

ARTICLES WHITTLED WITH A PENKNIFE FROM SOLID WOOD BY DR. J. H. BROWN.
From a Photograph.

water a foot high, the overflow of which supplied a little river winding through the flowers (representing trees). At one side was a water-wheel running, the other side a windmill. Drinking from the fountain was a bird, which would raise its head as if swallowing, very natural to life.

In front of the fountain was a little white mouse on apparently a solid rock, eating a kernel of corn; through a hole in the rock on which he sat ran the wires that turned his head to look at you and raised his paws to his mouth. All worked at the same time and

ran by the water from the main pipes in his house, and could be shut off at will. Above all this were seventy-five pots of flowers filling the bow-window.

It was a grand sight and was the talk of the town for years. He was obliged to pack it away owing to the large number of visitors who called to see it.

XXVII. — THE SKIPPING CHAMPION OF THE WORLD.

BY FRED A. TALBOT.

THE record-breaker is inseparable from America. Be it either in work or play, an astonishing feat must be accomplished. The results of these efforts to attain priority and notoriety have been the creation of some unique records, and in some instances the feats have gained widespread notice as remarkable achievements of physical endurance. Notwithstanding this curious tendency in the States it is doubtful whether one would have thought it possible to establish a record in connection with the young lady's favourite pastime of skipping. Yet this is the case, and the record is not held by any member of the fair sex, but by Mr. Fred Connor, of New Wilmington, Pennsylvania, U.S.A.

Curiously enough, the idea of establishing a skipping record appears to have originated in this country; at any rate, an Englishman was the first man to gain publicity in this direction. The holder of this unique championship was no other than William Plimmer, the well-known English pugilist. Some six or seven years ago he decided to ascertain how long he could skip without once stopping or pausing. He enlisted the assistance of some friends to witness the event. Owing to the curious nature of the competition considerable interest was

manifested, an effect due to a great extent, no doubt, to the fame he had accomplished in connection with his pugilistic encounters. An ordinary rope was provided, and Plimmer commenced his task. He



FRED CONNOR, THE CHAMPION SKIPPER—STARTING POSITION.
From a Photograph.

had to turn the rope himself, that is to say, he did not skip while assistants placed at either end turned the rope for him. Plimmer succeeded in making 3,926 consecutive jumps without a single miss or pause. It was considered a magnificent performance, and Plimmer was fêted accordingly.

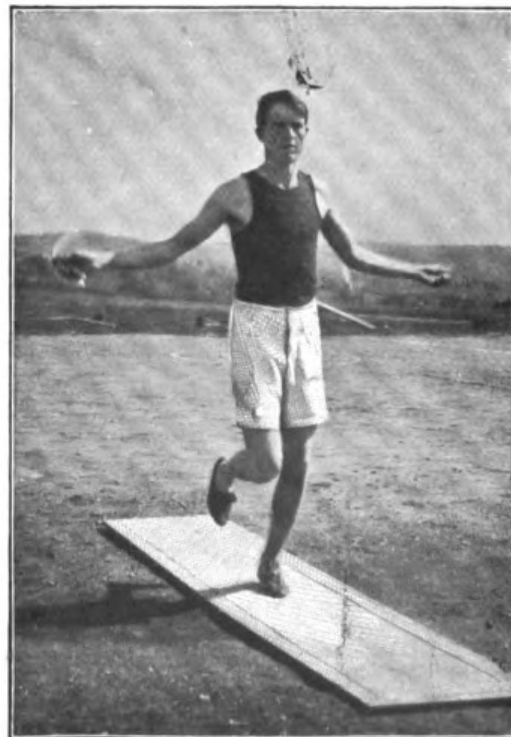
But the glory of the achievement of the English pugilist was short-lived. A challenger appeared on the scene in the person of Mr. Connor, who stated that he would excel Plimmer's record. The conditions were to be exactly the same, and the *venue* of the contest was to be Oil City, Pennsylvania. So eminently successful was Connor in this attempt that Plimmer's record was lowered by 109 jumps, Connor having accomplished 4,035 skips. The new champion's achievement was somewhat more noteworthy than that of Plimmer, since he had used the backward lope or step, which made the task much more difficult.

Although beaten, Plimmer made no attempt to retrieve the "blue ribbon," but another rival, Mr. Mullen, eclipsed Connor's record by skipping against time. This latest

opponent made 5,000 skips in one hour. The forward lope was utilized throughout, and the feat was regarded as being remarkable, since the strain of skipping incessantly for such a length of time and at such a speed is tremendous. Skipping is one of the most healthy forms of exercise, and at the same time one of the most fatiguing.

This achievement by Mullen stimulated Connor to further effort. He soon announced that he would further increase the record, and on March 1st, 1896, the attempt was made. Mullen's record on this occasion was hopelessly broken, for Connor carried off fresh laurels by making 7,000 skips in 1hr. 45min. Although on the average for the hour this aggregate does not equal that of Mullen, since Connor only made 4,000 skips in the sixty minutes as against the former's 5,000 in the same time, yet the feat was far more important, and is still the record for skipping for the longest time without a pause or miss. As with the case of the competitor he vanquished, Connor availed himself of the forward lope entirely. Great difficulty was at times experienced by the umpires in recording the skips, owing to the rapidity with which the competitor turned the rope.

