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EDITED AND ILLUSTRATED BY J. W. BENGOUGH.

The gravest Beast is the Ass; the gravest Bird is the Owl;
The gravest Fish is the Oyster; the gravest Man is the Fool.

Grip's Historical Readings.

EMBRACING NOTICES OF GREAT EVENTS
AND CELEBRATED MEN.

IV.—ALFRED THE GREAT.

The subject of the present sketch must not be confounded with other great ALFREDs, such as BOULTBEE, the great statesman, or DIAMOND, the great ex-journalist. The ALFRED we propose to tell about just now was born of royal but respectable parents in Berkshire, England, A.D. 849, and was even greater than either of the two gentlemen we have named. Being intended by his father for a situation in the Civil Service in the capacity of Monarch, the youth was placed under the care of a certain Mr. SWITHUN, who had instructions to give him the best education he had in his possession. "Of course," remarked the royal parent to the tutor, "I don't want you to cram him with any of the ornamental branches of the ecclesiastical classes, such as reading, writing and ciphering;—I just want you to give him a good solid education such as average members of Parliament have." Mr. SWITHUN, we believe, carried out these instructions to the best of his ability, and as a result ALFRED was at the age of 12 years, a good talker, and well versed in marbles and base ball. It was the young prince's mother who first incited him to learn to read. This she did by offering a prize in the shape of a finely illustrated book. Thus, we see, the chromo system was introduced into Britain a many years ago. ALFRED learned to read, but he didn't immediately turn his education to practical use. He might have got a country school to teach, if he had watched the advertisements in the *Globe*, but he was not covetous after wealth, and preferred to go winding the horn. This is not a slang term indicating that the young man took to frequenting bar-rooms; it is a hunting phrase. ALFRED was very fond of hunting the deer, and that he was a success in this line is proved by the fact of his capturing ELSWRITA, whom he married in his twentieth year. "Three years later, he took his seat as King. This didn't prove to be by any means a soft seat, though it was richly upholstered. For some reason, ALFRED got very unpopular, and in the midst of the war that was then going on with the Danes, His Majesty withdrew from the pomp and vanity of the Throne, and boarded in the house of a poor cowherd, in a remote and secluded part of the country. One day his

boarding missus set him to watching some aerated loaves, on the fire, while she stepped out to saw a few sticks of wood. ALFRED was occupied with other business, and the consequence was that he let the bread burn, whereupon the woman got very angry, and denounced him as a cowardly loafer. After this incident, ALFRED gathered his army around him again, and made up his mind to clean out the Danes who had invaded his territory. He visited his camp of GUTHRUM, the Danish king, in the disguise of a harper, and entertained the rude warriors with *Grandfather's Clock*, *Little Buttercup*, and other popular selections. His object was to find out how strong the enemy were, and when he found that they could stand his playing, he began to be afraid they would prove too powerful, but his fears were unfounded, and in the battle the Danish forces were badly beaten. The rest of ALFRED's reign was devoted to the improvement of his subjects, morally, educationally and socially. He used to write up the statute books himself, and then get the Parliament to sanction them; thus saving a great deal of time and wind not to mention sessional indemnity. So honest did the people become under this wise ruler, that it is said a purse might be left upon the public highway and no passer-by would pick it up. This may have been owing to honesty, but it is possible the passer-by might suspect that there was a string to the purse and a small boy concealed in the vicinity. King ALFRED was a great patron of letters, and encouraged art and literature in every way. We are sorry to say that he suffered greatly from bodily infirmity all his life, having the misfortune to live before the day of the liver pad invention. His distinguished services on behalf of the Anglo-Saxon race have given him a position in the temple of fame which even this memoir will not improve to any great extent.

Haulan!

THE CHAMPION INTERVIEWED BY OUR OWN
SPECIAL REPORTER

Newcastle, April 19th.

