

## Curious Water Sports.

WRITTEN AND ILLUSTRATED BY F. G. CALLCOTT.



From a]

DONGOLA RACE.

[Photograph.



WITH the growing popularity of the river amongst pleasure-seekers, the list of sports connected with it has of recent years become a much more formidable one. The old forms

of racing were too slow, and needed too much hard work and preliminary training for the man who is anxious to show his skill without the expenditure of any great amount of labour or time. An account of some of the novelties recently introduced may be of interest, especially to those who may be thinking of organizing such sports during the coming months.

The first of these novelties seems to have been the Dongola race; why so called it is impossible to say. It is rowed in punts propelled by six ladies or gentlemen, armed generally with paddles, though sometimes punting-poles are used. This was,

I believe, first introduced at Molesey, which has always been the happy hunting-ground of the more frivolous water sports. It is now very general at nearly all the up-river regattas except Henley, which needs no such attractions and sticks entirely to business. From this was developed the tug-of-war in punts. The two punts are fastened together at one end and placed broadside across the river, when the crews paddle in opposite directions, each trying to drag the opposing boat to the bank. The struggle very frequently ends in one at least of the

punts being filled with water, and gradually sinking beneath the feet of its crew. For this reason, no doubt, the pastime has not yet found favour with the fair sex, but is confined to those who do not object to a ducking.

Another development of punting is "punting in canoes." This also was first seen at Molesey Invitation Regatta, and on this occasion hardly one of the competitors was able to bring his frail craft to the winning-



From a]

TUG-OF-WAR IN PUNTS.

[Photograph.

post—a canoe, of course, being very much more liable to be upset when the occupier is standing upright than is the case with a punt. Many performers have since, by practice, become very expert in its management, and the sport may now frequently be seen at other regattas.

Water jousting in canoes is also an innovation. In the old sport, common



From a)

A WATER TOURNAMENT.

[Photograph.]



From a)

PUNTING IN CANOES.

[Photograph.]

amongst watermen, the competitors stood at the end of punts and tried to upset each other's equilibrium by thrusts from mops. The amateur in adopting this amusement has replaced the punt by a canoe, and in some cases a water tournament is organized where three boats distinguished by red mops contend against an equal number armed with blue mops.

The tub race, too,  
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which was always held at old-fashioned regattas for the benefit of the boys, who generally paddled about with a spade for some time, going in no particular direction, finally upsetting their lop-sided craft without arriving at their destination, has been imitated in the coracle race, also introduced at Molesey Invitation Regatta. The coracle is very similar to the tub, but has rather greater floating abilities, and with proper paddles can be navigated in a very satisfactory manner.

The walking the greasy pole for a pig is a very old form of pastime which



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A CORACLE RACE.

[Photograph.]

always causes amusement. As it is nearly always the last item in a regatta programme, it is rather difficult to get enough light for a photograph, and one taken at Sunbury will probably be of interest.

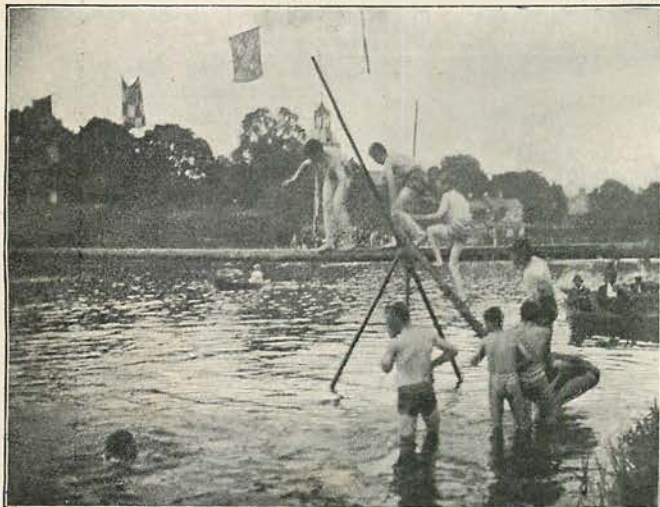
The Water Derby is seen at many regattas both on the river and on the coast, the sport consisting in propelling oneself by means of a paddle while astride



From a]

THE WATER DERBY.

[Photograph.



From a]

WALKING THE GREASY POLE.

[Photograph.

appeared at an up-river regatta, and proceeded in a leisurely fashion amongst the crowd of rowing boats.

Plank rowing is a sport which the writer came across at a recent coast regatta. The competitors stand on planks which they can propel by whatever means they prefer, and to anyone who does not object to getting his feet wet the plank is a safer means of transport than would be generally supposed.

A novelty race held at Hampton Court and Ditton's Aquatic Sports, 1898, on a course stretching across the

of a tub decorated with a horse's head. The steeds generally seem rather unruly, and the riders are more frequently thrown than not.

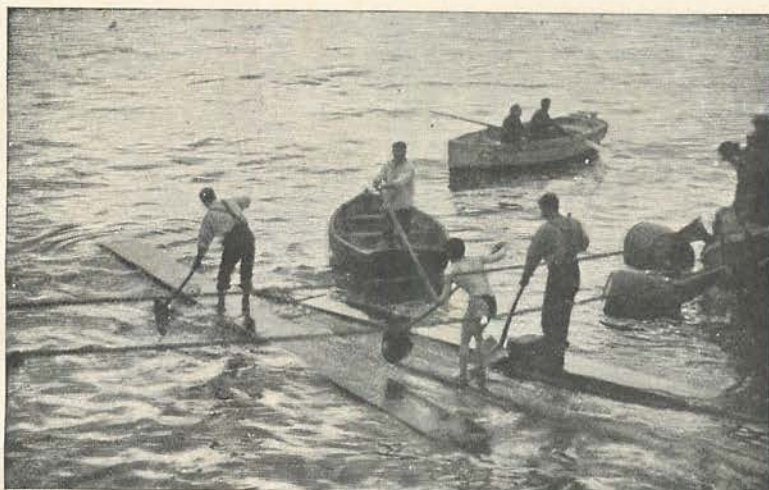
Log-rolling cannot be said to have yet been introduced in this country as a sport, it being confined to a few exponents of the art who have had a proper training, but one of these recently



From a]

LOG-ROLLING.

[Photograph.



From a]

PLANK ROWING.

[Photograph.

river, was remarkable for the peculiarity of the vessels entered. The only conditions were that the craft employed must be of a kind not previously used in a race, and that on reaching the opposite bank the competitor must land and drag his boat after him round a pole and paddle back again to the

starting-point. The makeshift craft used included a clothes-basket, a table turned upside down, a washing-tub, and an air-mattress, the latter finishing first, while most of the others performed somersaults in mid-stream.

The Jubilee race at Molesey Invitation Regatta held at the end of the 1897 season was a race between two



From a]

THE JUBILEE RACE.

[Photograph.



From a]

NOVELTY RACE.

[Photograph.

eights, one being a representative Molesey B.C. eight of 1897, and the other composed of old members of the club supposed to be of the time of 1837, and dressed in the costume of the period. The race looked like a win for the 1837 crew until within a few yards of the finish, when the boat capsized, and the top-hatted crew had to swim ashore.