

AN EXHAUSTIVE OF POPULAR SPORT

TO some men is given the ability to command in many directions and when such a man is found he is one of great capacity and of exceptional judgment. Such a one is Mr. August Belmont of New York, a manager of affairs where the keenest wits alone can keep a man in the front rank, and in addition to that he is at the head of the Jockey Club and also the American Kennel Club. What he is to the Jockey Club was well demonstrated a year ago, when, during his absence in England, things got to such a pass that the future of racing in New York state was in the greatest danger. The racing reports teemed with suggestions and even stronger comments regarding alleged frauds, and to such a pass had things come that the Jockey Club stewards were forced to undertake an investigation. What this investigation brought about was the disqualification of Riley Graman and one or two others, but that was nothing to what Mr. Belmont accomplished in his quiet way on his return in putting a stop to the paper attacks. It did not take him long to realize where the trouble was located and that it was more the rivalry of reporters to pose as authorities and keen critics than any slump in turf morals.

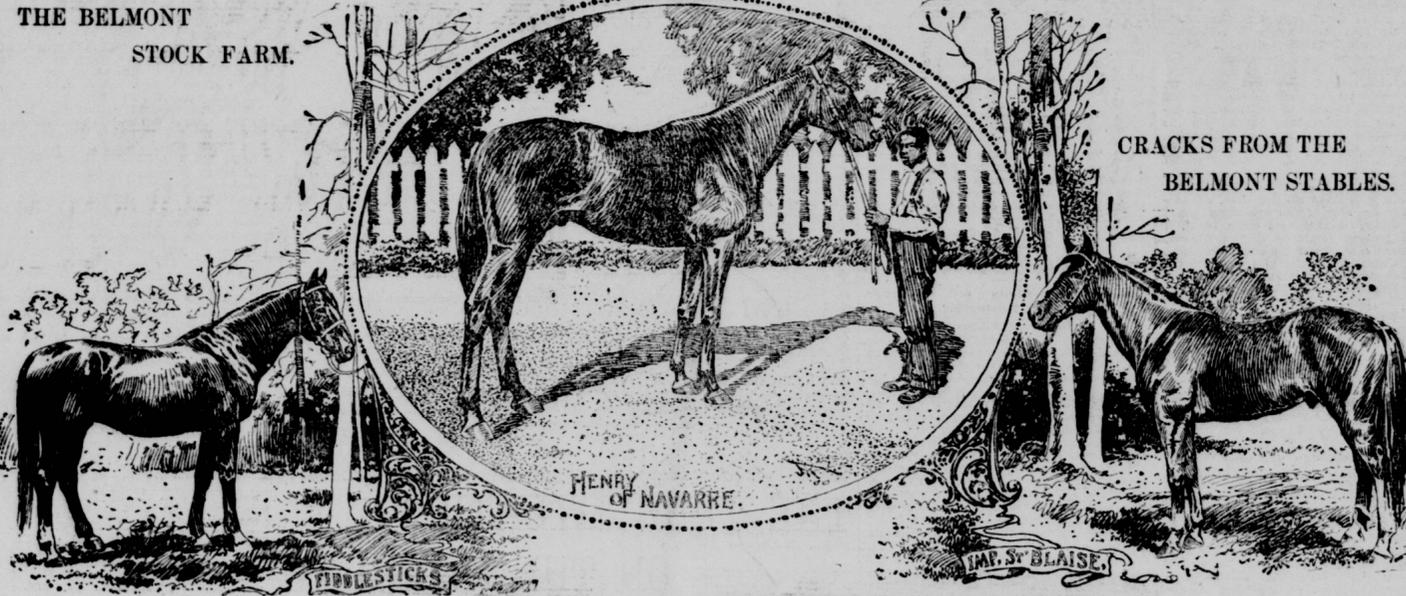
A very short time after his return each turf reporter in New York received a note stating that Mr. Belmont would be pleased to have him come to the Jockey Club rooms at a stated hour, and as it was a personal matter a request was added that no notice be published of the meeting in advance. All except one or two were on hand at the time appointed, and on Mr. Belmont's arrival he at once began his talk, the gist of which was that unless the persistent attacks on the turf came to an end there would soon be an end of racing. He stated that it was impossible for horses to always run alike, that racing could not be reduced to a mathematical science and that that must be recognized without any loss of time. The result of this talk was instantaneous change in criticism, and all through the good judgment of Mr. Belmont, who knew that the best thing to be done was to apparently make each reporter his confidant in the matter and have him placed on a personal footing as regards the turf future.

