



### ROWING FOR GIRLS.

THE art of rowing is achieving an immense and increasing popularity in this country. Its recognition as a healthy and invigorating exercise is becoming every day more universal. It holds its own among the many-door sports which are candidates for public favour; and, although the minor pastimes, which satisfy a certain section of the community, generally have only an ephemeral existence, and are successively replaced by some new amusement, rowing may be said to divide with cricket the more constant allegiance of the athletic world. Besides those who distinguish themselves on the river, a considerable number find in this pursuit a most agreeable and congenial form of exercise. Of recent years, too, many young ladies have asserted their right to enjoy this pastime, and the fact that "our girls" are developing tastes of this kind is a very satisfactory sign of the times. In former days, the rules upon which they were brought up were peculiarly restrictive, and few out-door amusements were open to them; but now, the desirability of their having some more invigorating

recreation than the monotonous "constitutional," or the lessons—however valuable—of the professor of gymnastics, is becoming generally admitted. We should be sorry to see girls playing cricket or football, since neither of these sports can be indulged in without an amount of danger which it would not be fitting for them to risk. The intense exertion, too, required for the enjoyment of either of these games must always prevent girls from taking any part in them. The same objections do not, however, apply to rowing, for while it calls into action nearly every muscle of the body, it can be thoroughly enjoyed without becoming a toil instead of a pleasure. No doubt, boat-races are very severe tests of human endurance; but there is no reason why girls should not become such proficient in the use of the oar that they can share the pleasures of this exercise without attempting to make any such display, or aiming at excessive muscular development.

It should, however, be remembered that before any girl attempts to row she should certainly learn to swim. Every boat is more or less liable to be upset, even with the best and most skilful management; and this is, of course, more likely to occur with those who do not understand how to control it. All those, too, who venture on the water should not only learn how



to use an oar, but also understand how to steer and manage a boat in difficulties, so that they may be able to extricate themselves in case of accidents. A simple illustration will suffice. If a party of girls in a boat were accidentally to be obliged to navigate themselves with one oar, they might be relieved from a situation of some danger if any of them knew how to scull with one oar over the stern—an accomplishment which can be easily learnt at any sea-side place. Again, it is very desirable that they should understand the necessary fittings of a boat, and how to correct a fault in an emergency.

It is perhaps hardly necessary to say that the styles of rowing on fresh and salt water are quite different, and that proficients in either are generally unable to instruct any one in the other. The more graceful art is that of rowing on rivers and lakes, and from the numerous available pieces of water in this country it is surprising that it is not more diligently practised. There is a great charm in boating, apart from its pleasures as an exercise; and perhaps the chief reason why so many never avail themselves of the constant opportunities for enjoying it is that they are unacquainted with boats, and unable to swim. Although of late years a great number of conveniences have been supplied for teaching swimming, it is probably true that by far the greater number of people in this country would be helpless if they chanced to fall into deep water. We have, however, already pointed out that it is most essential that, at any rate, all who wish to row should first acquire moderate skill in the art of swimming. This proviso being satisfied, there is no longer any foolhardiness in their venturing on the water. It has been objected that rowing is not a graceful art, and has, amongst other drawbacks, a tendency to make the shoulders round; but, although a careless and slovenly style might have this effect, any one who is well trained will soon become as straight as a lath, and a standing example in disproof of this assertion. In rowing, the back is never bent; and, although the shoulders must necessarily be raised a little in reaching forward, in going back they should be dropped as low as possible. The long even swing, with the elbows close to the sides, the head erect, and every muscle in play, is all that the most ardent admirer of calisthenics could desire, and so far from developing an ungainly or awkward carriage, should have an exactly contrary effect. There are numerous appliances for expanding the chest, but without discussing their respective merits, it is certainly true that none of them can possibly equal rowing in this respect.

It must, however, be admitted that girls who become enthusiastic admirers of this pursuit must take great care that their hands do not become blistered, for, although athletic young men pride themselves upon their horny palms, it is not desirable that their sisters should emulate them. Objections of this kind, however, usually arise during the excessive practice necessary before a boat-race; and it is very doubtful whether it is at all desirable to encourage girls to compete on the river, even amongst themselves, since

all the benefit which would otherwise be derived from this exercise might be more than counteracted by the extraordinary exertion of a single boat-race.

Rowing for mere amusement is not, however, entirely free from inconveniences, and one of the most unpleasant and common misfortunes that can happen to beginners is that which is familiarly termed "catching a crab." This disaster occurs when the oar is allowed to turn in the water the wrong way before taking it out; the water then keeps the oar down, and the handle bears the rower backwards. The moment it is felt that this is likely to happen, the oar should be smartly lifted out of the rowlock, and "shipped." If this be done quickly, the annoyance of being knocked backwards off the seat may be avoided.

Sculling is, perhaps, in some ways even pleasanter than rowing, and is still more suitable for girls. The sculler sits, of course, in the centre of the boat, and must keep her back straighter and her shoulders lower, if possible, than when rowing, since the strength of the stroke depends very much upon the drop of the shoulders. It would be as well for beginners not to attempt to scull in a "skiff" or "funny" until they are quite masters of the art, for in either of these light craft they would otherwise almost certainly be upset. The ordinary sculling-boat is, however, tolerably safe.

