

ROWING AT OXFORD.

By W. H. GRENFELL.



ALL those who wish to be coached during the present term are requested to be at the College Barge at 2.15." This invitation is up in the Porter's Lodge of St. Giles's College, as it is up in the Porters' Lodges of the various other Oxford Colleges, at the beginning of the October term to catch the eye of the unwary freshman. Among those who are looking at it without any certain idea of what they mean to do that afternoon is one Graham, a freshman, who has just come up from a non-rowing school; but, although he has never handled an oar, nature has

been physically kind to him and given him good lungs which he has well tested at his public school on the football field and running track, a straight, strong back, and legs which have already stood him in good stead. There he stands eyeing the inoffensive document, little dreaming what toil and drudgery and what glorious reward it may mean to him should he respond to its call. As yet he has not made up his mind in which direction to seek the athletic laurels of which his brows are not accustomed to be bare—triumphs on the running path, the cricket and football fields, he feels to be not outside his grasp, but fate or chance turns his steps towards the river, and little does he think he is about to court a mistress who will brook no rivals. He sits down in the College Barge, full of aspirants like himself, whose ideas, like his, have not got beyond the "put the oar in deep and pull it out with a jerk" school, and who still believe in the existence of the aquatic heroes in Ouida's books, who flourish an enormous biceps (about the worst thing a rowing man can have) in the face of an admiring and terrified captain, and after that never get into a boat or touch an oar till the day of the race, which they naturally win in a paddle.

Two men in earnest conversation are standing at the end of the barge—the one looks solemn and phlegmatic—the other quick and vivacious. These our hero is informed are the captain and secretary of the College Boat Club. The captain is a man of few words, but his whole soul is in the College Boat and its fortunes, and he has never been known to say much save on the one topic which absorbs his thoughts, and on which he has been known at times to wax almost eloquent. The secretary is less reverent and has even been known to jest on the sacred theme. The latter comes up to our freshman.

"Have you ever rowed before?"

"No."



THE RIGHT REV. CHARLES WORDSWORTH, D.C.L., CHRIST CHURCH, BISHOP OF ST. ANDREWS. NO. 4 IN THE OXFORD EIGHT, 1829 (FIRST UNIVERSITY RACE).

“Have you weighed?”

“Yes. I'm 12st. 6lbs.”

“All right then, will you row three in my four?”

Into the boat our hero gets—puts his stretcher the right length, and starts for his first row on the Isis. The secretary stands up in the stern and begins to inculcate the first principles of oarsmanship. Very difficult they seem at first, and so different from what he had expected. “Now you must try not to row with your arms. Do all your work with your body and legs. Get your hands out with stroke and swing your body down with his: slowly forward and sharp back, but keep swinging the whole time,” and the mysteries of a sharp recovery, feathering clean, and raising the hands sharply over the stretcher are duly explained to him. Graham got out of the boat with the conviction firm upon him that rowing, or at all events rowing in racing form, was a very much more complicated exercise than at first sight it appeared, still he felt that he had received sufficient encouragement from the coach to make it worth while to come down to the river again—besides which the rowing men, especially to one who had all his friends to make, seemed such good sorts and so ready to take any amount of trouble over people they had never seen before. As he was walking back to college under the grand old elms in Christ Church Meadows—the captain and secretary were walking behind him. Says the secretary to the captain—“Did you see that chap rowing three in my boat? Well, he's awfully strong and plugged like fun and can swing his body right down to his knees—but he's awfully rough and knows nothing about it, and made the boat roll like a tub.”

“Yes,” replied the taciturn captain, “I was watching him, he has the making of an oar, and we mustn't lose him: he knows nothing about it as you say—but it's much easier to teach a man something entirely new, than to get him out of a bad habit, and I would much rather coach a man who knows nothing than one who has been badly taught. I'll ask him to come to my rooms to-night and we'll see if we cannot get Smith to come to.” From that hour our hero's fate is settled.