In a similar manner the American Kennel Club owes its permanent establishment to Mr. Belmont, for at a time when it was being made a target for lawsuits he assumed responsibility for all expenses in defending any and all suits brought against the club or its officers and thus saved the day. Mr. Belmont's first connection with sport was probably his exhibition of fox terriers, for he was one of the earliest to take up that breed in this country, being an exhibitor at one of the first shows in this country. He then dropped out, but only for a time, as about fifteen years ago he again took them up and, making judicious purchases abroad, soon took the lead. Eventually he bred Belmont Victor II, pronounced to be one of the best terriers ever seen in this country. When any one takes to horses to any extent, then every other fancy suffers, so that the advent of Mr. Belmont at the head of the Jockey Club was the signal for his gradual withdrawal as a fox terrier exhibitor. The Kennel Club, however, declined to accept his resignation of the presidency several years ago, and when anything important has to be straightened out his sound advice is always sought for.

In addition to being an owner of race horses, Mr. Belmont has one of the most important breeding establishments in the country, the Nursery farm at Lexington, Ky. Mr. Belmont senior had one of the same name at Bayton for many years, and when he finally realized that he was fighting additional odds in attempting to overcome the natural drawbacks of breeding and raising race horses on Long Island he removed his breeding farm to the newly purchased place at Lexington, which he also named the Nursery farm or stud, the Babylon one being kept as it is at present, for the use of race horses.



THE BELMONT STOCK FARM.



CRACKS FROM THE BELMONT STABLES.

AUGUST BELMONT'S SUCCESS ON THE TURF

The Lexington farm is an exceptionally good one for even that section of famous breeding establishments. Like all of them, it has a splendid water supply, and for the development of the young stock, the rolling surface is admirably adapted. There are there are spacious pastures, well wooded for shade, and the brood mares can look after their foals in the heat of their first summer. Mr. Belmont senior has at the time of his death the greatest establishment not only in the country, but anywhere, if case is to be the test for decision, for when the horses were sold in 1891, after his death, the sum of \$83,500 was realized. The feature of the sale was the great sire St. Blaise, for which Mr. Charles Reed gave \$100,000 to secure him for Fairview stud, at Gallatin, Tenn. The position of the Belmont stable at that time was an easy first, as the stable included Potomac and Mashua, the first and second for the Futurity; La Tosca, the best of her sex that year; St. Charles, Fides, Her Highness, Amazon and Prince Royal.

The present Mr. August Belmont was a large and judicious buyer at the Nursery sale, purchasing Fiddiesticks as the sired of the new establishment and such well tried mares as Princess, Belladonna, Felicia, Fen Follet, Fides, Lady Margaret, She and Semiramis, Magnetar, kept at the sale by T. W. Shreve for \$100,000, was later on secured by Mr. Belmont, but neither of the mares was up to the necessary standard, so when the late William L. Scott's imported St. Leger winner Rayon d'Or was disposed of he was bought for the Nursery farm. This famous mare had a vile temper, and this he transmitted to his colts, the speediest ones excelling in bad temper. Unreliability was also a feature of the Rayon d'Or's hence it is not a matter of much regret that he died about eighteen months ago. What is hoped to be a worthy successor to St. Blaise is the American bred race horse Henry of Navarre. It is yet to be seen what he can accomplish as a sire, but he has all the requirements of high breeding and individual excellence, both as to conformation and speed. It will be a great disappointment to the thousands who idealized Henry of Navarre if he is a stud failure. It is hardly possible for such to be the case, however, when it is considered that the Nursery and mares are for the most part dams of winners.

