SUNSET IN THE SAND HILLS

The Editor Shoots a Swan in His Highly Educated Mind.

ON CRESCENT'S BEAUTIFUL SHORES

Whisperings of the Whirling Wheel—Chat with the Ball Players and the Usual Weekly Grist of Sport.

I NEGLECTED to state in my opening article on spring duck shooting last week that upon arrival at Hamilton's we found our genial host suffering in the incipient stages of the mumps, but still able to be about. He was on hand to welcome us as usual and at once injected a lot of enthusiasm into our respective corporosities by the information that he thought we were just in time. Notwithstanding the lakes were all frozen over solidly the white geese had been coming in by the thousand and for two days past there had been quite an encouraging flight of ducks, principally canvasback and redhead. The Brewer and the Lawyer, despite the fatigue of our long and arduous journey from Lakeside, were irrepressibly jubilant and resolved to go right out that afternoon as soon as they had gotten their dinner, which Mrs. Hamilton had announced would be ready for us as soon as we got washed and straightened up a bit.

In a marvelously short time our sod palace had assumed the picturesque condition that so delights the sportsman.

Guns and gun cases were stacked in one corner; trunks were unstrapped, opened up and shooting paraphernalia hauled forth and scattered over the beds and chairs. Shell, boxes, pipes and bags of tobacco, boxes of cigars, oil cans, wiping sticks, duck calls and other heterogeneous articles littered shelves and window sills. The warm reds, greens and purples of extra blankets glowed in a confused pile, while valises, overcoats, rubber boots, mackintoshes and pillows were strewn slovenly about.

Outside Canvasback Lodge was another picture, composed entirely of touches of the sandhill wilderness. To the left was a pyramid of decoys, canvasback, redhead, mallard, teal and blue-bill; here lay an old rusty steel trap, there some castoff harness and a broken neck-yoke. The boats, five in number, lay behind the lodge; one new and unpainted, and another filled with trampled hay and rushes, with quantities of duck feathers intermingled and a good sized pile of empty shells in one end, evincing recent service, perhaps before the late freeze-up came. A huge stack of "cow-chips"—the only fuel in the woodless sandhills—loomed up just west of the big family adobe house; then came a tousled haystack, then the sod barn with the carcass of a dead steer beyond, while all about, in one attitude or another were setters, pointers and spaniels, the inmates of the big kennel Hamilton has in process of breaking, just twenty-two head in all. Rex, the king of dogs and Hamilton's pride, as well as the greatest retriever on earth, was there, too, keeping a fatherly watch over all his kind and cavorting around like a pup in keen anticipation of the sport he felt our presence boded. A pair of whitely bleached deer horns crookedly surmounted the low door way, while from pegs driven in the walls in front and at the ends were the drying skins of badger, skunk, coyote and muskrat. A red-tail hawk, flanked by a pair of seagulls, was tacked over one of the casements, and traps, axes, oars, dog chains, empty powder cans and other debris lay all about in the most unmethodical profusion.

Add to these the shimmering atmosphere hanging over the background sandhills, with their splotches of melting snow and tufts of green cactus; Lake Hamilton lying like a reflection of the cerrulean heavens in front, and the golden blanket of the March sun spread over the whole and the scene is complete.

But we had no time to waste in admiration of our surroundings and were quickly seated at the long table, and such a dinner as lay before us, redundant as it was with the spoils of plain and lake.

A short-rib roast, as was never roasted before, baked potatoes, watercress, corn pone, sand cherry sauce and hot coffee, is what we stowed away under our shooting jackets, by the cartload it seemed.

The banquet was too much for me—I came near foundering, and after it was over, I repaired to the lodge and stretched my graceful and athletic shape upon a bed for a good smoke. Charlie and Billy could not be swerved from their original resolution and filling coat pockets with Victor shells and shouldering their guns, they set out, per pedes apostolorum, for a jog round Lake Hamilton.

I have no knowledge how long it was after their departure, but I do know that I was rudely and abruptly aroused from a most refreshing slumber by Hamilton loudly calling me to get my gun and come outdoors. I sprang from my bed and, seizing my gun, hurriedly inserted a couple of shells, and scrambled forth to see what was up.

"Stand still," admonished Ed, who stood just without the door; "there's a bunch of swan coming from off Crescent an' they'll pass right over the house."

Sure enough, the next moment I saw the birds, seven of them, cleaving the air with measured stroke of snowy pinion, coming from the south in a line, and I saw that they would pass directly over us. As they cleared Hamilton's house they discovered us and began to rise and veer off. Then I let them have it—first one barrel and then the other—and, although we heard the shot rattle against their breasts, I got none down. With a sonorous "hoo-oo-oo!" the great, lumbering creatures spasmodically beat their wings, climbed higher and higher, then with a grand sweep, swung off over the dome of the frowning sandhill back of us.