He goes to the wine, he is flattered by the notice taken of him by so august a person as the captain of the college crew—he even meets Smith who rowed two in the last University race. The talk turns upon rowing, last term's Eights, whether the boat is likely to go up or down next summer, the prospects of next term's Torpids, and the chances of the present term's college Four. He is fired by the rowing mania—he too will see if he cannot do something to uphold the college flag upon the river. So regularly he treads the accustomed path to the barge, little thinking at first that he is destined to tread it almost daily during the four years of his Oxford career.

Under the careful coaching of the college rowing staff he makes quick progress; he puts his name down for his college novice Fours, designed to bring out those who have not rowed in Torpid or Eight, and practices every day: then comes his first race in a boat, attended with all the excitement of a novel experience. The race is rowed in heats; his crew wins, and he knows he has distinguished himself at three. This has brought him pretty well down to the close of his first October term, which finds him a confirmed “wet-bob,” a devoted slave of the oar, and rowing in a trial crew for next term's Torpid.

The Easter term reveals him rowing five in his Torpid and in regular training. Down he goes to the river every afternoon as regular as clockwork at 2.15 to the college barge, to be coached as regularly by the staff of the College Boat Club. Often he sees the University Eight swing by at their practice on the home course before they



G. NICKALLS, MAGDALEN COLLEGE, PRESIDENT O.U.B.C. 1890; NO. 2 IN THE OXFORD EIGHT, 1887; NO. 7, 1888 AND 1889; NO. 6, 1890. WINNER OF THE WINGFIELD SCULLS, 1887, 1888, AND 1889; WINNER OF THE DIAMOND SCULLS, 1888, 1889.

leave to row on wider, deeper, and rougher waters; and he wonders in his mind whether he himself will ever be such as they, and wear the broad blue ribbon of university aquatic ambition, and do battle for *alma mater* on the historic course.

At last come the Torpid Races, the event for which he has suffered much in many places, and our hero acquits himself well, and does yeoman service according to his lights. He has now raced in an eight-oared boat, and has completed the first portion of his aquatic career with sufficient distinction to be pretty secure of a place in the College Eight in the next, the summer term.

When that term opens, our friend is rowing at his old place five in the College Eight which is sixth on the river: He is now initiated for the first time into the mysteries of the sliding seat, and cannot help sliding too soon. Also, when the crew go into a light boat for the first time, he is painfully conscious of his want of watermanship; when the boat rolls he feels doubtful as to which has the best of it, he or his oar. As the races draw near, the crew goes into strict training, and breakfast together by turns in each others' rooms, and dine together in hall, on fare specially provided for them, according to immemorial custom.



SIR JOSEPH W. CHITTY, BALLIOL COLLEGE; ONE OF THE JUDGES OF HER MAJESTY'S HIGH COURT OF JUSTICE. NO. 2 IN THE OXFORD CREW (FIRST RACE) EASTER, 1849; NO. 4 IN SECOND RACE, DECEMBER, 1849; STROKE 1851 AND 1852; PRESIDENT O.U.B.C., 1851; WINNER OF THE UNIVERSITY PAIRS, 1849, 1850; WINNER OF THE SILVER GOBLET AT HENLEY 1850, 1851. FIRST CLASS CLASSICAL GREATS, VENERIAN LAW SCHOLAR, FELLOW OF EXETER COLLEGE.

The first night of the Eights is now upon them: the first of the six nights' racing which is to decide the place of each college on the river for the year. Graham confesses to feeling akin to trepidation and a great dryness of the throat as he walks down to the barge with number six, but forgets about both in the preliminary spin. The feeling comes back however as he watches the second division races which are decided before the first. Ah! here they come! The leading boat is well away anyhow as she comes through the Gut; but the second boat's head is shooting across the stream—that means a bump; and one can hear the shouts of triumph from the partizans of the successful boat even from here. "I hope that won't happen to us. Anyhow, it's our turn now. I wish my mouth wasn't so dry; and the tea and brandy seem to have stopped about a quarter of the way down my throat."