In other branches of sport Mr. Belmont is well known, though not outside of his intimate friends. As a pupil of Prof. Donovan of the New York Athletic Club, Mr. Belmont might have taken high rank had he so pleased, but athletic honors of that kind were not his mark. Later on he was the president of that club at the time when the Manhattan Athletic Club was its dangerous rival and Mr. George Goss was spoken of as its likely president. The danger being past, he dropped out of the place in athletics when there was an opponent on hand in which he could show his power. In polo also Mr. Belmont was a leader in the days of the fierce rivalry between Rockaway and Hempstead, a rivalry which has not yet been ceased. His manner of getting the best of an opponent has been well illustrated in the recent tilt between the Western turf congress and the Jockey Club. The Jockey Club had granted a license to the Western Turf Club to extend its meetings until the 4th of December, which is five days over the limit set by the Jockey Club for racing in the northern latitude. When the time came for the Western men's rule to go into effect, they made a great fuss about outlawing the outsiders, some of whom withdrew from the meeting. Later on a telegram was sent to Belmont, who, in reply, left no room for the Western association in his quiet reminder that it would be out of the question for the Jockey Club to admit the Western congress rules were in force in the territory conceded to be governed by the Jockey Club.

JAMES WATSON.

MICHAEL'S FIERCEST FALLS.

EXACTLY HOW IT FEELS TO HURLE THROUGH SPACE.

The Little Bicycle Wonder Graphically Describes for the First Time the Most Sensational Tumbles of His Wheeling and Racing Career.

By "Jimmie" Michael.

On the eve of my departure for Europe I have been asked to give some particulars of the most exciting moments of my career.

As a whirlwind rider I can relate some startling incidents of the many narrow escapes I have had from death.

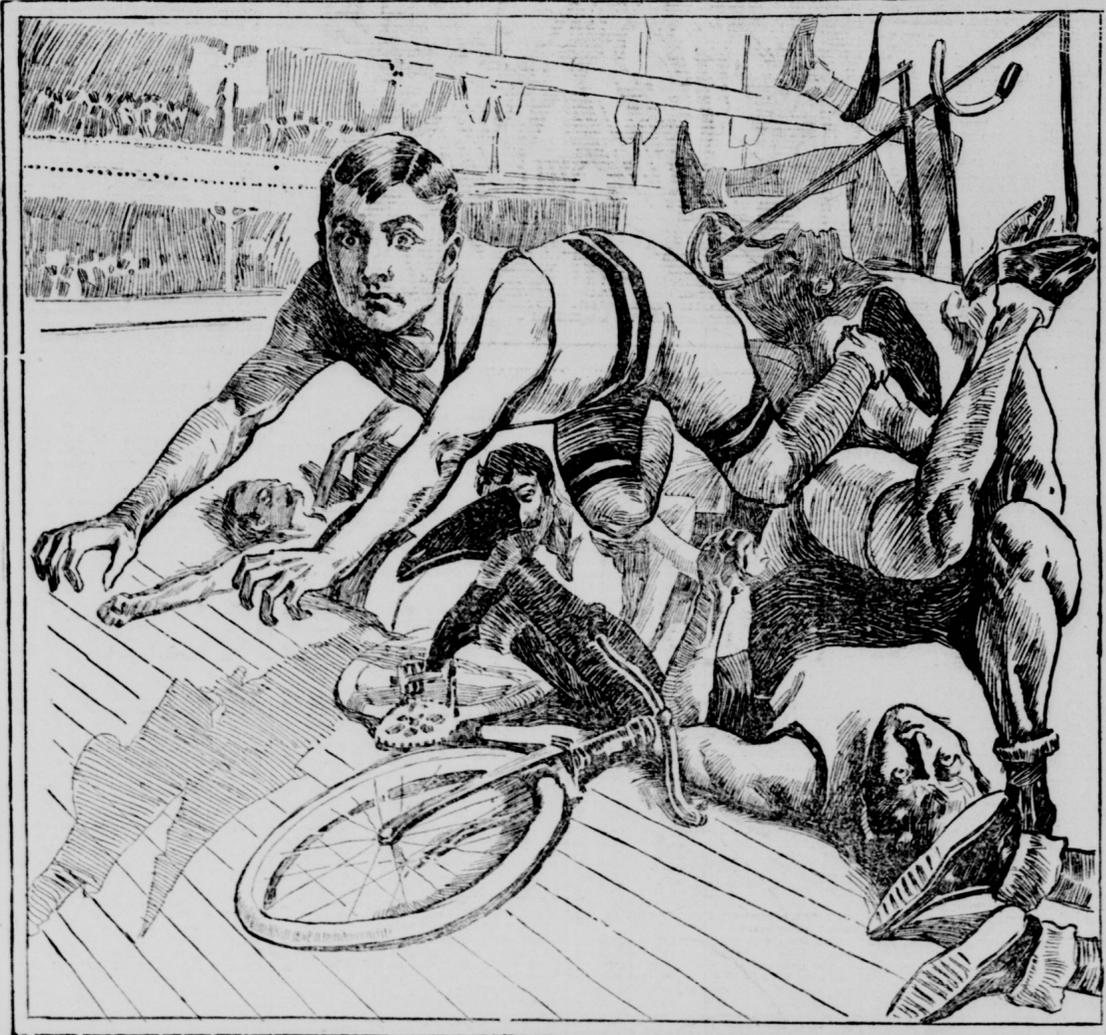
More than once I have during the wreck of wheels and terrible impact attending a grand smash-up, when riders going at a fast clip collapse in a writhing heap, thought for an instant that the game was up.