A cottony bit of down or two, floating almost stationary on the listless breeze, was the only evidence left me of whatever effect my shots had had.

"What sized shot?" queried Hamilton.

"Fives," I answered.

"Too small, and then they were higher than they looked."

Provident host! I had never known him to be at fault when it came to account for a poor shot at the hands of any of his guests. Still I think he was all right in this instance, yet I was disappointed. I had counted on one, if not a double, but had only succeeded in displacing a feather or so.

It was now getting along well in the afternoon and as a good many birds were to be seen flying aimlessly around the lakes to the south, I went back into the lodge and got a supply of shells, rejoining Hamilton a moment later just east of the family residence.

"When the ice opens up," he observed, "I think you will have great sport; there seems to be a great many birds here now and all that is required to make good shooting is a little open water. Down! there comes a flock of white geese now."

We dropped together in the low grass, and glancing up I instantly caught sight of a long white line against the blue of the background sky. They were coming swiftly on with their usual garrulous clamor and were soon over us, probably fifty yards high. I straightened up to get a better shot, and, leading them well, let go with the first barrel, but again I scored an ignominious miss.

"Lead 'em! lead 'em!" impatiently exclaimed Hamilton.

The birds had now passed over and their broken ranks were welling together again, and, while I felt that they were out of range, I obeyed directions, and pulled the second barrel.

My surprise at this more than counterbalanced the chagrin I experienced at my first shot, for with a loud squawk one of the birds dropped from out the line and went gyrating and tumbling off against the side of the sandhill. He lit with a bounce, rolled down a few feet, then lodged against a clump of yucca.

An half hour later the Brewer and the Lawyer returned, Charlie with a white goose thrown over his shoulder and Billy carrying a brace of widgeon. They had indulged in quite a long tramp, clear over to Hackberry lake and back, and seen slathers of geese and "quite a few" ducks, and were in correspondingly high spirits. Metz had gotten his goose from a flock flying over, while the Lawyer had made a double on his widgeon, jumping them from the reeds on Hackberry's frozen shores.

The following morning broke calm and mantled in light cloud. The sun-glow interfusing the delicate mist, which always arises from the marshy sandhill districts, kindled it into a veil of pearl streaming over the brow of day.

Hamilton was not well enough to leave the house, but he joined us after breakfast and advised us to take one of the wagons and pull over the range to Crescent lake. All the shooting they had had this spring had been at Crescent, as the birds seemed to frequent the place in preference to all others. Two weeks before, when the lakes were partially open, the Ankeny boys from Deadwood were down, and one afternoon from off Otter point they killed eighty-five redhead, and the day following some sixty more. Then the freeze-up came, the birds disappeared as by a magician's hand, and they gave it up and returned home.

So of course we were not long in making up our minds. We would put in the day at Crescent, the Brewer and the Lawyer going together, and I, with Alfred, the hired man, who was to drive us across.

The frescoes of dawn had hardly dissolved when we got under way. The clouds had melted into the merest lacework, and the corrugated tops of the western sandhills were breaking into rosy fire, and the solemn gray was brightening into a golden landscape of plain and promontory, when we came upon Crescent lake.

"Look at that heagle!" exclaimed Alfred, as he pulled up the horses on the brow of the ridge, where we could gaze off over the really enchanting scene stretched out before us.

But, parenthetically, I must insert here a brief description of our driver. His name was Alfred, Alfred Daykin, and he was a tenderfoot, fresh from Albion's distant shores. Not exactly a tenderfoot either, for he had put in a year on a sheep ranch up in Montana, had hunted considerably and was fast acquiring a knowledge of American game and American ways of pursuing the same. He was a bright fellow, inclined to the hyperbolic in his recountal of past experiences, yet honest and conscientious when it came to matters of real importance. He was odd in configuration and odder in manner and speech, and we had a good deal of fun with him during our sojourn in the hills, almost as much as had our forefathers with his ancestry in the memorable days of '76.

"See the heagle!" and he pointed off over the upper arm of the lake, where one of those huge birds was circling, probably in search of rabbit or crippled duck.

The broad expanse of ice was glittering and scintillating like gem-bestudded silver. The sunlight also spread broad and dreamy over the sear grass, stretching away, clear to the base of the darksome hills, here sprinkling itself in mites of gold among the drooping and withered flags, there striking aisles into fields of reeds and rushes. The blackbirds were alert with their sweet "kong-ker-ree," and off from the icy sheet came once in a while the squawk of a goose, the hoarse "holler" of a swan or quack of duck, for in numerous places out on the lake, lying still in the early sunshine, we saw great bunches of mixed birds, from the lovely swan and Canada goose, down to merganzer and teal.