By this time he is standing on the college raft. "Now, then, get in all," says the captain. "Shove her out!—Forward all!—Are you ready?—Paddle!" And Graham finds himself half-way down to the start before he has time to think any more about the matter. Then comes the most agonizing six minutes of the lot—the waiting at the post before the start.

There goes the five minutes' gun. Plenty of time yet. Half the college is on the bank, ready to run up with their crew, and armed—some of the trusted ones—with various implements for making diabolical sounds should the crew come within striking distance of the boat ahead.

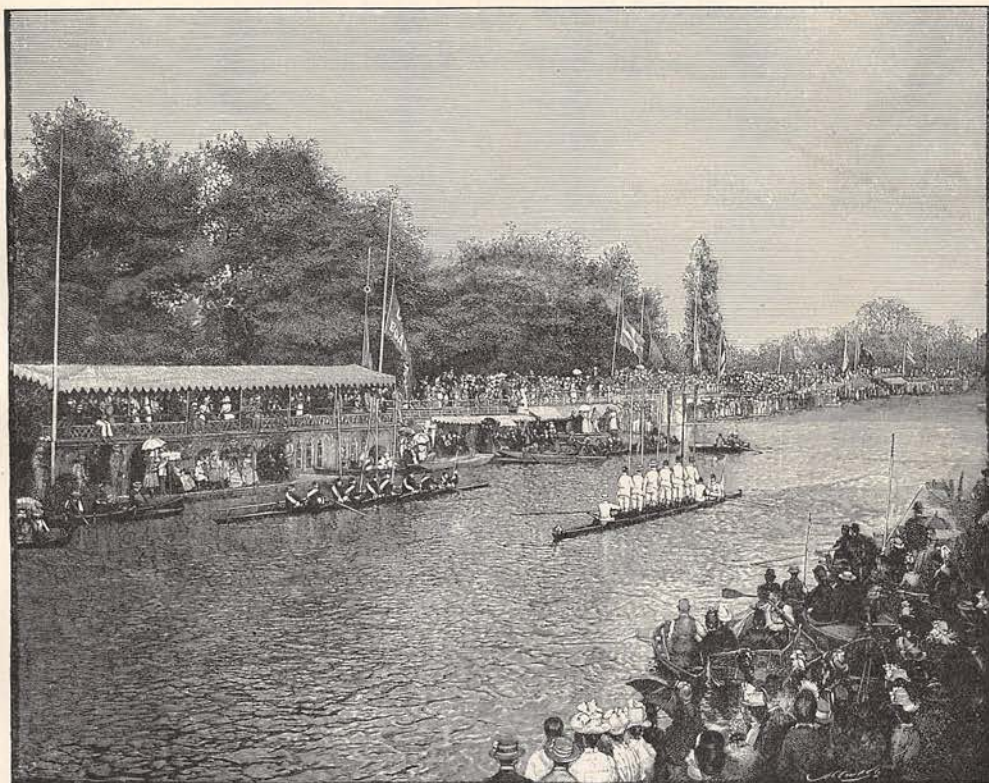
A few last words from the captain—"Now, mind you keep your eyes in the boat, and watch the time every stroke, and whatever you do, don't hurry."

Bang! There goes the minute-gun—only one minute before the start. "Shove her out. Paddle a stroke, bow. Hold tight to the bung, cox. Keep her stern out." The stroke of the Torpids is on the bank counting the seconds. "Half a minute gone." "Three-quarters gone." "Forward all!" Not a sound to be heard save the counting of the seconds from the bank—"Ten seconds more, nine, eight, seven, six, five, four, three, two, one, *Bang!* and simultaneously with the flash of the gun ninety-six oars swish through the water as twelve boats dash off in pursuit of the one in front and flight from the one behind. What a swirl there is on the water, and what a roar of voices fills the air! "Well started, St. Giles's. Well rowed, all! You're gaining—you're gaining!" Our hero hears but a confused din from the bank. He thinks of nothing but rowing his hardest, and never takes his eyes off the outside shoulder of number seven; but still, as he swings his body down, he cannot help

seeing the boat behind, and fancying that it is further from them than when they started—and now he is sure of it. Hurrah! there is no fear from them!

