SPEAKING OF SWIMMERS.

A RETIRED MAINE SAILOR'S YARN ABOUT ONE DAN FISH.

The Cheerful Person Who Acted Like a Lunatic, Was Picked Up Off the Danish Coast, Was Lost at Sea and Turned Up in New York, to a Museum Manager's Confusion.

"Speaking of swimmers," said a retired Maine sailor, "in the year '56, when I was before the mast on the American bark Andrew Todd, I met Dan Fish. Curious thing that the durndest swimmer I ever heard tell of should be named Fish. But so it was. Names come that way once in a while. Once I knew a feller named Barnes that was a hostler. A feller named Ketchum was a deputy sheriff once in the town where I was brought up. But he never did.

"Well, about Fish. We went up the Baltic on that trip. On the way out we run pretty well in toward the Danish coast. One day saw a feller on a lonesome cape making signs. He was jest a-working himself into spasms with the signs that he was making. Old man happened to be on deck at the time, and he said:

"'Wonder what that blamed jumpingjack is trying to make out to do?'

"Mate said he thought man must be having fits. Cap'n allowed 'twarn't that. Thought he must want to say something to us. Cap'n didn't want to stop, but thought it might be something he ought to know, and so he hung up head to the wind, and sent a bo't ashore. Don't come back with the feller aboard. He clum over the rail.

"'What kin I do for ye?' asked the old man.

"'Goin' to New York?' asked the feller.

"'Yep. Started for there.'

"'Wal, all right then, I want to go along.'

"'You do, hey? Wal, this ain't no omnibus. We ain't running a stage coach. We ain't advertising for passengers.'

"'Exactly; but I don't want to be a passenger. I want to work. I want to get to New York, and I'm an A. B.—able bodied, and you bet your life I ain't nothin' else.'

"Wal, it so chanced that the old man was short the right kind of a second mate. So he thought the thing over and asked the stranger if he understood things well enough to take the berth. Man said that was jest the lay he was strong on. So the old man took him below.

"It come so that he was in the skipper's watch. Old man usually hung round on deck till about 9 and then he dropped below for forty winks. He allus left word that he was to be called if breeze piped up any. Things went along fust rate for a few days. We got down pretty well into the mouth of the channel. Got so that we could see our way clear to go whoopin' down into the deep water. Weather began to look a little more nasty. Old man would warn the second mate every night more up and stiff about calling him up if the thing come on to blow any in partikler.

"One night I was at the wheel. Heard all the conversation. Old man got down so that only his head was above the companionway. Said he to the mate:

"'Looks sort of muddy around the aidges to-night.'

"'Sure, Mike,' says the mate.

"Old man didn't like for a cent the familiar way the mate had, and he jawed him by the aere about it.

"'Say, don't you talk to me like that any more,' he yelled to the mate.

"'Not on your life, Pete,' the mate said, so cheerful like and sincere and all that, you couldn't get mad at him.

"The old man looked at him for a minute as though he would like to eat both his ears off without pepper or salt. Then his head went down the companionway and out of sight. In a moment it came up again.

"'Say!' he yelled.

"'Aye, aye, sir,' shouted back the mate, still with that cheerful grin on.

"'If she comes on to blow up any be sure to rouse me out.'

"'Sure Mi—oh, aye, aye, sir! But bless your soul, Cap'n, I can handle her like a book. Don't you worrit. Sleep the sleep of the angels.'

"'Well, if it comes on to blow and you don't rout me out,' said the old man, 'you'll be an angel. You can save Mike that all right.'

"Twasn't long before the wind begun to pipe. I had to wrassle summat hard with that old wheel to keep 'er up. But the mate pendulemed up and down the deck whistling, and never said a word about taking in a stitch of sail. Pretty soon she began to worse around that the old man struck his head out. The wind caught up his hair, and it strung it up into the night like a flag of truce.

"'Say, ye ought to take in your royals there,' yelled the old man.