The Brewer and the Lawyer selected a blind on a point in the upper end of the lake, while I picked out one a mile below, on a narrow peninsular neck of rush-covered land extending well out toward the middle. My companions were to take the boat, and unloading this and half the decoys, I directed Alfred to drive me to the point I had selected, and an half hour later we were all snugly ensconced in natural hides that would defy the keenest discernment of goose or duck, and anxiously awaiting the coming of the birds. My English valet had driven the horses and wagon off back of the nearest hills, and returned and taken up his stand in the exuberant reeds a few yards to my right. We kept up our sharp lookout for probably an hour without being rewarded by the sight of any birds, but those basking in groups on the ice at distant points on the lake, and I instinctively felt that the sport was going to be limited.

"Hif we'd honly brought a hax," finally observed Alfred, "we could 'ave cut han hairhole hout there by the decoys, an' the sun shinin' on the water, would 'ave made the ducks coom, I'll bet you."

"Yes, that wouldn't have been a bad idea," I replied, "but as we didn't bring an axe, all we can do is to make the best of our situation and come better prepared tomor—"

"Mark!"

A pair of pintails, with their long, slender necks stretched out to their fullest elongation were coming hurriedly straight across the lake. Suddenly they catch sight of our decoys scattered over the ice, and warily make a sharp turn and start to circle the spot.

"If they come in, I'll take them both," I cautioned Alfred. "If I miss, pump it at 'em."

"Hall right," whispered Johnny Bull.

The spikes had now swung clear round over the hills back of us, but were coming back at a rate of speed that was discouraging. I wasn't in the best position, but just before the birds got over me, I led the drake about three feet, and his mottled body came down into the rushes, almost within reaching distance, as if shot from a gun—dead as a door nail. The hen, with an affrighted squeak, put on a little extra steam and did her best to get out of range, but she failed most lamentably. I was shooting the celebrated Peters Victor shells, 3½ drams of S.S. powder, and an ounce and an eighth of chilled sixes, the best I ever used, and Mrs. Pintail caught it well astern and made a frantic plunge for the ice, falling quite 200 yards away.

"Hey! That was hextra fine!" called Alfred, as he started on a run out on the ice for the bird.

He had hardly settled in his reedy concealment again when the clangor of a mob of white geese broke the morning stillness. They were coming from behind off toward Blue lake and we quickly saw the living snowy triangle clearing the dividing hills, coming straight onto us. Admonishing the Englishman to take the rear birds I bent still lower in the rushes and awaited the interesting moment. The bulk of the big flock passed over right between our blinds, with a sturdy old gander at the very head of the apex calling loudly to his followers to "come on." I broke his neck the first dash out of the box, and then, in the frantic scramble for the neither spaces that followed, I killed my second, while Alfred also cut a brace out of the tail-enders.

Not a bird fell over thirty yards from the blinds, and all four were dead when they struck the ice and the land, once more attesting to the killing character of the Peters shells.

There was a long interval succeeding this nice work, during which the only moving birds we saw were a long way off, too far even to be detracted from their course by the most vigorous efforts with the call, and I was rapidly becoming disgusted, when a bunch of canvasback, like fabled racers of the upper regions, came pouncing down upon us from the sky. The first premonition we had of their proximity was the sharp whistle and swish of their wings as they dished down and flashed over our decoys like apparitions of the air. Alfred and I were both startled, the Englishman half rising and lifting his gun.

"Don't shoot!" I commanded, catching him just in time, for the birds were already 200 yards away and going on and up like rockets.

"Too bad!" I remarked, with a bit of supplementary ornamentation soothing to a vexed spirit, and was about stepping from my blind for a little stretching when I saw the birds turn, way off a mile or more in the hazy distance, swing round and head in our direction again.

I simply had time to get in good position in the rushes again, at such tremendous velocity does the hungry canvasback fly, when they were upon us, yet not in half decent shooting distance. But no chances were to be thrown away, and we banged away, all four barrels, as they hurtled past like a charge of canister, into their very midst.

On they went, every mother's son of them, to our keen disappointment, but the next instant we saw one fall behind, farther and farther, sagging and wobbling, then let go and come to the ice with a plunk, fully 300 yards away. Alfred brought it in and it proved to be a fine young drake in a blazonry of splendid spring plumage, and, really, I felt satisfied with our morning's work. So much for the potent charm of a single specimen of the grandest bird that flies can fill the heart of an ardent sportsman.