There is, however, a mistaken idea existing that a fall from a wheel when the rider is going fast must surely result in death or at best the fracture of a number of bones and the general demoralization of the rider's anatomy. My falls, and here I may remark that they have been numerous as to be uncountable, have only caused temporary distress.

I account for it in this way: It has frequently been remarked that a special providence looks after the life of a drunken man, and I suggest that the same providence guards the bicycle racer from serious injury. The explanation of the drunken man's escape from harm is that, being mentally incapacitated, he falls without making any effort to save himself. A tumble is not made easier because a man grasps at the air, the ground, his hair, anything in fact to save himself. The man with a jag grasps at nothing. He just falls, and usually falls the natural, and therefore the right way. A bicyclist falls in the same manner. He, too, is intoxicated, dizzy with the whirl, whirl around the track and the fierce excitement of the race. The crash comes instantly. He has no time to think, and he goes to the ground without any attempt to save himself, smash, knockup, in the way he happens to be shot from the wheel.

He has to know something about the great art of falling, however. There is a way to fall so as to smash yourself to pieces, and a way to drop lightly and with a minimum amount of damage. I have acquired the habit of falling properly. Hence I possess a whole anatomy today, instead of being in sections, as might be supposed by one who has seen a bicycle smash-up.

I think the worst fall I ever had, and in fact the only one in my life that effectively put me out of the race, was one that happened to me at Paris. It was a 100 kilometer race at the Winter garden, and as the event was open to all comers the track was crowded to the danger point with all kinds of riders, pacemak-



I Was Going at a Fearful Speed, I Plunged Into the Middle of the Wreck, and then Another and Another Rider Came Crashing. For the First in My Life I Had to Give Up the Race.

ers and scrubs. I was going at a fearful speed, and was confident of showing up well to the front at the finish, when a rider in front of me who ought to have been among the spectators instead of on the track, managed to make his wheel slip and twist so that he was thrown and fell with the wheel under him.

There was no chance of my turning out, and so I plunged into the middle of the wreck, going over the handlebars in a heap. Before I had time to disengage myself, the rider behind me came crashing into the wreckage, and then another and another, until the track was a bewildering mass of humanity, straggling, kicking and swearing with the wheels, in all shades of eccentric shapes, mixed up in the snarl.