"'Sail right, 's all right,' just as cheerfully answered the mate, as though they had been talking about the hay crop. 'We might jest as well keep 'er on. We shall get there sooner. There ain't no danger at all. She ain't got a mite more sail than she can lug. Go right down and go to sleep, Cap'n.'

"The old man didn't like the looks of things, but the mate acted so confident-like that he gave a few snuffs and then bobbed down out of sight.

"In another half an hour he was up once more. The mate was whistling a tune and looking at the stars. The old crib was lurching down into the seas like a gentleman jag going downstairs.

"'Take in them r'yals,' screamed the old man.

"'Northin' but a puff, Cap'n; northin' but a puff,' said the mate.

"Jest then there was a mighty rip and whoop of the wind and the upper sails went out of the events like smoke. The mate was standing looking at the rags scudding off on the wind when the old man came stomping up behind him. The old man hit him one clip behind the ear and over the rail he went right into the smother.

"'Shall I pat 'bout ship?' I cried, for the thing sort of stunned me.

"'Put 'bout, nothin'!' said the Cap'n. 'I ought to have done that long ago. He was a hoodoo, that's what he was. I don't want any *boonties* on board the Todd.' And he ordered the watch to turn out and furl.

"It made the men feel sort o' blue for a few days to lose a shipmate in that way. And do you know, we all sort o' liked the cuss. He allus had cheerful ways with him. And we thought the old man was a little mite ha'sh to knock him overboard the way he did and then to slide away and leave him. But the feeling wore away, and almost before we knew it we were sloshing on our way up New York harbor.

"'Say, now I'm going to surprise you. I'm afraid you'll think I'm not telling the truth. But, so help me the Great Crawfish, if the man who came running down to the wharf to take the bow hawser wasn't Dan Fish. There he was just as large as life. Old man looked at him as he would at a ghost. Thought he really was a spook. Scared all of us. But spooks don't lug lines as a general thing and smoke clay pipes while doing it. There didn't seem to be no doubt that this was Dan himself in the flesh, smile and all.

"'You here?' at last gasped the old man.

"'Sure, Mike,' said Dan.

"'Warn't you drowned?'

"'Not so that I knowed it.'

"'Wal, how d'ye get here before us?'

"'Swum. I've been here jest nine days waiting for you. I want to collect the pay that is due me.'

"He bonse aboard and the old man counted out his money. Every ten seconds the skipper would ask: 'Ye say ye swum?' And Dan would answer every time: 'Sure, Mike. I'm the champion swimmer of Yurrup. Virrup and Amerikee. I kin outswim everything except the Hackensack whale, and I kin give him quite a sweet run a long ways.'

"'And that was as we could get out of him. Ain't no need of going into the details,' said he.

"'That wasn't no great trick. If I could do that this old tub of yours by two weeks in a straightaway swim across the Atlantic I'd be kicking myself most silly for a week.'

"'But if you swim like that I kin make your fortune for you,' said the old man.

"'Wal, go ahead and make it,' says Dan.

"It happened that about that time a museum was advertising the greatest swimmer of the world. Oh, he could outswim anything, so the bills said. Cracked him away up. Jest as soon as he could get things stowed all right and the stevedores at work the old man hooked off up street and hunted up the manager of the great swimmer. Old man said that he was interested in swimming himself. Manager began to brag on what the swimmer could do. Old man said that warn't nothin' much. He knew a feller that could take the rag off'n that. Then the manager would tell something bigger. And the old man would chip in with the same old grind that wasn't nothin' much to run up a flag about. Pretty soon the manager got gorrammed mad.

"'Who is this feller that ye are talkin' so much about?' he yelled at last. 'What's his name? I never heard of him.'

"'Name's Fish,' calmly said the old man. 'Fish, that's his name.'

"'Thought likely,' sneered the manager. 'Name's codfish or catfish or mackerel, eh? Oh, you think you're a joker, don't ye?'

