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Boys and Athletics

"How to Swim in Races" by J. W. Spencer,
Holder of 23 American Nautical Records.

The human body is not very well designed for nautical feats. Since we are not equipped with fins, it is rather difficult to force the body forward in the water with any speed, but with instruction and practice it is possible to increase the ability of the average swimmer two or three times.

Regarding swimming as a sport, our English cousins are far in advance of us, as is shown by a comparison of English and American swimming records. The reason for this difference is that the English show much more interest in the pastime than we do, and, in addition, swimming pools are numerous and well patronized in that country. There are indications that the interest throughout America is increasing. New swimming tanks are being built every year, and records at all distances are being outdone.

Considered as an exercise, swimming has two points which in particular commend it. The muscles of the chest and back are greatly developed and the lung capacity is increased. As distinguished from many other sports, swimming has a practical application, particularly for those who live near the water or take an interest in boats or yachting. It gives not only an ability to save one's self in cases of emergency, but in many instances to save others.

One of the reasons that the water is not too rough, or so cold as to numb, a swimmer should be able to cover a mile, or to keep afloat as many hours. This would not be a remarkable performance when one considers that there are men who have gone twenty miles or more without rest let up.

The specific gravity of the body is that water will nearly support without effort on the part of the swimmer. With the lungs well inflated the average person can, with a little practice, float motionless in salt water. To do so in fresh water requires considerable practice and development of the lung capacity. Because of the greater sustaining power of salt water those who are unable to swim will find it a little easier to learn the art in the sea.

After some degree of ability has been acquired the difference in fresh water will not be noticed except in the attempt at motionless floating.

Those who are entirely unable to swim will find that it is practically impossible to teach swimming by any sort of a written article. The knowledge can only come by actual work and practice in the water. Children, as a rule, under favorable conditions work out the ability to keep afloat by their almost undirected efforts, but the best way to learn is to have the help of a friend who understands the art, or the assistance of a competent instructor where possible.

The intention is to present in this article a description of what are known as "racing strokes." These can be easily learned by people who have had enough experience in the water to be classed as those who are "at home" in that element. However, there are certain points relating to elementary swimming which it is well to touch upon, for, if kept in mind, they will aid in overcoming the most serious difficulties. There are three things which will help the beginner if dependent upon the instruction of a friend. The first is that an inflated belt or other device for keeping the body afloat will make it easier to learn the stroke. The attention is not distracted from the proper performance of the necessary motions by the danger of sinking. With the aid of the belt each stroke may be taken slowly and executed according to instruction. In this way much useless floundering and waste of strength is avoided. As soon as the idea of the way of using the limbs is acquired the belt should be discarded and the attention directed to keeping the body afloat by means of the stroke.

The next important thing is to avoid the natural tendency to keep much out of the water as possible. Most beginners try to keep the head, neck and even part of the shoulders above the surface. This cannot be done easily, even by a good swimmer. A very portion of the body which is kept above the water is a dead weight upon the effort to keep afloat, and soon produces exhaustion. Swim as low in the water as possible, so long as the breathing is not interfered with. If the water is not rough let the body drop till the chin is just immersed.

The third thing to remember is that the leg stroke is not understood by most of the people who swim. Beginners are often told to draw the legs up and then kick them back, the idea being that propulsion is attained by kicking at the water. This principle is wrong, and those who swim that way have difficulty in making progress. The proper way is to draw the legs up, then extend them, but at the same time separate them, till they form an angle of about forty-five degrees to each other. Then, with the legs straight and "toes pointed," swing them together forcibly as if they were the blades of a pair of scissors. It is this last part, or the swinging together of the legs,

which gives the propelling force. The principle of the motion is that the water between the legs forms a wedge on which the legs act in closing, and the resultant force moves the body forward. It would be well for the beginner to practice this leg stroke while holding up the hands to some convenient pole or other stationary object at the surface of the water.

At first work on the three parts of the leg motion, with a slight pause between each, until with practice the whole stroke may be made continuous.