It was some time before the trainers and others who rushed to the rescue could unravel the tangle, and when they did so, I was picked from somewhere at the bottom of the heap. On top of me had been a couple of tandem riders with their machine. No bones were broken, but my cuticle had been badly scraped, and I was a mass of bruises and contusions. I tried to go on, but had to give it up. I was completely used up, and for the first and last time up to date, in my life, I had to limp from the track and give up the race.

My other bad falls have all occurred to me in this country. The worst was while I was training at Saratoga, on a two-lap track in the Casino. How it happened I have never been quite able to tell, but my wheel went from under me and I was shot into space. Strange to say, the fall on this occasion did not hurt me at all. I simply upset my stomach so that I was unable to ride.

This is one of the worst features of a bad fall. Bruises I can get over, and cuts can be plastered up so that I can afford to laugh at them, but the upsetting of the stomach is too much for me. It is a falling that it is impossible to recover from in a hurry. My trainer always has a heavy task before him when it happens. It seems to turn my inside completely around in sympathy with the fall, and makes me sick, so that I cannot put on my best speed.

A few days before one of my races with Chase I had a most peculiar fall. While bending over the handlebars and speeding for a lap I was with the wheel in some way and went up into the air, turning a complete somersault and landing on my feet, not a bit the worse for my experience. I came through it without a scratch, but as usual my stomach was somewhat shaken up.

Another fearful fall that I had was in Boston on the 15th of June last. It was the night before my race with Duffy, and I was training hard and riding my best on a track one-third of a mile in length. I was being paced by a sextette, and having got in behind it was feeling like riding the race of my life. At that time we had whooped up the speed until the wheels must have been flying around the track at a 155 clip. Suddenly the spokes of one of the sextette's wheels, which had been carelessly left loose, came out without a second's warning, the whole machine went to pieces, and the wheels were full of riders and whizzing wheels, whirling around with all the wisdom of machinery deprived suddenly of its guiding power. Into

the midst of this frightful stew I whirled at my 155 speed, and there never was such a fearful mix-up as was to be seen a moment later.

How any of us ever got out of it alive is a mystery only to be accounted for on the principle referred to before that some of our trainers rushed up and separated the wheels from the men. It is hard to get single wheels, but to be in the middle of a sextette of riders, and beneath a machine with six wheels that revolve like the life long after the motive power has ceased to connect with them is a feat. It didn't prevent my riding the rest of the day, however, and although Duffy led for the first twelve miles, I managed to get to the end of that distance to overcome the soreness from the fall of the previous day, and the race won at the end of ten miles.

During the time I was training for the race with Lense at Springfield, Mass., I had a bad fall. It was caused this time by a front wheel of the triplet passing and blowing up, an unforeseen accident that resulted in the unforeseen collapse of the grand tangle of legs and wheels. In some of these practice spins it must have borne in mind that I ride at a faster pace than during a race, as the runs are of short duration, and I go in for speed more than during a race. This was my fall at the time I speak of.

On this occasion I was badly cut and bruised about the spine, but I was in fairly good condition, although I was incapacitated any one not worked over like a Trojan to set me fit for the race two days later, and I went on the race in fairly good condition, although I was covered with plaster and badly bruised and stiff from my fall. It was a twenty-mile race and no one in the race got my stiff and sore frame to keep up the race. It was neck and neck for eighteen miles, when I managed to come on up some reserve force from my sheer force of will won the race.

I have grown to expect falls, and take them as part of the trouble of my life, and if I were not for the effect on my stomach I think I could manage to win a race in spite of the worst fall I ever had. I left me with whole health, but only my trainer and I know the trouble I have had with my stomach from the feature of the accident side of my stomach. After all it is the stomach that is the part of a test of power and endurance. No one knows this better than a professional bicycle rider, whose stomach is so often called upon to submit to all kinds of demoralizing accidents.

PARTIES bound for Alaska should take at least twenty dollars in silver quarters, halves and dollars along with them, as it is very scarce in that country and the inability to make change frequently results in extortion on the part of packers, boatmen and others often resulting in compelling parties to pay from fifty cents to two or three dollars in excess of regular rates.