But what is this? the roar from the bank is increasing, and seems more mingled and confused than it was before, and every now and again there comes to his ear the cry of "St. James's! Well rowed, St. James's!" mixed up with "You're gaining, St. Giles's!" Ah, they must be near the boat ahead! and the two crowds of supporters on the bank must be mingling. How he wishes he could look round and see how close they were! But all he has to do is to watch seven's back and keep time, and pick it up if stroke should quicken.

Stroke's oar grazes the bank—they must be near the Gut now. He can just see the cox's face quivering with excitement while he shouts, "You're gaining every stroke!" And what is this? The boat is suddenly dancing up and down like a cork upon a troubled sea; he knows what that means—they are in the "wash" of the St. James's



PROCESSION OF BOATS.—SALUTING THE HEAD OF THE RIVER.

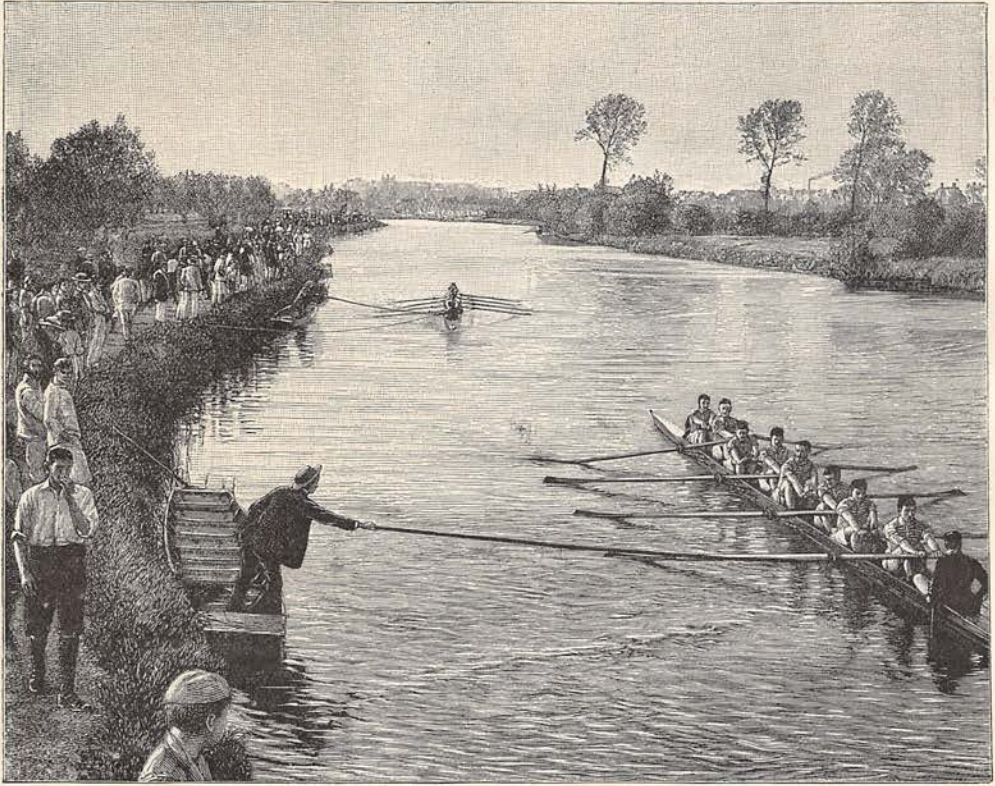
boat. Then above all the shouts he hears the voice of the old rattle, wielded by a reliable hand, which tells them they are within striking distance.