"'No, sir. I mean Dan Fish,' said the old man. 'He ain't no salt mackerel. I'd bet him against your man for all you want to stake. Leastway on your dough. He's only a sailor, but he can outswim any man in creation.'

"The manager thought he had struck a cinch. He asked the old man if he wanted to put up more than 50 cents. Finally the old man said he would bet his share in the Todd and cargo against $5,000; but he said he supposed the manager was too poor to raise so much. That made the manager mad, and in less than ten minutes the money was up.

"For the next two days the old man wouldn't let Dan out of his sight. He kept asking him if he really was all the kinds of a swimmer he made himself out to be. Dan would say:

"'Old man, you jest hang on to your boarding tackle and see if I ain't.'

"When the day came there was quite a crowd down on the beach where the swimming contest was to take place. The great swimmer was there on the ground first, under the charge of the manager. The swimmer was all dressed up in rubber clothes, and had a paddle and a little flag to fly at his fore peak when he was in the water. He was a slick-looking chap. Looked as though he could go through the water like a pickerel.

"Manager began to scout around, and finally went up to the old man and asked him where his swimmer was. Said his own man couldn't be standing around there much longer in the cold. Old man pointed up the street.

"Dan Fish was coming down. He had on three hats, one a straw, one a plug on top of it, and tied on to the plug was a fur cap with ear lappers. Dan had on two overcoats, and on his back he had strapped a big hamper. He walked down to the edge of the water and stood there.

"'Wal, get ready,' said the manager.

"'Git ready your own man,' said Dan. 'I've been gittin' ready for twenty-four hours. It takes time to get things together and packed away in small space same as I have. Why, I've got four months' provisions in that hamper!'

"'Wh-wh-wh-what, well what are you trying to do any way?' finally stuttered the manager.

"'Do?' shouted Dan, 'do? why, I'm goin' to take a swim. I'd like to see that there guy in the nursing tube suit is a-goin' along o' me he'd better take his grub. He won't get none of mine. He'd better take along some extra clothes. My notion now is that I will strike right for the east coast of Greenland and cruise around it that section for a time. If we get up there and you have the shivers you needn't think you can borrow my extry overcoat. I give ye fair warning now. Fact is, ye want to stock up for a four to six months' cruise.'

"'Why,' says the feller in the rubber tube suit, 'my idea was that we were to have an exhibition. Just swim out here and show what we can do for tricks, you know.'

"'Call that swimming?' asks Dan. 'Why, a monkey can slosh around in a puddle and do tricks. This is swimming that I do. If you want to swim come along. And he waded out to his neck. Then he faced around with that assorted variety of hats rising above the water.

"There was a live argument on shore. Finally the man in the rubber suit said that he wasn't going to trust himself out in the water with a lunatic, and he put his paddle over his shoulder and struck off up the road with the manager trailing along behind, asking and begging him to come back. That's all there was to it.

"That is to say, only that the old man went up and pulled in the stakes, and give up a blowout on board."

JOHN E. OWENS'S SUBSTITUTE.

Brief Career of the Man Who Replaced the Comedian in the Union Army.

WASHINGTON, April 29.—There died in a Washington hospital the other day an Irishman who attained a certain notoriety a generation ago through having been accepted as a substitute in the Union Army for John E. Owens, the comedian. Owens was a resident of Baltimore county, Md., his home being just beyond Baltimore city. The demand on the county for her proportion of the State's quota, under the second requisition of President Lincoln for soldiers, during the civil war lacked forty-seven of completion. Late one afternoon, the time for volunteers to round out the required number having expired at noon, the dreaded and unpopular wheel of fortune, as it was called, was set spinning to supply the deficiency. The third name taken from the wheel by a blind boy sent over from a nearby asylum to act as name taker, was that of John E. Owens. The fact soon became known at Barnum's Hotel in Baltimore city, the meeting place of Owens and his friends.