We lunched at noon, took a smoke and then settled ourselves for the afternoon watch. It was a profitless vigil, from a shooting standpoint, but three more white geese and an old hen mallard being added to the morning's bag, but the enjoyment derived from a close connection with nature in all her most bewitching forms was compensation enough for the wasted day.

Alfred became tired and went off to the wagon for a doze, leaving me alone with my dreams. For a time I was engrossed with watching the basking groups of fowl on the ice, and listening to their drowsy murmurings and the cansonet of the blackbird, interrupted occasionally by disordant blots of sound from winnowing hawk or famishing coyote. All these, however, were soon unnoticed, as I lay outstretched on a bed of reeds, with the swaying stalks environing, and watched the cloud-ridges, pils upon pile, lowering in a mighty form over half the heavens and plunging leagues and leagues of desolate hill and plain in shadow. We bend our heads before the grandeur of a Yellowstone, where almost seas of water plunge upon the rocky heart of that wild country with reverberating thunders, but glance merely at some cataract of stormy vapor dashing down the sky slope! Yellowstone or Niagara, to this, are mere cascades! We linger entranced upon the beamy lights and velvet shades of the old masters; of Titian or Tintorreto, whose names glitter with the magic tints of Italy; but the colors born of the artist, atmosphere, flash disdain upon the tame blazary of their mimic hues. Even the divine frescoes of Raphael must yield to the common tints of twilight on Nebraska's western prairies. And the architecture of Giotto and Angelo, what is it to what you can behold by gazing upward into the clouds at a turbulent March sunset. There is a matchless architecture then, with colonnodes and pillars, arches and towers, never tiring the sight in their sameness, but changing constantly as you gaze, resting on foundations of living sapphire, and flushed and glowing with flitting tints that transcend even the diviniest dreams of all the mighty masters in ages past.

We drive slowly home in the evening. The clouds have about all disappeared, and the signs are for another pleasant day on the morrow. The Brewer and Lawyer have fared but little better than I. A Canada and two white geese, three pintails and a pair of red heads is all they are enabled to show, and disappointed and in silence, we trail along the darkening valley road as the sun goes down.

The blackbirds fly to their roosting place,
As the sun goes down;
And far in the sky the goose's flight I trace
In flocks that waver and interlace,
As the sun goes down.

The bullfrogs croak by the lake's black rim,
As the sun goes down;
And the rushes stand all grim and slim
When the mists have gathered gray and dim,
As the sun goes down.

A teal comes past with a swish of wings,
As the sun goes down;
And a fold of the twilight creeps and clings
To the flagstalks; and a cricket sings,
As the sun goes down.

SANDY GRISWOLD.

Whisperings of the Wheel.

ALTHOUGH the Turner Wheel club is a comparatively new organization, it is one of the strongest organizations of its kind in the state. It was also one of the first wheel clubs composed entirely of active Turners in this country. It was first organized in the spring of 1892 and started out with a membership of ten, which has now grown to nearly fifty, all of whom are active Turners as well as wheelmen. An applicant must be a member of the Turnverein before he is eligible. Thus none but active membership exists in the club.

The charter members were Messrs. Doyle, Weber, Heyn, Windheim, Blodel, Johnson, Schurig, Becker, Kuhn and Wolf. Blodel being the first president and Weber the first captain, the first year of their existence, they took many pleasant runs and also attended the wheelmen's reunion which was held at Blair, Neb. In 1893 its membership increased, and among the many pleasant runs taken during that year was the joint run and picnic with the Omaha Wheel club at Bellevue. The present year sees it one of the first among the clubs of this vicinity. The election of officers took place in January, and they are:

E. Schurig president; Theodore Baumer, vice president; T. Becker, secretary; J. August Doyle, treasurer; Ed Hayden, corresponding secretary, Phil Moeller, captain, and Fred Spratten and H. Schaeffer, lieutenants.

Mr. Schurig, the president, is well known in the city, being our city electrician. He has been a member of the Turnerbund for the past five years and an active wheelman for three years.

Theodore Baumer, the vice president, is a young man and very popular among his clubmates and associates. He has been a member of the Turners for the past four years.

Mr. T. Becker, secretary, has been with the Turnverein over ten years. He is a member of the bear class and has accompanied them on many prize winning trips.

Gus Doyle, treasurer, one of the prime movers in organizing the club, is one of the best liked wheelmen in the city and is always anxious to work for the interests of wheelmen in any way. He has been a Turner ever since he was a small boy and says he expects to remain one until he is too old to straddle the "horse."