On arriving at London, I found the public mind of the Great Metropolis hugely exercised over the coming aquatic contest. Accordingly, I went down to my favorite Club, and found great excitement amongst the members. Next morning I got together a few particular friends, among whom were the DUKE OF DIDDLESEX, the MARQUIS OF SPLENCHAN, Major De ROLLOCK, of the Blues, and Count THOLESPINSKI of the Russian Embassy, to go down as a party to the Tyne and visit the great man. On arriving at the Ord Arms, I presented my card,—"GRIP, Toronto," to a footman in blue and red (the Champion's colors), and requested an interview. We were ushered into a reception room, gorgeously upholstered; also in blue and red, and after a time, were informed by the *laque de place* that his master was hardly "in form" to see us this morning, but, in consideration of the party being represented by GRIP, he was inclined to waive all ceremony, and receive us in his own private room. We found the Champion lying on a lavender-scented couch of the *Louis Quince* pattern, his head supported by the softest of swan's down cushions, and being fanned by a faithful *Punkah Wallah*, imported from the Punjaub for his own particular and private use. We were requested by the servitor to walk as noiselessly as possible, as his master's nerves were very easily unstrung. He was about to take his usual *petit verre* of campbor julep, as is his custom immediately after his

ROSE-WATER BATH.

which treatment, we were assured by the man in Blue and Red, "was a hexcellent thing for the nerves, you know."

The great Sculler, after nodding familiarly to the Duke, and the rest of the noblemen and gentlemen, languidly motioned me to approach. "My, dear GRIP," said he, after a few words about old friends, "this is exceedingly kind of you, to call upon me. I shall of cawth be delighted at any time to see you, but I weally beg you won't bwing that mob with you; as a favor, old boy, I hope you won't." "But," I said, "NED, these are heavy swells, and may possibly make up a good book for you." "Yes, of cawth, I know all that; but weally, I can't be bawed with them," replied the fastidious "boy." "Why, NED," said I, "you've turned a proper Englishman since you crossed the Pond." "Aw, yass, professional man must turn one way or another to suit circumstances, you know," was the reply. "But pawdon me, dear boy, I must take my usual lunch. Abernethy crackaw and thimbleful of shewy." Whereupon the great EDWARD yawned and closed his eyes, as for a nap. I took this opportunity to get a good view of the Champion's physique. His biceps muscles have been so abnormally developed that he is now obliged to get his guernseys manufactured to order to fit him. I could not help regarding him as he "lay all the day" with a carbuncle on his neck and a diamond on his finger, but with feelings of especial pride, and was rejoiced to find his *tout ensemble* so much improved. I am assured that he now pulls at the rate of 65 to 72 strokes a minute, and a bet of £500,000 is offered that he can pull

TEN THOUSAND MILES

in ten thousand consecutive quarter hours. The Champion enquired very kindly after his old friends in Canada, especially Mr. ROBERT BERRY and the rest of the Island boys. But I must conclude in order to catch the Canadian mail. I can only add that my eldest son, whom I had hitherto designed for the Church, I will buy an out-rigger for, and send him to the Island. As I have failed to make a scholar of him, I trust that he will turn out to be what is much more profitable, a Sculler.

The Medical War.

GRIP's special commissioner lately arrived from Bay Street, brings interesting particulars of the furious war going on in that remote part of the world between the Medicals and Sawbones tribes. It appears that the Medicals, who are for the most part youthful, were driven into revolt by the oppressive measures of the Sawbones, with whom they are obliged to have dealings. According to the custom of the land, a Medical is received into the Sawbone tribe on passing a satisfactory written examination before a native Council, and it is in connection with this ceremony that the war originated. The Council, acting, it is said, under the influence of a powerful chief known as OLD RYE, entrenched themselves in the basement of an old church, and thrust the Medicals into the street, decreeing that the examination was to be oral, and the Medicals would only be admitted in rotation, a few at a time. The Medicals took offense at this, and called in the aid of BLACKBOTTLE, a neighboring chief, under whose leadership they attacked and drove in the pickets of the Sawbones.