At the time Owens was filling an engagement at the old National Theatre in Washington and he was having a benefit night, as was the custom once during an engagement in those days. The bill consisted of two plays, "The Rivals" and "The Happiest Day of My Life," in which latter play Owens portrayed a henpecked husband timidly hiding away whenever opportunity offered. The theatre was crowded. President Lincoln and a party occupied a box and members of the Cabinet and other distinguished men in both civil and military life were in attendance. The curtain had gone down amid deafening applause, and when it was rung up again Owens stepped to the front leading *Mrs. Malaprop*. An uproarious demand for a speech continued for some minutes. Now, this was a weak point with Owens; he dreaded speechmaking and always avoided it if possible. Many of the audience were aware of his timidity about public speaking and the calculating to prevent one from him, suddenly he had a happy thought. He took from his pocket a letter brought over by special messenger during the evening from some waggish friend in Baltimore, and, clearing his throat, after an instant of quiet read:

"At a large and intensely interested meeting of the calculating-blooded citizens of Baltimore county this afternoon, you were, upon the third turn of the wheel of fortune and with every evidence of entire acquiescence on the part of all present, selected to represent in part the loyal sentiments of this county as a private soldier in the Union Army. All feel that the honor of the nation's flag could not be intrusted to worthier or more willing hands. We know that your martial spirit has hitherto yielded to a belief that the youth of the county was entitled to first consideration—but official action, in which even envy itself does not attribute collusion or foul play, has relieved you from this restraint, and you will be given a free hand, a uniform and a gun with which you may chisel your name in unimperishable glory on the nation's history, or, failing, fill the grave of an honored though unknown hero, somewhere south of the Potomac. Don't let your mother know, but you have until next Thursday to take your place in line at the State Camp at the Cattle Show Grounds.

"GEN. ED SHRIVER, Commanding."

When the shouts, cheers and guying that followed the reading of the letter had subsided a bit, Owens said:

"My friends, you all know me, you've seen me act, you've seen with what effort my heart and mind have combined to overcome the disciplined timidity of my cowardly legs. The conflict that rages here (striking his breast) is as tumultuous and unreasoning as the waters that dash over Niagara. The yearning for the approbation that follows the successful discharge of a hazardous duty is at times overwhelmed by the fear that an uncontrollable *Bob Acres* trembling might come upon me in the very moment of apparent triumph, and while snatching, as it were, the bauble reputation even from the cannon's mouth, bring disgrace both upon myself and the cause I have so much at heart. My legs have been too thoroughly disciplined by virtue of a long and close study of the noble-minded but feeble-legged *Bob Acres*. You see it is more than possible that the proud uniform of a soldier, which my State, God bless her, so invitingly offers me, might be tarnished through the trembling of my extremities to fling their owner somewhere else whenever danger is scented. I therefore beg and implore any in authority who may hear my voice (looking longingly at the President's box) and who, like myself, wound not willingly see our glorious Star-Spangled Banner exposed to contumely, to wield the power of the whole Administration, if need be, and turn this unsought honor from so unworthy a person, and place it in the keeping of one whose training for the deadly conflicts of life has left his nerves less unstrung than mine."

The next week Owens, through his overseer, arranged with a stalwart young farmhand, recently employed upon his plantation, to take his place in the army for so much money down. Several of Owens's friends drove out to the rendezvous with him on the Thursday to witness his transfer of prospective military honors to Michael O'Dowd. This was soon over and the party returned to Barnum's Hotel, where champagne flowed until well into the night to commemorate the event, after which Owens was driven out home. Shortly after arriving there he was sound asleep. About 2 o'clock the dogs set up a brisk barking. Mrs. Owens being aroused, laid hands on her husband, and said:

"John, wake up. Some one is calling you."

"Huh, what?" said the sleepy comedian.

"Look out of the window," urged his wife. "I'm sure something unusual has happened."

Owens threw up the window and peering into the night with eyes that almost refused to open, called, "Who's there? Who wants me?"