Mr. Hayden, the corresponding secretary, is a popular young cycle dealer here in the city and is well thought of by all wheelmen. He is also a member of the Omaha Wheel club.

Phil Moeller, the captain, is also second turnwart of the Turnerbund. He is an excellent road man and picks out the most pleasant runs for his men that can be found in this vicinity.

The membership embraces some young men from the best German families in Omaha. Its April run card calls for the following tours:

Sunday, April 14, Papillion.
Thursday, April 18, Council Bluffs; 7:30 p. m.
Sunday, April 21, Millard.
Thursday, April 25, Manawa; 7 p. m.
Sunday, April 28, Bellevue.

All runs start from its club rooms, which are in Turner hall and are among the most pleasant and spacious to be found in the city, by the way. Its club colors are red, white and black, and will in all probability be carried to victory many times the coming season by its racing team, which will be composed of some of the fastest men in the city.

Frederickson, one of Nebraska's fast men, has accepted a position with the Western Electric Supply company of this city and will hereafter call Omaha his home. Fred rode well last season, and with proper care will make a "top notcher." He will ride a Sterling.

Mr. F. E. Pearce, one of Omaha's prominent wheelmen, is slowly recovery from the effects of a very difficult surgical operation. Mr. Pearce is a great favorite among wheelmen in this city, having been vice president of the Omaha Wheel club during 1894 and an active cyclist for the past ten years.

Stromsburg, Neb., is to have a third of a mile bicycle track. If a small town like this can have a track why can't Omaha support one? It is ten times larger than Stromsburg.

Mr. and Mrs. McIlrath, who started from Chicago last Wednesday morning on their tour around the world awheel, will pass through Omaha about Thursday of this week. They will be escorted from Council Bluffs by members of the Ganymede Wheel club of that city. They will remain in Omaha over night and will be escorted out of the city Friday morning by the Omaha Wheel club. The trip is being made in the interests of the Chicago Inter-Ocean and will consume nearly two years. They expect to reach San Francisco about June 25 and will sail from there to Japan, thence to China, across China, upper Siam, India, Beluchistan, Persia and Asiatic Turkey, thence to Great Britain and home. They will take the same route which Lentz, the famous globe girdler, who was supposed to have been murdered between Tabriz, Persia, and Erzeroum, Turkey, traveled over.

"Tillie" Urlau leaves for Denver the middle of this week.

Those who tell us that the League of American Wheelmen is losing the confidence of wheelmen look at the application list published in last week's bulletin and crawl into your ignoble cavities. They publish 875 names of applicants for membership. Never before in the history of the league have they opened the season with such a list. The best previous record is 528. The first list in April of 1894 had but 135 names, and the whole month gave but 720 members. Once in the middle of their best year they published 921 names. They are not yet quite up to that, the best on record, but the year is young yet and they have taken a good start. New York tops the list with 387 names. Best previous record by California with 386 names. The largest division list of 1894 was 254, by Massachusetts. Largest total, in one list last year, was 528 names. Will Mr. Hynes please answer this?

Chief Consul Ebersole of the Nebraska division is making an extra effort to get the "fair sex" to join the league. As Sterling Elliott says: "No organization can be so good that it is not made better by the presence of women.

The tobacco chewing sex should not monopolize the league tickets.

The girls may have them on the same terms.

The League of American Wheelmen is open to the sisters and they are ever welcome.

The first issue of the League of American Wheelmen Bulletin and Good Roads combined is out. It is a weekly journal, devoted to highway improvement and other subjects of interest to wheelmen in general, and to the League of American Wheelmen in particular. It is edited by Sterling Elliott and Abbott Bassett. Mr. Elliott is the present chief consul of Massachusetts, while Mr. Bassett is secretary of the League of American Wheelmen. The league has been without an official organ for several months now and all the members will gladly welcome Messrs. Elliott and Bassett's edition. Members will receive it weekly "free gratis."

Members of the League of American Wheelmen in this city must remember that under the new rule the renewal season is cut down to sixty days. In previous years renewals were received to July 1. This year the season ends June 1, so don't forget to renew early.

Howard B. Raymond, ex-chairman of the national racing board, League of American Wheelmen, says in last week's Bulletin that if controlled by the league professional racing can be made a success of in this country. In all probability next year will see three classes in the League of American Wheelmen, viz: class A, which will be composed of pure amateurs or "snow whites," as they are called; class B of semi-professionals, or "spotted amateurs," and class C of professionals.

Dr. W. W. Vance of Kearney, Neb., and representative of the League of American Wheelmen in this division, was in the city last week attending the league board of officers' meeting.

