

## Some Out-of-the-Way Records.

BY FREDERICK A. TALBOT.



**T**HIS is the age of records. Scarcely a day passes but some new and startling achievement is accomplished, completely eclipsing any others that may already be extant in

that particular line. Some individuals experience a great delight in establishing records in order to gain the wide-spread notoriety which generally results from the performance of such remarkable feats, while others become record-breakers unwittingly, though their efforts may often be quite as extraordinary and equally interesting.

It is an honourable achievement for a boy whose school life has extended over a period of nearly eleven years never to have missed a single attendance throughout the whole of that time. Yet this is the unique record possessed by Master Abel Roberts, of Llangollen. He was admitted into the infant department of the Board School in that town in 1888, when he was only three years of age. From the infants' school he duly passed into that of the seniors. Altogether for ten



MASTER ABEL ROBERTS, WHO HOLDS THE RECORD FOR SCHOOL ATTENDANCE.  
From a Photo. by Lettsome & Sons, Llangollen.

years and nine months he was present both morning and afternoon with unerring regularity and punctuality, not even being compelled to absent himself from his school duties on one single occasion through illness. Evidently great rivalry exists between the scholars of that school regarding their regular attendance, since another boy boasted a similar record for six years.

Many of our members of Parliament have occasionally treated the House to abnormally long discourses, but it is doubtful whether any constituent has yet rivalled the celebrated speech of Dr. Otto Lechter, a member of the Austrian Parliament, who on one occasion spoke for no less than twelve hours off the reel. Dr. Otto Lechter represents the constituency of Brunn, in Moravia, and his



COUNT LECHTER BEFORE DELIVERING HIS SPEECH.  
From a Photograph.



COUNT LECHTER, AFTER DELIVERING HIS RECORD SPEECH OF TWELVE HOURS.  
From a Photograph.

party, which comprises Progressive Germans, were in a large minority in 1897. An important subject was in debate, and Dr. Lechter rose to expound the views of his party thereon and to defend their interests. He commenced his speech at nine o'clock in the evening, and spoke to a full House throughout the whole night until nine o'clock the following morning. During the twelve



MRS. ANNE FLETCHER, WITH HER HUNDREDTH  
From a Photo. by] GODCHILD. [Nainby, Alford.

hours he was speaking he never once sat down or stopped, except to take, now and again, a sip of black coffee. His speech was one of the most brilliant that have ever been delivered in the Austrian Parliament, and was described as never once failing in interest or power throughout the whole time, neither did he repeat a single sentence.

In the little village of Langton Spilsby there resides a hale and hearty old woman whose matrimonial name is Mrs. Anne Fletcher, but who is familiarly known among the villagers as the "Century of Babies." That is not to say that Mrs. Fletcher is the happy possessor of such a huge colony of infants, but is due to the unique fact that she has carried over one hundred babies to be baptized. Curious to relate, not one of these children is her own progeny, since she is childless. She is passionately fond of

children, however, and she somewhat atones for her own loss by becoming godmother to the little ones of her more fortunate neighbours. The baby she is shown nursing upon her knee in our illustration is her one-hundredth godchild.

Captain John Whitmore Bennett has travelled 30,000 times across the English Channel. Until his recent retirement he was the oldest commander of the cross-Channel services from Folkestone and Dover, his term of service having extended over a period of fifty-three years. He first joined the fleet of boats sailing under the flag of the South-Eastern Railway Company between Ostend, Calais, and Boulogne. After sixteen years' connection with this company he relinquished his position to join the London, Chatham, and Dover Company, and initiated their steamboat service between Dover and the Continent. He can relate many interesting reminiscences, especially in connection with Royal personages travelling between this country and the Continent, and on one occasion he carried the German Emperor ashore when he was a little boy.



CAPTAIN JOHN WHITMORE BENNETT, WHO HAS CROSSED THE CHANNEL.  
From a Photo. by] 30,000 TIMES. [Amos, Dover.

Hans Angeli and Rittmeister Eugene Baron Forgatsch accomplished a notable feat in August, 1898, when they swam down the River Danube from Vienna to Presburg, in Hungary. The distance represents about thirty-eight English miles, and these two intrepid swimmers covered the journey in seven hours. They were unaccompanied; they never left the water; and neither did they take any refreshment in the way of food or drink from the time they plunged into the river at Vienna until they emerged again at Presburg. It would be almost impossible

to devise a less expensive method of travelling than this, especially when one emulates the example of these two record-breakers, who carried their clothes on their backs in a patent waterproof bag invented by Angeli.