Of the racing strokes for fast swimming, there are only two which are in general use. These are the over-arm side stroke and the trudgeon, or double over-arm. It is inadvisable for one to try to learn either of these strokes unless one has gained considerable proficiency in the ordinary method of swimming, or, as it is called, the "breast stroke." For racing, the general sentiment in this country is that the trudgeon is the best, but there are many advocates of the side stroke. The majority of the latter are those who do long distance work, so it may be said that the side stroke is better suited for events which pass the quarter mile mark. The "trudgeon" is undoubtedly superior for short races, but as it is more difficult to master than the other it is best to begin fast work by learning the side stroke.

The characteristics of this method are that the body is kept on the side, and that the upper arm is brought clear of the water and swung forward through the air for each stroke, while the under arm performs its entire motion under water. There are many who swim in a manner which closely resembles the side stroke, and for such it is generally easy to acquire good form. The most important point in this style of swimming is to keep the body on the side. It will be noticed that when one swims the ordinary breast stroke the upper part of the chest is forced directly against the water. The result is that progress is greatly retarded, but in the side stroke the top of the shoulder is presented so that it to a certain degree cuts the water. Therefore the body should be kept on the side and the tendency to roll onto the chest when the upper arm is thrown forward should be avoided. The lower arm should first determine on which side he will swim. In this respect individuals differ. The question can be determined by trying both sides. The one which seems to afford the most natural position should be selected as the best for the individual, and all subsequent work should be undertaken in accordance with that decision.

The upper arm stroke is made by swinging the arm forward above the water until fully extended, straight to the front. The arm is then dropped into the water and swept downward and back, though almost a full half circle. When near the surface and parallel with the body, the elbow is bent and the arm lifted quickly from the water, elbow first. It is then ready for the swing forward for the next stroke. The lower arm stroke is made by thrusting the hand out from the shoulder—all the time under water—and when extended to the front is swept through the water—not straight down and back, as in the case of the upper arm—but a little to the front of the body. This movement is complete when the arm lies almost against the body. The arm is then bent and the hand brought up close along the body till in front of the shoulder, from which the next stroke begins. Care should be taken to make the sweep of both the arms as long as possible. There is a natural tendency to cut short that part of the stroke which forces the body ahead. This must be avoided, and a good, full sweep of the arms acquired.

The principle of the leg movement is the same as previously explained in connection with elementary swimming, but there is the difference that, in the side stroke, the legs must be separated in the way that one would separate them to take a step in walking—that is, one in front of the other. In the former explanation it is understood that the legs are to be separated sideways of the body, or as they are when one stands with the feet apart.

As to the order in which the motions of the different limbs are made, it is necessary to regard the propelling part of the respective strokes and to execute them in the following order: Lower arm, upper arm, leg, lower arm, etc. These should follow each other continuously. As soon as one ends the other should commence so that the body is moving forward continuously.

Probably the most difficult part of the side stroke is the breathing. The body being on the side and carried very low in the water, the face is nearly covered. In fact, many swimmers have their heads almost under the water at one part of the stroke. It will be found that there is naturally a slight lift of the body at the end of the sweep of the upper arm stroke. This lift will bring the face partially clear of the water, and the

breath must then be taken in through the mouth—never through the nose. The object of this is that any little splash of water drawn in with the breath will stop in the mouth and will not choke the swimmer by being drawn into the throat.

After one has acquired proficiency in the side stroke, the trudgeon may be attempted. The point which characterizes this method is that both arms are brought forward above the surface of the water. In this way one avoids the resistance which is encountered in forcing the under arm forward in the side stroke. It is evident that the body cannot be kept on one side. There must be a decided roll which will bring the shoulders alternately near the surface. That shoulder which is naturally carried uppermost in the side stroke must be brought up further than the other to allow of breathing on that side and to allow the propelling part of the leg stroke to be made with the body in nearly the same position as in the side stroke. The alternate rolling of the body is accomplished by allowing the sweep of each arm to raise each shoulder so that the arm can be lifted out and swung forward, straight to the front, as is done with the upper arm in the side stroke.

The order or succession of the movements of the limbs is the same as previously described.