Stroke quickens. "Now then, pick it up." The rudder goes on hard—five can see the white foam fly—a fever of expectancy upon cox's face—then a gloomy look of disappointment, and the rudder is hard on the other way.

Ah! they have made a shot in the Gut and missed. The boat rolls—they have taken a bad Gut, and had a fruitless spurt taken out of them. A yell of triumph goes up from St. James's on the bank, as their boat has gained a good half-length. A ding-dong race ensues all up the Willows—one continued spurt, each boat doing all it knows. Graham cannot help wondering how long it can possibly go on, and whether each stroke will not be his last. He doesn't know whether they are gaining or not. The rattle is still on, and they are really creeping up inch by inch. Now they are overlapping a foot, but still St. James's struggles gamely to get away, and the coxswain will not risk another shot, but whispers to the stroke, who calls upon his crew for one final spurt, which each one responds to as well as he is able. Ah! what's that little shock. The yell from the banks from every Gilesian throat proclaims it a bump.

“Hurrah! Well rowed, St. Giles’s!”—Then a “Well rowed, St. James’s!”—“Well rowed, St. Giles’s!” passes between the two crews themselves, and they paddle to the bank to get out of the way of the crews coming up behind. After these have all passed the St. Giles’s crew paddle proudly to their College Barge to be received by the welcoming shouts of victory from all the available members of the College assembled on the raft. How pleased every one is! Not rowing men alone but the whole College seems to share in the general jubilation. Graham feels walking on air as he returns to his rooms, and the captain of the crew unbends so far on the occasion as to allow an extra glass all round at supper to celebrate the victory.

What is there to beat the wild excitement of a bumping race? What can stir more the Viking blood within us? When have your pulses beat higher than when you have felt the boat dancing and jumping with that peculiar motion which shows you have got into the “wash” of the crew in front? When have you felt such an electric thrill of wild joy pass through you as when you felt that little jar—which



BUMPING RACE AT OXFORD.—FIRST TWO BOATS STARTING.

means a “bump,” and may land you head of the river—the crown of so many days’ hard toil and training? And it is no selfish pleasure: you share the triumph as you have shared the toil with seven other good men and true—the whole College is shouting itself hoarse upon the bank with an exultation which every member of it from the heaviest of Dons to the weediest of freshmen shares according to his lights.

You may feel many other proudly happy moments in the glorious undergraduate days on many a hard-fought field of University contests; you may feel the electric glow when, after racing down to the ominous line of willows you have cleared the far-famed brook and landed alone in the field with the hounds and view the spent fox crawling down the bullfinch in front; you may feel it when, as the smoke curls away from your rifle, you see the great ten point stag you have pursued all day executing that frantic and spasmodic gallop that shows your hand and eye have been steady and true; you may feel it as the bailer has just flown from your hand and won a hard-fought match on the cricket-field; you may feel it when you stand for the first time upon some ice-crowned summit unprofaned before by the pressure of the human foot;

but never will you feel it so strong or so vivid as when the little tremor of the boat and the roar from the bank tell that you have raised your college to the head of the river!

This is however only the first night of the races. Five more times has our hero to go through the same agony at the start and the same struggle in the race: the first three nights are crowned with success; but our crew meet a nut they cannot crack, and for the next three nights though they always gain they cannot quite reach the head boat on the river. However they have made three bumps and finished second, and so celebrate the event right royally by a "bump" supper, which is followed by irregularities for which the College authorities find excuse in the excitement of the occasion.

The College do not put on at Henley as most of the men have had enough rowing for the time, and our hero is not sorry that the agony is not going to be prolonged, and feels that, seeing he has only just finished his first academic year, the chances are that he will row to the music of the Henley bells on some future occasion.