Another swimmer who has probably achieved more wonders in the water than any aquatic champion since the days of the late Captain Webb is Montague A. Holbein, the famous long-distance cyclist. He scored first honours on July 25th, 1899, when he swam forty-three miles in the Thames in a little under twelve and a half hours. He entered the water at Blackwall Pier early in the morning, and, with the advantage of the strong ebb tide, swam down the river until he had progressed two miles beyond Gravesend. Taking advantage of the turn of the

tide he swam on the flood back to Blackwall, but just failed to reach the pier owing to the unfortunate failure of the tide. Although he had been in the water for so many hours without a rest he was quite fresh

and strong when he once more donned his clothes.

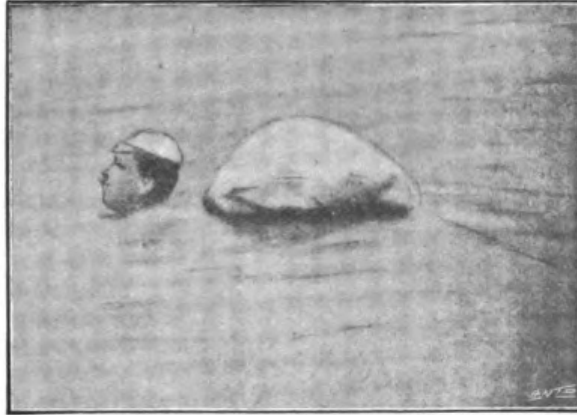
A month later Holbein defeated his Thames record by another marvellous swim in the Solent, where he covered forty-six miles in twelve hours. He dived into the water near the Spit Fort at Portsmouth, at twenty minutes to eight in the morning, and although the water was choppy and a disagreeable wind was blowing against the tide the swimmer soon settled determinedly down to his task. Not once during the whole journey did he evince any signs of

fatigue or exhaustion, and at the end of twelve hours his friends, who had accompanied him in the boat, had great difficulty to persuade him to leave the water. Had it not been for the rapidly approaching darkness Holbein undoubtedly would have continued on his way for another hour or two. His performances, however, in the Thames and the Solent rank as two of the finest feats in the annals of aquatics, while they are

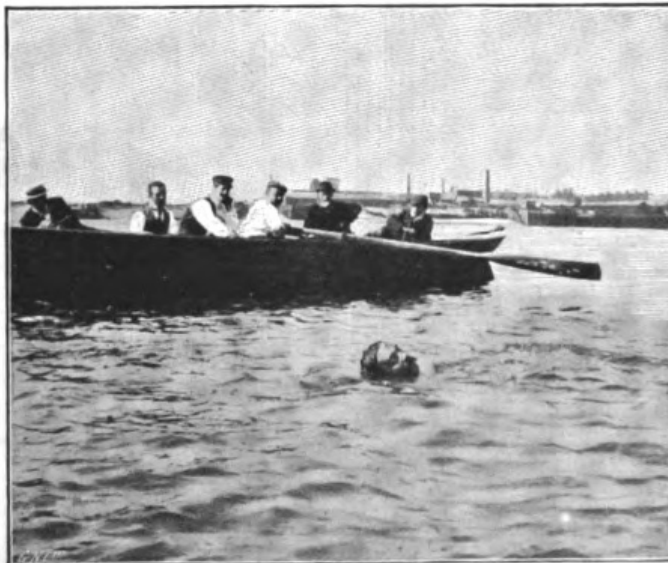
rendered still more remarkable by the fact that they are the longest distances ever covered by swimming. Holbein's *ultima thule* is to emulate Captain Webb in swimming across the English Channel from Dover to Calais; and judging from the wonderful stamina he displayed in the successful accomplishment of the foregoing efforts, there seems every

possibility of the attempt being crowned with success, providing wind and weather are propitious to such an event.

Another traveller who aspires to make himself famous by creating the record of



HANS ANGELI, WHO SWAM 38 MILES IN SEVEN HOURS.  
From a Photograph.