A rich Irish brogue broke the air with: "An' is that you, Mister Owens?"

"Of course it is," replied Owens.

"Air you all right, sor?"

"Of course I'm all right," and then, reflectively, "Tight, too. What do you want?"

"Can they do anything with you, sor?" floated up in the brogue.

"Can they do anything with me?" repeated Owens.

"The Gineral, sor—can he take you for a soldier now?"

"No!" said Owens. "I'm all right, I've put in a substitute—I'm free! Don't worry about me, my friend—good-night to you!"

"Good-by, Mister Owens, sor," said the voice. "I'm yer substitute, sor. I clim' the fence an hour bevant midnight. I didn't see no pickets. So good-by, Mr. Owens. I've got me clothes and the money."

This was true. The Irishman made his way to Canada and remained until the close of the war, when he returned, and through the efforts of Owens, who never ceased to be amused at his substitute's escape, he got employment as a watchman about a Washington theatre, which he never surrendered until taken to the hospital a short time before his death.

HOSTILE PEOPLES YOKED.

STATE OF THE ENMITY BETWEEN NORWAY AND SWEDEN.

Recent Events Which Have Been Exaggerated in Importance—Other Events Overlooked—The Crown Prince's Unpopularity—The War Strength of the Nations.

The relations between Sweden and Norway have been strained for so long a time that much which looks ominous to the world at large is contemplated with comparative indifference by the two nations. Many recent events have been treated with improper significance by correspondents. An appropriation of several million crowns for defensive purposes is made to appear as a menace to peace, no mention being made of the fact that this appropriation has been advocated with great zest for more than a decade.

There are certain events, however, that cannot be explained away. Frequent reports of discourtesies shown by the population of Christiania toward the heir-apparent to the throne of Norway and Sweden indicate that something is wrong. One of these disturbances was an incident which occurred in Christiania recently and which was telegraphed broadcast. The students of the university and a number of other young persons were said to have hissed and snowballed the Crown Prince on his way to the royal castle. The reader of this news, if he possessed any imagination whatever, could not help laughing heartily at the thought of the dignified Crown Prince jumping and dodging to save his immaculate hat from the missiles. What really took place was this: One of the large restaurants in the Norwegian capital wanted to introduce a new brand of beer and conceived the idea of serving it free during one day in order to advertise it. This opportunity was eagerly seized by the students of the university and the members of the literary and artistical proletariat, who are more numerous, perhaps, than in any other city of equal size, and are striving eagerly to emulate their Parisian prototypes. The result was that about midnight, when the restaurants close, the streets were full of young men in a very excited state of mind, who howled lustily in the belief that they were singing patriotic songs.

A large number of them were gathered around the monument of Carl XIV. Johan in front of the royal castle, when the Crown Prince passed by in his carriage. He was greeted with a mixture of hisses and cheers and followed to the very gates of the castle. The rival factions continued their contentions in front of the castle, until the guard turned out to chase them away, when all united in a merry snowball war against the soldiers. One man was arrested and no one was hurt. The Swedish chauvinists laid hold of this incident with avidity and made the most of it in order to further their agitation.

But a much more serious event, which took place a few days earlier, was entirely passed over. It occurred when the Crown Prince, now Regent of the united kingdoms, arrived in Christiania. Thousands of people had gathered in front of the railroad station—a rare occurrence in Christiania, where little attention is paid to the comings and goings of the royal family—but not a hat was lifted and not a cheer was raised when the Crown Prince appeared. No overt act, no indiscreet utterance spoiled the demonstration. And the mute dissatisfaction expressed on every face must have cut the coming ruler of the country more deeply than any hostile outcry.

One of the gravest dangers to the union is to be found in this aversion of the Norwegian people to the Crown Prince. King Charles XV., the elder brother and predecessor of the present King, is alleged to have said once in a moment of depression:

"It will hold together in my time, and perhaps in that of my brother, but how his boy will fare, that is another question."