After the long vacation our friend finds himself up at St. Giles's quite eager for the fray. He has passed through his rowing noviciate, he has matriculated in his Torpid, and graduated in his College Eight. Are there any University honours in store for him? Will he pass successfully through the keener competition of the Trial Eights and gain a fellowship with the University oars?

The events of the October term for graduates in rowing, for those who have gained the ribbon of their College Eight, are the 'Varsity four-oared time races for which such Colleges as like can put on boats, and the University Trial Eights.

The University Trial Eights are the material from which the crew is selected to do battle against Cambridge at Easter. They are made up by the President of the O.U.B.C., who can ask

any member of the University to row he pleases—but the Captain of each College Boat Club has the privilege of sending in to the President the names of the two best oars in his College, to whom the President is bound to give a trial, even if it is only one journey down to Iffley and back. Some forty names are thus sent in, and the President spends the first fortnight of the term in trying these various men and rejecting those who are considered hopeless, till finally two crews are settled which are coached through the term by the President and Secretary, and a race between the two comes off at Moulsoford or some other suitable course, when the performances of the men are most critically watched by an assemblage of old oars, and various speculations indulged in as to who would prove the best men to fill the vacancies in the University boat.

Although St. Giles's put on a four and win by a bare second with our hero rowing three he is tried for the Trials and found wanting. But none the less do his steps turn daily towards the river as they did before. Was not the notice again put up in the Porter's Lodge, and as a member of the College Eight was it not now his turn to take the freshmen in hand and teach the young idea to row, and to curb and restrain the first rude attempts at oaranship, and form material fit for the coming Eights and Torpids to draw upon.

So with Torpids and Eights again passed another year and another long vacation, and time again brought round the October term with its freshmen and Fours and Trial Eights. This time Graham is captain of his College boat and keeps the sacred archives of the Club. One of his first duties as captain is to attend a general



"TOM" TIMS, BOATMAN OF THE OXFORD UNIVERSITY B.C. FOR TWENTY-THREE YEARS.

captains' meeting at the University Barge for the election of the President of the O.U.B.C. and the various officials. The captains' choice is unanimous, and falls upon one who had twice fought with Cambridge at Putney, and had been brought up in the best traditions of Eton rowing, the acme of style inculcated by a famous head master. The President being elected, he takes the time-honoured chair—the chair made out of the wood of the boat which was rowed to victory by the gallant seven at Henley in the year 1843.

Round the barge, hung on the walls, are the photographs of the august company of old blues who rowed for their University themselves, and the survivors of whom through the umpire's boat on the day of the race, and prove to each other how much better the rowing was in their day. After the meeting Graham is given a seat in the Trial Eights, which he occupies regularly throughout the term, and under the constant coaching of the President rapidly develops his latent powers.

The day of the race at last arrives, and with it the end of the term. The scene is Moulsoford, where the course is fair and two crews can start and row abreast. A terrific race ensues after the word has been given by the President from the bows of the launch, on which he is accompanied by several old oars, and Graham's crew wins by a bare quarter of a length.

"Five rowed well in the winning boat: kept it long and hard the whole way through: did more to win the race than any one. And seven in the losing boat, he rowed in first-rate form, and worked well too. I should think both of them would do for next term."

Such are some of the remarks of those on board, and next term they prove to be true. To Graham's great delight the faithful Tims summons him daily at the President's behest to attend at the University Barge and form one of the crew, which is made up of four new choices and four old oars. Graham rows five, and when trained scales 12st. 12lbs.

Strict training begins in Lent, a holiday being given on Ash Wednesday. Every morning at 7.10 do the crew turn out and meet together in flannels for a walk round the parks, ending up with a 100-yards sprint; and the President being strict, and holding punctuality to be the soul of training, woe to them who are dilatory in showing their sleepy faces at the appointed time. The crew lunch separately in their various colleges, but all dine together and breakfast together, each member of the crew entertaining the rest by turns.