MR. M. A. HOLBEIN, WHO SWAM 46 MILES IN TWELVE HOURS.  
From a Photograph.



MR. G. M. BOYNTON, WHO IS WALKING ROUND THE WORLD.  
From a Photo. by Lafayette, Ltd., Dublin.

having walked round the world is George Melville Boynton. He started from San Francisco early on the morning of August 13th, 1897, and he is still tramping. He started attired in a paper suit of clothes and with no money in his pockets, his object being to live on the hospitality of the inhabitants of the various countries through which he passed. The estimated distance is 31,000 miles, and he is to accomplish the task within a stated time. This remarkable feat of pedestrianism is the outcome of a wager. If Boynton succeeds, a sum of 50,000dols. will be paid over to charities in San Francisco by the other parties to the wager. Boynton reached England some months ago, and, after touring the country, left for the Continent. Judging from the present rate of progress there seems every prospect of the globe-trotter fulfilling the

wager. It is to be hoped that he will—for charity's sake.

Another young man who suddenly attracted public notice last year as the result of a remarkable achievement was Master A. E. J. Collins, who ruthlessly upset cricket records by scoring 628 runs not out in a single innings. This mammoth score was recorded in a school match at Clifton. Mr. A. E. Stoddart, the well-known Middlesex amateur, hitherto possessed the unique record of having scored the largest number of runs in one single innings, his contribution being 485 not out, scored for Hampstead against the Stoics in 1885. Great though this achievement was, it was completely eclipsed by young Collins's effort, and it will be a difficult record for any other cricketer to defeat. Altogether Collins, whose portrait we are enabled to reproduce through the kind permission of his mother, was batting seven hours, his rate of scoring therefore averaging about ninety runs per hour.

It is a moot point whether any pastime



MASTER A. E. J. COLLINS, WHO MADE THE RECORD SCORE  
OF 628 NOT OUT.

From a Photo. by W. H. Midwinter & Co., Bristol.

renders such opportunities to the record-breaker as cycling. One of the latest and greatest attempts to obtain distinction in this direction is the endeavour of Mr. Edward Hale, the veteran cyclist, who successfully achieved the task of riding one hundred miles every day for twelve months, Sundays excepted. Some little while ago an American essayed the task of riding fifty miles per day for the same period, but such a performance sinks into insignificance in comparison with this latest effort. Mr. Hale started on July 31st, 1899, and completed the twelve months on July 30th, having cycled over 30,000 miles on the various high roads of the United Kingdom—a quite unprecedented ride. Mr. Hale performed his task upon an Acatene chainless cycle, and the same machine fulfilled his requirements for the whole year. It will be observed in our photo. that the machine is fitted with two handle-bars; the upper one is for easy riding on good roads and with a back wind; while the other—the dropped pattern—is for fast work and hill-climbing. Mr. Hale experienced absolutely no ill-effects from his feat. As an example of physical endurance the ride is remarkable, while the high standard of excellence

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MR. EDWARD HALE, WHO RODE 30,000 MILES IN ONE YEAR.  
From a Photograph.



MR. JOSEPH POLLARD, WHO BATHED, SUMMER AND WINTER, 7,119 TIMES.  
From a Photo. by J. Downey & Sons, South Shields.

and durability of the cycle is apparent.

We have heard of those zealous swimmers who, sooner than miss their morning dip in the Serpentine, have sallied forth in the depth of winter armed with pickaxes and similar weapons in order to break the ice, but it is doubtful whether their enthusiasm could equal that of the late Mr. Joseph Pollard, formerly swimming master of the South Shields Swimming Club. For more than nineteen and a half years he had indulged, with unerring regularity, in a morning bathe in the

North Sea. He commenced his unique record on September 29th, 1877, and continued it till May 5th, 1897. This represents something like 7,119 dips, and during the whole of that time he only missed forty mornings, his absence on those occasions being due to illness, one attack of which he contracted in his attempt to swim from Newcastle to South Shields against a heavy wind, when he was fifty-three years of age. During one period of that time he held a record of over 3,000 consecutive bathes. His time for bathing from April 1st to October 31st was 6.30 a.m., and from November 1st to March 31st seven o'clock, so that, more often than not, in the winter he was bathing in the dark.