Pixley will ride a fifteen-pound Stearns "Yellow Fellow" this season. He expects it about May 1.

The Omaha Wheel club has ninety-one members now and the applications continue to come in. The officers are negotiating with the owners of the old Rustin residence, which stands on the northeast corner of Seventeenth and Harney, and hope to secure a lease of the property at a reasonable figure. If they succeed the house will be remodeled, the yard sodded and a beautiful lawn will cover the now weed-covered and unkempt ground. A better place for a club house would be hard to find anywhere in the city.

The League of American Wheelmen state meet for 1895 has been awarded to Kearney by the board of officers of this division. There were but two bids for it—one from Lincoln and the other from Kearney. Lincoln's bid amounted to but little, while Kearney offered to give $1,500 worth of prizes, have the track in record-breaking condition and show the boys a general good time.

Kearney, the hustling little metropolis, is one of, if not the most, enthusiastic cycling towns of its size in this country. They have the largest cycle factory west of the Mississippi located there, also a fine quarter-mile track, a large cycling club and some of the fastest riders in the state. The state meet was held there last year and everybody who attended enjoyed themselves to their fullest capacity. Omaha promises to send down a much larger delegation than it did last year. The famous "Googlers," who have lapsed into oblivion during the past winter, will be reorganized and attend en masse. Omaha did not bid for the meet. They have applied for a date on the national racing circuit and as it is almost an assured thing that they will get it, it would be useless for them to try to hold two large meets in one season, as to get a circuit date they will have to guarantee at least $3,500 in prizes, and to get this subscribed will be no small task.

On account of the rain the Tourist wheelmen failed to take their first outing of the season last Sunday. Their run for today is Bennington, Neb., over the Military road. The club will stop for dinner and return early in the afternoon. On the return trip the club will take a spin over the new boulevard, start from the pump house between the hours of 8 and 9 a. m. This is one of the main traveled roads and commonly is in the best of condition. Every Tourist should turn out and bring his cycling friends along.

The Ganymede Century club will meet Monday night of this week for the purpose of perfecting their organization and electing officers for the ensuing year.

October 11 and 12 are the dates given the Ganymede Wheel club for the national circuit meet. The boys are already at work upon the prize list and the organization of their committees for the carrying on of the work incidental to the holding of a great meet. Last year's tournament was a "hummer," but this year's races will have gilt edged frills on. The Ganymedes are just the organization to hold a successful meet and there is but little doubt the races will draw hundreds of racing men, cyclists and cycle salesmen to the city. National circuit races are always features of great importance to the cycling world.

They say Kearney collared the state meet! That is good, what could Omaha do with it any way? Kearney held the most successful division meet ever held in the state in 1894 and that the Kearney boys will make the 1895 meet a corker, there is but little doubt.

"Where are we at?" that is a question which needs an answer in reference to the local 'cycle status. Omaha has nearly 3,000 riders of the wheel, any number of 'cycle emporiums, four or five wheel clubs and yet we haven't got enough enthusiasm to hold the road race of the midwest, to capture a state meet occasionally or have a tournament of our own. Through the hard work of Mr. Ebersole Omaha has secured a date on the National circuit and now the problem confronts Mr. Ebersole who is to get up and push the meet. No one seems any too willing to take the lead and back him up. This is wrong, dead wrong! Omaha will never amount to a hill of beans in the 'cycling world until her riders and dealers get together and work together for the interest of the whole. Let us organize! There are enough of us! Let us form a dealers and club association and then with a concerted movement make Omaha one of the 'cycling powers of the United States; we can do it. Who will be the first to call a meeting of the dealers and clubs? Mr. Ebersole as a 'cyclist, a club man and a chief officer in this division, let us hear from you. Two or three good, rousing meetings and our organization would be complete. The 'cycle editor is confident that there is not a 'cycle dealer or club man in the city who will not give such an organization a support.

The Omaha University Club.

This club has for some time had all arrangements made to leave the North Twentieth street ball grounds for this year, but the directors have far exceeded their expectations, and now have safely located in their archives a three-year lease of these magnificent grounds, and a bill of sale of the entire improvements thereon, which were owned by the Young Men's Christian association. Hereafter, these grounds will be known as the University club grounds. Negotiations are already under way with one of our leading bicycle dealers to put the track in first class shape and give frequent exhibitions by some of the flyers.

The base ball team has been selected, with the exception of two, and possible three positions, and for these there are plenty of first-class candidates, so many, indeed, that no selection can be made until the test of actual work upon the field has been thoroughly applied.