Now is the day of the race drawing near; and ten days before the half-dreaded date the crew take up their quarters at Putney to practise on the more buoyant tidal waters. Their arrival creates much excitement among those who are anxious to see the crew for the first time. Their rivals have been there a fortnight before. The London Rowing Club has, as has been their wont, courteously lent them the use of their boathouse, and it is here that the crew find themselves getting ready for their first row on metropolitan waters. The President enjoins the novices among them to keep their heads, to keep their eyes in the boat, and to get sharper on to it, as the craft is much livelier on the deeper water.

"Lift her up—look sharp. Now then, five, get opposite your rigger—look ahead there——" and the policemen make a lane through the crowd which gathers round to see the Oxford men launch their light ship for the first time on the waters which are to be the scene of the great contest.

The crew quickly get their oars and are soon seated. The coach, an old University oar, who has often served in the same capacity, takes his place on the bow of the steam-launch.

"Paddle on four bow oars—easy—forward all—are you ready? Paddle," sings out the cox, and off they go with an encouraging cheer from the crowd on the bank.

How lively the boat seems!

"Drop your hands!" shouts the coach.

What is this? The boat is dancing about as if in a wash during a bumping race. Five cannot get his oar out, and nearly catches a crab. Ah! that is the wash of those two tugs steaming full speed up the river: a new sensation for the fresh hands; but well known to the old oars. The swell sweeps up on the boat and gives bow a good wetting; but never mind, there is many a good ducking in store for you before the ten days are over, when the wind and tide will be fighting each other in far-famed Corney Reach.

The boat is turned short of any point from which they can be timed by those who know too much upon the bank; and after earnest exhortations from their coach to drop their hands and bring their blades out square in the rough water, they start for their first spin, and alternately row and paddle over the greater part of the course.

The objects of interest are pointed out to the new hands, "The Creek, the Crab Tree, the Soap Works—a strong and welcome smell when you are doing a course—Hammersmith Bridge, the Old Mills, Dove's, Chiswick Church, top of Chiswick Eyot," and so on, "you will hear plenty about them before you are much older."

"Forward all—no, easy, here come Cambridge," and in the distance is seen the rhythmical dip of the light blue oars with the little coaching launch full steam behind. How quick they come up, how easily they seem to slip along, what perfect time they keep, and how beautifully they slide together!

And now they are passed, and the crowd of launches and steamers following behind soon shuts them out from view. Cambridge is rowing the course on the ebb.

"I wonder what time they will do—pretty fast on this tide with no wind," is the remark on the launch and our crew continues its way with frequent admonitions from the coach till the boat is swung round and they return to the London boathouse, fairly well satisfied with their first appearance on the classic reach.

The first question is "What did Cambridge do?"

"Nineteen forty-seven."

This is rather a damper, but then of course it was a splendid tide and no wind.

And so the daily work goes on, their spirits being raised by their doing a similar course in twenty twelve on a less favourable day, which the veteran critics consider a better performance.

Towards the end of their stay at Putney scratch crews, kindly manned by the famous London and Thames Rowing Clubs, pick them up and so accustom them to the rattle of the rowlocks of a boat alongside them.

The great day dawns. Graham sleeps well, having given himself up to a fatalistic feeling, and the knowledge that all must now soon be over. The usual training walk is taken before tubbing and rubbing down, the usual breakfast, the usual preliminary spin to see that all is right, the return to their quarters though the humming crowd flocking to take up their places to see the race.

Now they have fought their way down to the boat-house again. A few last words from the coach—"Start at thirty-eight for the first minute, and then keep it at thirty-seven. You do better at that than any other stroke. Keep it long. Keep your eyes in the boat, and think of nothing but the time and swing."

With a ringing cheer from the bank they are off as challengers to wait at the starting-post for their rivals. Another cheer—here come Cambridge—and the two crews are side by side, about to test the result of so many weeks' and months' hard work.

"Now look alive with the coats, every minute makes a difference to the tide."