By this wonderful exhibition, which was not only a remarkable skipping performance but also a splendid physical feat, Connor



SKIPPING 120 TIMES A MINUTE.

From a Photograph.

firmly established his claim to the championship, and since then no other challengers have succeeded in wresting it from him. Connor has since devoted his energies mainly to pace instead of to staying power, and in this direction he has also achieved some startling successes.

Shortly after his disposal of Mullen he had a sharp spurt of 500 jumps in 2min. 22sec., an average of about $3\frac{1}{2}$ skips per second. This was a rapid piece of work, but continued practice has enabled him to increase his speed enormously. Occasionally he attains such a pace that the camera fails to record the rope distinctly, but simply gives a confused blur showing the rope whizzing through the air. Some difficulty was experienced in obtaining the photographs illustrating this article, and it was not until after several attempts had been made that successful photographs were obtained.

On December 24th, 1897, Connor succeeded in lowering the last remaining record in connection with skipping. This latter was



SKIPPING 300 TIMES A MINUTE—FORWARD MOVEMENT.
From a Photograph.

established some little time previously by Mr. Frank Nucle, of Auburn, New York State, who accomplished 2,000 skips in 14min. 30sec. This averages a speed for the hour of about 8,000 jumps, so that it will be recognised that Connor set himself a formidable task in attempting to eclipse this feat. The contest was decided at the Young

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Men's Christian Association, Oil City, and Connor gained another gigantic success. He lowered Nucle's record by 2min. 51sec., because he accomplished the 2,000 jumps in 11min. 39sec., an hourly speed of over 10,300 jumps—truly a magnificent performance.



SKIPPING 300 TIMES A MINUTE—CROSS-ROPE MOVEMENT.
From a Photograph.

It might be naturally supposed that to watch Connor skipping, especially in the longer contests, was a tedious process and devoid of interest. Such is far from being the case, however. Connor is a typical athlete, and he can introduce considerable variety into his steps that relieves the monotony of the spectacle. There is the forward lope, ordinary running style, which is the easiest and speediest step; back lope, which is both difficult and fatiguing; double jump, front hop, cross arm hop, and so forth. With such a variety of movements, when one continual action becomes tiring, he can obtain relief by adopting some other step. Then, again, he is continually altering his pace. At one moment he is proceeding along in an easy, regular step, while at another he is turning the rope so quickly that his feet do not appear to touch the ground, and the revolving rope makes a peculiar and fascinating hiss in its progress.

Three days after his defeat of Nucle's exploit he created another fast record by making 7,000 skips in 47min. 45sec., at the Oil City Athletic Club. The following

week he completed an even finer performance by making 10,111 steps in 1 hr. 18 min., which still ranks as one of his finest and fastest performances. His last exhibition was given at Warren, Pennsylvania, some time ago, when he made 1,000 jumps in 5 min. 17 sec. Since that time Connor has been resting upon his triumphs, awaiting patiently the arrival of the next challenger to the skipping-rope championship, but apparently other athletes are content to allow Connor to remain in undisputed possession of his unique record.

XXVIII.—A WONDERFUL CLOCK.

AFTER two and a half years of steady labour William Jankowsky, a young carriage-builder of Brooklyn, U.S.A., has completed the most

remarkable timepiece known to the annals of the craft. Not only does this clock keep correct time, but it has several sets of chimes, electric lights, a phonograph, a music-box, a procession of ecclesiastical figures, a couple of miniature breech-loading cannon, a gas warming device, an electric fan, and an alarm. It took Mr. Jankowsky just one year to collect the materials desired, to draft the design, and cut out with a scroll-saw the hundreds of pieces of wood used in the construction.

The whole affair stands 8 ft. high and 4 ft. in width and 3 ft. deep. The woods used in making it are ebony, white maple, oak, mahogany, and walnut.

In the winter time the clock is connected with a gas stove, and automatically warms up the room in the morning, while during the hot summer days it operates an electric fan.

When the clock is wound up and its various devices put into operation it affords an amusing entertainment, for this wonderful timepiece does practically everything but talk, and when the phonograph is started it even seems to have the power of speech.

When visited by a representative of this magazine Mr. Jankowsky ushered his guest into the drawing-room and promptly exhibited the clock.

"There she stands; a pretty ornament, is it not?" he smilingly asked, pointing to the unique time-teller; "that represents two and a half years of hard labour and thought.

"I am a carriage-maker by trade, and am kept busily employed during the day, so I had only my evenings to work on my clock. Many and many a time I sat up until the wee small hours perfecting my design or finishing some delicate bit of carving. Two batteries are employed in producing the force necessary to operate all the devices pertaining to this timepiece. I will set it going.

"As you will notice, first



From a

WILLIAM JANKOWSKY AND HIS WONDERFUL CLOCK.

[Photograph.