Canoeing has long been one of the recognised pastimes of ladies, since it is supposed to be a pretty exercise. Paddling is, however, really a motion of the arms alone, and although it is seldom made laborious, it is certainly very fatiguing. In rowing, as we have seen, all the muscles are employed, so that the labour is divided amongst them. The arms, by themselves, could ill bear, for any length of time, the exertion required to move the weight of the body and of the boat, or canoe, through the water. The writer well remembers the intense fatigue which he himself felt after canoeing on one occasion for a distance of about five miles against time. Nevertheless, from the small draught of water which a canoe makes, many otherwise impassable streams can be successfully navigated in one, and in the heat of summer it is very delightful to paddle quietly beneath the shade of overhanging branches near the bank of a river, although such an amusement is hardly worthy of the name of exercise. One objection to the ordinary canoe is its unsociability, since it will only carry one person; but the Indian or Canadian canoe, which has recently been imported into this country, will carry three people easily, and is even then very safe, and always on an even keel. When using the double-bladed paddle, it is as well to remember that it is much easier to work if the strength of each stroke is obtained by pushing rather than by pulling the paddle through the water. The single-bladed paddle, which has only recently been introduced into this country, must also be used in the same way.

Sea-rowing is certainly not very graceful, and is so totally different from rowing on fresh water that even good oarsmen often find themselves in some difficulty on the sea. So fatiguing is this branch of



the art that it cannot be recommended as a suitable pursuit for girls. The arms have to do much more work, and it is only necessary to watch a fisherman in a rowing-boat to see how peculiarly ungainly the necessary movements of the body are. If any girl who has learnt to row on fresh water essays to do so at sea, at a time when it is anything but quite calm, she will quickly find that the rules which apply to this branch of the pastime are totally different, and will run great risk of "catching a crab," with the most disastrous results. The fittings, too, of sea-going boats are usually very bad; and in many of them rowing is only possible under the most awkward conditions. At the same time, if girls were to learn enough about the management of a boat to know what to do—or rather, what not to do—in an emergency, many disastrous and fatal accidents might be avoided. Every one who has had the management of a boating party knows the anxiety which the nervous trepidation of some, and

the utter want of presence of mind in others, cause. Innumerable accidents have been caused by ladies jumping up when the boat gives a roll, when, if they merely sat still, and as near the centres of their seats as possible, they would be in no danger.

There are many pleasant spots which can only be visited by water. In the neighbourhood of the English metropolis, many of the most exquisite bits of scenery in the Thames Valley are only known to boating men, and it certainly seems quite feasible for girls to enjoy the charm of river-side scenery much oftener than is at present the case. The difficulty of making up a party would be greatly lessened if they were able to use their oars, or sculls, and excursions which are now made only very seldom might then be frequently enjoyed, and with but a scanty escort. It would be difficult to devise a more tempting programme for a fine afternoon than for a party of girls thus to explore some unfamiliar waters.

## HOW TO PRONOUNCE WELSH NAMES.

### HINTS FOR TOURISTS IN WALES.



At first sight it seems a strange thing that the language which in the earliest times of which we have any record was spoken by the inhabitants of these islands, and may therefore be in a sense considered our original tongue, should be the very language of which the majority of the educated English are not ashamed to own that they know nothing. They will be found well enough versed in Latin and Greek—those magnificent dead languages the assiduous cultivation of which is due to the many fine works, known as "the classics," which have been preserved to us in one or the other dress. They will pass muster as easily in French, German, and other living languages of the Continent of Europe, which they cultivate yet more thoroughly for the sake of social and commercial intercourse. In this very island, however, there is still a living language not yet consigned to the limbo of forgotten commodities, remaining both pure and logical now, and so not altogether unworthy of a scholar's serious study: and that is Welsh, or Cymric—the fine old Celtic tongue still in every-day use in nearly all parts of Wales, and even to be heard in the streets of polyglot London. The Britons, or Cymri, as the interesting pages of history bear witness, were a hardy and independent race, not easily to be crushed or deprived of their individuality by the successive invaders of these islands. They took refuge at last in the mountain fastnesses of the west country, from which they were never actually driven, notwithstanding the so-called conquest and

annexation of Wales by Edward I.; and the Welsh tongue to this day clings, with some aboriginal customs, to the same mountains. Very gradual indeed has been the process of "civilisation" which intercourse with the English is presumed to bring about.

One of the great civilising agents of the nineteenth century is the tourist, who, like the roving bee that fertilises the flowers, does his best to break down the barriers of race which distance or a difference of tongues sets up. And the tourist has certainly not neglected Wales. In spite of the outflow of English holiday-makers every summer to Switzerland, the Rhine, and other Continental places of refreshment, there is a large stream also setting in towards Snowdonia, with lesser streams in the direction of the Cader Idris group and Barmouth. Nothing could well be more unreasonable than to enter a country where a very ancient tongue is still in use, and where the ancient names of places especially remain uncorrupted, and to expect to get along comfortably without knowing even the rudiments of that useful vernacular. Is it too much to ask of the tourist that he shall just learn to pronounce it, and no more? The pronunciation is really a very simple matter; but if twenty people of ordinary intelligence are asked to look at a few ordinary Welsh words, such as *edrychwch ar hwn*, or *Pwllheli*, probably nineteen of the number will declare that they are unpronounceable. Some of the words, they will say, are "all consonants."

It is merely the alphabet that we need particularly consider here, for to know it properly is to be able to pronounce Welsh. Let us now see what the alphabet consists of. In the first place, the consonants *b, d, l, m, n, p, r, s, t* are pronounced just as in English; so that in the case of nine letters at least it is all plain