The colors the club will be green and white, and will be embodied in the base ball uniforms, which are expected soon. These uniforms will be among the prettiest ever seen on an Omaha ball field. They will be white, with green trimmings, including green stripes around the cap, green lettering on the breast, green belt, and green stockings, with a broad white stripe around the calf of the leg.

A number of dates have already been made, but the best amateur base ball games Omaha has ever had played within her gates will occur on May 21 and 30. On the 21st the University of Michigan will be here for one game and on May 30, Decoration day, the great and only Stagg, for many years the idol of Yale, will be here for the University of Chicago team for two games. In the evening he will be tendered a banquet and reception.

So great an interest has been manifested in the formation of this club the directors are already looking for a suitable club house, to be operated upon the principle of the "Frat" houses and to furnish a place where the members and their friends can meet and get acquainted with each other.

Some misapprehension seems to have arisen regarding the associate membership feature of the club, and perhaps a word of explanation may not be out of place.

Many attempts have been made in the past to establish an organization of this nature in Omaha, all of which have failed for various reasons, chief of which was the lack of facilities for bringing the club prominently before the public.

To overcome this difficulty at the start it was the desire to make such arrangements that the club might be represented in the field of amateur athletics by the best talent of the city.

So far as the base ball and football departments are concerned this object has already been attained. The articles of incorporation provide that in January, 1896, an amendment must be adopted either continuing the associate member feature according to the opinion of the directors regarding its admissibility. Of course very rigid requirements must be complied with by any one seeking associate membership as regards character and standing, and in no case are they allowed to either hold office or vote for officers of the club. The honorary membership feature is, of course, permanent.

Wheelmen Agree with The Bee.

It is pleasing to note that The Bee's call for a Decoration day road race has met with the heartiest endorsement by local wheelmen generally, and we are to have the race. The Tourist Wheelmen have taken the matter in charge, but will be aided and assisted by all the local clubs. That it will be a grand success is an assured fact. M. O. Daxon, Harry K. Smith and George Sancha are the racing committee and will attend to all preliminary work. The race will be on the Dodge street course, from Fortieth street to the boulevard's terminus and return, a distance of fifteen miles. Full particulars of this splendid event will be forthcoming next Sunday.

A Batch of Hot Liners.

Oh, no, there won't be a great crowd out at the Charles Street park this afternoon to witness the third game between Harry Gatewood's husky Saints and the Walsh family! Oh, no! With fine weather the attendance should equal that of any Sunday during the championship season, as both teams are putting up a remarkably good article of ball and will strive hard for the mastery this afternoon. All the cranks who haven't as yet had an opportunity to size up the local players should not miss today's chance, as the strongest men in the whole outfit will be on the team, and they will play for all they are worth, for they want the game like the man in Texas wanted a revolver.

That the Omaha's uniform is the neatest and prettiest of any that has ever been worn here, I think the majority of the fans will agree with me, although it would have been more attractive still had the order been filled as Manager Rowe sent it in. His directions were for red belts, stockings and trimmings, but instead of this color they came back in the old hoodoo maroon. This is a color that has been tabooed in baseball circles for years. It is considered a "Jonah" to any team that dares assume it, and the fact certainly exists that disaster has invariably overtaken every club who has thus ventured to defy the fates. May Omaha prove the exception.

The University of Michigan baseball team has decided to take a western trip this spring, and the local University club has induced them to include Omaha in their list. These two teams will make an especially interesting attraction, as among the locals are three old Michigan University, and a strong trio they make—Abbott, Jefferies and Crawford. Of course, these alumni will try hard to down the undergraduates. The game will be played Friday afternoon, May 1.

That the ladies will turn out, at least on ladies' day, this season, in greater force than ever is attested by the many letters of inquiry that have been received at this office from the fair ones with reference to the make up of the team, who are married, who are single, and many other particulars in which the girls are always interested. To be sure there has been numerous suggestions made as to which would be the preferable day to devote to their enjoyment, but a large majority endorse the selection made by the management and are profuse in their expressions of approval. What if Rowe and McVittie had set inadvertently aside "wash-day" for this all momentous occasion?

Should the practice of "farming out" promising players to minor league teams continue much longer, every youngster who shows any promise will be found on the reserve list of one of the big league clubs. It seems as though this practice would be detrimental to the minor league teams, in that the players so loaned might be recalled at a time when it is most important or necessary to the success of the team that is keeping them in fettle for some league club. Another bad feature of the "farming out" is that it prevents these players signing with any other league team that may need strengthening and cannot afford to pay a large price for the release of an experiment under such circumstances. Philadelphia, St. Louis, Cincinnati and several other clubs have farms in which players are kept in reserve, and at the present rate it will not be long before every club in the big league will have its minor league training school and storage warehouse for reserved players.