Whether authentic or not, this prophecy bids fair to come true. The last three Kings have held their own in the hearts of the Norwegian people by acts which the Swedish aristocracy, speaking under their breath, have branded as weak-minded concessions. Oscar I. gave to Norway its own flag; Charles XV. endeavored to abolish the objectionable policy of appointing royal governors for Norway; Oscar II. accomplished the abolition of this policy and has tried in every way to be a constitutional monarch in the English sense. Gustavus, Duke of Wermland and Crown Prince of Sweden and Norway, is credited with a strong opposition to any compromise or yielding. He is reserved, conservative, slow of action and speech, but inflexible when once his mind has been made up. His accession to the throne, the Norwegians think, will mean that the final crisis is upon them.

It happened some eight or ten years ago that a member of the Swedish Cabinet ventured to say that in case of an emergency he would like "to take a walk into Norway with 30,000 men at his heels." Six months later he was quietly dropped from the Cabinet, but if the will of the Swedish people had been consulted he would have been buried at the foot of the Kaiser's monument. Whether the resurrection had been out of the question. At the present date his word might have been received differently. Anyhow, there is a rumor to the effect that the Crown Prince recently declared himself ready to march into Norway at the head of a Swedish army. The rumor has not been allowed to die because it cannot be denied that the two countries are making extraordinary efforts to make up for previous neglect of their defences.

A look at the party situation in the two countries is necessary in order to bring these measures into the proper light. Parliamentarism has not yet made much progress in Sweden. The present Conservative Cabinet has held office for years without having a majority in the lower house of the Riksdag. Party lines are so vague that it is hard to tell whether parties in the Anglo-Saxon meaning really exist. Universal suffrage dates back only to 1865. The first effect of the new order was that the agricultural elements found themselves in a majority and since then they have used their power chiefly to enforce economy in government and to promote legislation furthering their own interests. For a long time they were united under the name of the Farmers' party, representing as such the centre, and flanked by two minor groups of aristocratic ultra-conservatives and city radicals. The protectionist agitation reached Sweden in the eighties and for a time it promised to bring into existence two sharply defined parties, based on opposition or adherence to the new doctrine. But the issue once settled, everything lapsed into the previous vagueness, and to-day the Riksdag has to show a half dozen groups that seem to have crystallized around idiosyncrasies, rather than principles, each one including members of widely divergent opinions.

An indirect result of the protectionist victory was the introduction into Swedish politics of a strong element of chauvinism, which since then has been gaining ground steadily. The advocates of a strong defence, who heretofore had met with scant encouragement, are now shaping the fate of Sweden, and militarism is used to crush liberalism. First Russia and then Norway have been enlisted as bugaboos to compel military appropriations. Under this pressure the army has been reconstructed, the compulsory military service has been made effective, and a new navy has been built, which is looked upon with admiration by European experts—so much the more so because every one of the new vessels has been built in Swedish shipyards.

The Swedish Riksdag voted, only a few days ago, to appropriate some 22,500,000 for the purchase of twenty rifles and as much for strengthening of the fortifications. This does not mean that the Swedish people have any intention of going to war with Norway. What it means is that the chauvinists had been crying so long and so loudly about the superior equipment of the Norwegian infantry that they finally were allowed to have their way. The action is dangerous principally through the effect it will have on the Norwegian people.

One of the chief grievances of the Swedish conservatives against Norway used to be that the country did not bear its appropriate share of the expense for the protection of the Scandinavian peninsula against a possible enemy. Now the cry has changed and it is thought that the Norwegians are arming too much. The change of policy is no doubt striking. After having refused for years to do anything, the Norwegian radicals suddenly turn round and vote one million after the other for guns, for cruisers, for fortifications. It is, of course, not reassuring that this should happen just when the life of the peace-loving Oscar II. seems to be drawing to an end and his more aggressive son is about to succeed him. But it must always be remembered that as each the centre