The two crews are ready stripped. A loud cheer from the Oxford steamer for Oxford, one from the Cambridge steamer for Cambridge.

"Are you ready? Go!" The oars grip the water together, and another great contest is about to be won and lost.

No need to describe a race which is described every year in every paper throughout the kingdom. Suffice it to say it was stubbornly contested throughout, and that the best crew won.

In the losing boat of course it was all the coxswain's fault. So say the partizans of the losing side. "Did you see any one take such a course as Palinurus did? Why, he allowed himself to be driven right into the shallows, and then had to come out again to shoot Hammersmith Bridge; and what on earth was he doing before Barnes Bridge?" Poor coxswain! He has been deposed from the high place



W. H. GRENFELL, BALLIOL COLLEGE. NO. 4 IN THE OXFORD CREWS, 1877 AND 1878; PRESIDENT O.U.B.C. 1879. AMATEUR CHAMPION PUNTER OF THE UPPER AND LOWER THAMES.

he once occupied in fact, and still occupies in fiction: he no longer criticizes and bullies the straining crew; the places are changed, and in case of failure it is upon the narrow shoulders of the half-starved cox that a large measure of the blame invariably falls.

And now the curtain drops on our hero as he is seated between two Cambridge men at the rowing dinner in the evening of the race day, and drowns rivalry in a bumper he drinks to his late opponents. In the hope that it may give some idea as to what rowing at Oxford is like, we have followed his course through the various incidents of an Oxford aquatic career, from his first rude attempts in a freshman's Four, through the College Torpid, the College Eight, the College Four, and the Trials till we find him at last settled upon the hard seat of the aquatic immortals in an Oxford University crew. He has been successful, but his success has not been unprecedented. Thanks to perseverance and a strong constitution, he has left many behind who could not get beyond their College Eights, or even Torpids, but he has been outstripped by more than one Eton oar who had been through the grind before he had begun it, and has found that it takes three good years' persistent work to become a master of the craft. He has found by taking a good degree that hard reading, whose worst enemy is loafing, goes well with the fixed and regular exercise of a boating career, as is proved by the select company of old blues which he has joined, which has upon its successful roll the names of Bishops, Judges, Statesmen, Headmasters, Q.C.'s, M.P.'s, and one Ambassador. As he looks at his oars and trophies and thinks over the lessons of generosity in victory, good-humour in defeat, of self-denial in training, of self-sacrifice and *esprit de corps*, of obedience and authority, he is well assured that not the least valuable of the lessons of his University career have been taught him on the river, and that all the toil he has gone through has been more than thrice repaid. Here we will leave him, barely realizing that he could have attained so much from such extremely small beginnings, did not eyes fall proudly on the legend engraved on the gold medal of a successful University crew—"Possunt quia posse videntur."

Too little has perhaps been said in the foregoing pages of the brave deeds of University oars of old—of how the first race was rowed in 1829, when the thin skin of the victorious Oxford boat separated from a watery grave one future Bishop, two Deans, a Prebendary and two Rectors; of how in 1843 the immortal *Septem contra Camum* started with seven oars against Cambridge in the final heat of the Grand Challenge Cup at Henley, and actually won the race, when such a roar went up as has never before or since been heard on that or any other course; of how in 1859, a Cambridge crew, dead beat, rowed a sinking ship with at least one man on board who couldn't swim, without deviating one hair's breadth from the course till the waters swallowed her up; how in 1877 was rowed the only dead heat over the four and a quarter mile course— But are not all these things written in the *Record of the University Boat Race* laboriously compiled by Messrs. Goldie and Treherne, and also in the Badminton volume by no less a hand than that of W. B. Woodgate, great oar and sculler, and still greater authority on all matters aquatic?

Well, *finis coronat opus*, here's a bumper to the two crews of 1890! May they be more than worthy of their greatest predecessors, and if anything here set down may turn the steps of a single man towards the Isis, I shall feel more than repaid for having ventured on an unknown course.