For the benefit of Messrs. Haskell, Ward, Snyder and other Western association umpires I will state here that a letter from Harry Wright, chief of the National League umpires, informs me that his interpretation of the new rule regarding foul tips, will rule in the major body this season. According to the veteran's definition, a foul tip caught within the ten-foot limit is counted a strike, yet retains all the other effects of a foul tip of former years, that is, a base runner cannot advance on it.

It is really funny to see how Lincoln, Des Moines and Rockford have already nailed the '96 pennant to the flagstaff over their respective parks. Buckerino says he has it won because he is going to play in the team himself; Hugh Nicol claims it on the score of having the largest number of G. A. R.'s in his gang, and Willie Traffley swears it is 'his'n because he has gobbled the cream of every team in last year's circuit. While Old Bill has a good jaw for fairy legends, he also has the biggest mouth for pie in all Iowa. If you can only get the right focus on the picture these three cherubs present it will make you lawf.

Jack Crooks writes me from Washington that Gus Schmelz threatens to shave off the wings on the side of his face as a peace offering to the Tail End Fates which preside over the great and glorious game at the National capital. By the way, "Well! Well!" is putting up better ball this spring than he has been guilty of since 1889.

Some fool friend of mine writes to me to know whether I would take the management of a female base ball team for a tour through Nebraska and South Dakota this spring. I have been afraid all along that my talent in this line would be overlooked. Just think of the sporting editor of The Bee filing into Pierre, S. D., with a gang of Pearls, Daisies, Mauds, Mays and Lillians, and tackling those cowboy yanigans up there for a nine-inning contest. I replied that I would sit down and think about it.

It doesn't require the vaticinative properties of a wild goose bone, the skin of a muskrat or the versi-colored circle around the moon to convince President Kent that it will be a very cold summer. The ice is already forming thick enough to cut for winter use about some of his original red-hot schemes. Next season I'll take the presidency of the association myself, Rowe, Kent et al to the contrary notwithstanding.

Some one is authority for the statement that Buckerino Ebright can talk Latin. Then Hiram is an accomplished linguist, indeed. He has associated with Thomas Jefferson Hickey so long that he can swear in Russian with a polish which would make the czar blush until his face looked like a blood pudding. With a small jag of advance money in his pocket, Buckerino can go a long ways.

And now Mr. Brackett of Peoray, Illinoy, threatens to retire to a convent if the Lushers do not win the championship this year. Already the convent doors have begun to yawn for Bracketty's little form. Never was cloister in so much danger.

It is a very strange coincidence that the school house clock stopped yesterday at 2:10 p. m. and thereby marked the exact time when big George McVey turned the corner into Twentieth street on his way out to the grounds.

For five straight years A. A. Stagg, now professor of physical culture at the Chicago university, was the terror of all teams who met Yale on the base ball field. He is now teaching the University of Chicago base ball team how to play the game, and, as he is said to be one of the best organizers in the country, we can expect him to bring an excellent team with him when he comes to play the University Club of Omaha here on Decoration day.

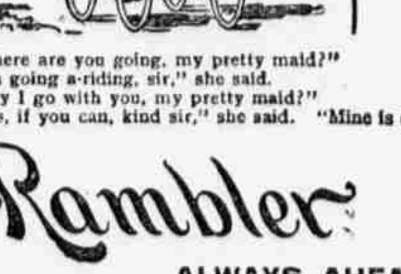
Next Friday, Saturday and Sunday Jimmy Manning with his cabinet of curios will be here for "tree trow downs." Grasshopper Ulrich is in a frenzy of joy. He yearns to get even with whilom associates, and declares that they won't get a smell. However, Shaffer says that Georgie is not the seventeenth son of the seventh brother, and that he often communicates through his lid.

The Wilcox & Draper Shoe House team are training constantly and will shortly be in prime condition. They are ready to accept all challenges and are simply dying by inches to get a chance at the Walsh family. By the way, Messrs. Rowe and McVittie, here is a tremendous drawing card for you—a game with the black boys.

The Little Casino baseball schedule for the National league has reached the sporting editor's desk. It is published by Emil Grossman & Co., Cleveland, O., and is a valuable vest pocket volume. It contains besides the schedule of games an almost endless amount of baseball information and statistical matter.

Down in Chicago, as in New York, the police captain who builds a $40,000 apartment house on a $2,600 salary is regarded as too good a financier to waste his talents on the force.

Kansas City ladies are waging war on the smoke nuisance in street cars.



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