uv the kamp groundz, wear we kud be alown, an the way thet thare gyurl torked ter me wuz serprizen. the mannir in wich she shode me mi sinfel waze an pickcherd heving ter me awlmost muved me ter teers, an i nevir felt sew mutch like makin a ass uv myself an sniverlen az i did then, in awl mi life be4; an' wen she arst me tew begin a noo life "to pleeze hur," i sez, sez i, "mi deer, i wud go threw hell on hot brix ter pleeze yew!"

Wel, we torkt an' torkt til the small hovers uv mawnin, an the rissult wuz thet i felt myself invierd. Then she sez, sez she, "deer bruthir, this yere wurk uv the lawd kinnot be karrid on ithout filthey lookur; won't u kintribewt yewer might?"

"Wel," i sez, "ive owly got the 10 dolo bil wich par gev me an thet's deoun in mi sok."

"No matter," sez she, "ile turn my hed enuther way wile you git it owt," an then she sez, wen i spoke uv given a dolo, "yew kum up ter the mawnin prare-meatin, an i will giv u the change."

With thet we partid verri affeckshun-8ly.

I dror a vale ovur subsikwint ivents at the zeffur pint kamp-meatin.

i travild bak ter putnim keownty a saddur an a wizer man, mynus mi worterberry an the 10 dolo bil.

But, az i staited at the kummine-mint uv this yere narrytyv, ime no sukkir ef i wuz borned ithout er kori—an i kin beet the rikud plowin klay sile!

To "Gentle Annie."

Yes, dear, we know the mills of the gods grind slowly, but they can trot right around a barber when we are trying to get a shave and the last car. You could comprehend this great and awful truth more easily, Annie, if you were that monster—Man.—Burdette.

THE running of this universe is such a big thing, that it is well, for all general purposes, that it is not managed by the numerous shortsighted wise-aces who have only individual benefits and present results in view.