

THE FUTURE SPHERE OF THE WAR BALLOON'S UTILITY—SEARCHLIGHT AIRSHIPS, SPIES OF THE AIR, RECONNOITRING THE ENEMY'S CAMP AT NIGHT.
 In the aerial warfare of the future the most disquieting work of the war balloon, next to its dropping of explosives, will be its sudden appearance by night to reconnoitre an enemy's camp by searchlight. Few things can be more disconcerting to an army than to be suddenly plunged in a blinding glare of electric light and to know that its dispositions are being noted by the observers in the air. Retaliation with shell is almost impossible, owing to the speed of the balloon and the continual movements of the searchlight. —Illustrated London News.

"BIG BOY" TAFT.

What He Will Always Be to His Former Cincinnati Associates.

William Howard Taft is the same "big boy" in the hearts of his old associates in his home city—Cincinnati—to-day as he was in the days when he went to school. As one of the old companions of the Secretary of War expresses it, "Taft is always a 'big' boy, and he grew up to be a 'big' man." "He wanted to claim acquaintanceship with every friend who called," said a former neighbor. "Whenever he meets me," said an old woman who has known him since



HOW POLAR BEARS SWIM.

Snapshot made by member of the Duc d'Orleans Arctic expedition from the deck of the Belgica in the Kara Sea. —The Sphere.

early childhood, "even if it is on the street, he takes me up in his arms and kisses me."

To Mr. Taft's mother the credit is given of solving the question "How can a big man be graceful?" It was by having him as a boy taught dancing. "Will" detested dancing, but his mother made him take lessons, and induced the girls in the neighborhood to assist her in her efforts. Later, when the big man went to the Philippines as head of the commission appointed by President McKinley, he ingratiated himself with the little brown men by the grace with which he carried his portly frame through



THE TRAIN DE LUXE OF THE HIGH ROAD: THE FUTURE OF MOTORING.
 This 35-40-horsepower motor contains a saloon, a sleeping compartment with four beds, a kitchen and a toilet. The inventor intends to tour Europe in his luxurious machine. —Illustrated London News.

the dances at balls given in his honor. It is said that he studied the dances beforehand and had the floor marked with chalk to assist him in carrying out the figures. Not only his grace in dancing but his ease of manner in walking—which for so large a man is much wondered at—is attributed to this.

It was early in life that Mr. Taft gave promise of future greatness—in size. A carpenter who had his shop near where the Tafts lived tells a story about the start of a fishing excursion to Brown's Basin, in Clifton, which he made with young Taft one day. "We were going to get off early, and I was going to wake 'Will' at 4

o'clock," he said. "He was to tie one end of a string to his toe and hang the other end out of the window. When I went to pull the string it was not in sight. I threw some pebbles up at the window and pretty soon 'Will' got up. He looked out and broke into a laugh. He explained to me that he had rolled over in the night and wound up the string."

A classmate of the Secretary of War tells about an incident that occurred at the 16th District school on Mount Auburn. He and "Will" were kept after school one day. The prospects

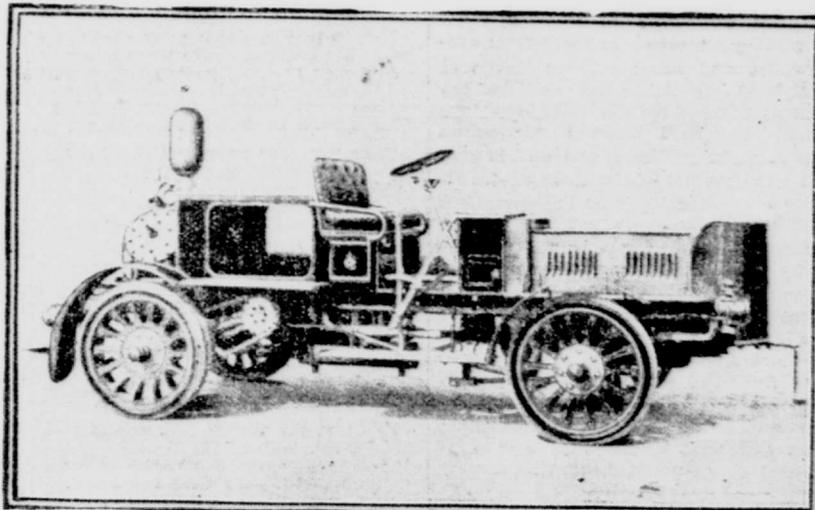


W. H. HORNE, RECORD HOLDER.

Mr. Horne is the professional attached to the Beckenham Golf Club, and a few days ago he made the remarkable drive of 381 yards. —The Sketch.

were not promising for the chubby young Taft. Miss Cole, the teacher, called him up to her and said: "Which will you have, 'Will,' a soft whipping or a hard one?"

"I'll take a soft one," said "Will" modestly. The chastisement which followed was not in exact accord with "Will's" choice. He told his father about it later, and Judge Taft sent word to the teacher to give him another one if he acted that way again.



GLASGOW'S NEW MOTOR FIRE ENGINE.

A powerful petrol motor fire engine has just been constructed for the Glasgow Corporation Fire Brigade. It has a 50-horsepower motor, capable of propelling the machine at a speed of thirty miles an hour along the road, while on reaching the scene of action the power can be at once transferred from the car to the pump, which will deliver 450 gallons a minute. —Illustrated London News.

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