The fact that the trudgeon keeps the face under water most of the time will necessitate considerable ability in catching the breath, for the mouth can only be above the surface for a fraction of a second each time. To



Striped pique is used to make this comfortable and serviceable boy's suit. The trousers are tucked in at the knees to fall in full effect, and the blouse has a broad collar of pure white pique, with only the revers of the striped goods.

make it possible to inhale in this short period, the breath must be exhaled while the face is still under water. When this is done there is enough time to fill the lungs if the air is drawn in quickly.

There are certain rules which apply to both the trudge and side stroke, which, if kept in mind, will aid in developing speed. First, time the movement of the limbs so that one stroke follows the other in regular and even succession. This keeps the body moving steadily forward and prevents the loss of power which will result from a "sag" in the stroke. Second, remember that the head is only to be carried just high enough to bring the mouth clear of the water at the time when the breath should be taken. Third, reach well forward with the arms and make the propelling sweep as long as possible.

If one can master either or both of the strokes described in this article, it will be found that the pleasure of swimming will be almost doubled. However, when you go in for a swim do not stay in the water too long if you wish to derive the greatest benefit from the sport. It is always best to come out before a sense of exhaustion is experienced or before feeling chilled.

REFLECTIONS OF A BACHELOR.

A girl can be terribly ugly without ever discovering it.

A man can get very fond of any nice girl that won't marry him.

It takes a terrible lot of indignation to make a man feel as bad as stopping smoking to cure it.

For every love letter a man writes when he is engaged he writes ten thousand checks when he is married.

A girl has an awful funny way of twisting her neck around so that no matter which way she seems to be facing her lips are right in front of yours.—New York Press.

Patience—"Is her husband in trade?"

Patience—"No; he was sold out by the sheriff last week."

50 YEARS A HORSE THIEF

Eighty years old and for 50 years a horse thief, Charles J. W. Agrius is again in jail in Milwaukee. It seems hardly worth while but he is making strenuous efforts to escape.

The most notorious horse thief in the middle west is as spry to-day as many men of middle age. He does not look over 60. He insists, though, that he is almost 84, and people who knew the veteran criminal in the early days say he is. He has gray chin whiskers, is somewhat bald and wears his hair long, in ringlets. He is slight and of medium height, somewhat stoop-shouldered and shifty-eyed.

Of course, he has a romance, or says he has. He was driven from Sweden by a love affair and duel. Then he came to this country and soon after started out as a thief. Thirty years ago he operated extensively along the Sauk and Mississippi rivers, and the pioneers cursed the organized gang that they supposed were running off their horses.

His method was to pick his horses and when conditions were favorable make a quick run from southern Wisconsin across the state line into northern Illinois. Here he had a cave which concealed him and the horses until the hue and cry was over. Then he was off to southern Illinois to dispose of the horses to farmers.

He has been arrested scores of times, but so well were his tracks covered and so pleasing an impression did he make on judges and juries that the district attorneys found him

The Days of Auld Lang Syne

Interesting Events of Ye Olden Times Gathered from The Planet's Issues of Half a Century Ago.

From Planet files, March 20, 1860, to April 3, 1860.

Robert Earl makes an assignment.

Peter Peters is one of Chatham's watchmakers.

Arthur Jones is a provincial engineer and land surveyor.

James Rennie & Co. are wholesale boot and shoe manufacturers.

William Smith, in the Goodyear Block, advertises his boots and shoes.

Many of the Russian noblemen still continue to oppose the liberation of the serfs.

It is contemplated to introduce steam fire engines into the Toronto fire brigade.

D. Forsythe sells garden and field seeds and also a large stock of groceries, crockery, etc.

Died—In Dover East, on Friday last, the 23rd, Catharine, wife of Mr. Chas. Terry, aged 80 years.

Birth—In Chatham, on Friday, the 30th ult., the wife of Mr. W. G. Betts, of a daughter.

The crops in Michigan are in a most prosperous condition. A very large breadth of wheat has been sown.

Died—In the township of Harwich, on Tuesday, Louisa Gammage, beloved wife of John Bedford, aged 30 years.

William Waldon, a colored resident, aged 60 years, was killed by being kicked in the stomach by a horse.

John Chapman disposes of his book and stationery store to Mr. McCrae, and continues in business as a book-binder.

Died—At his residence, Township of Harwich, on Thursday, the 29th inst., John Tobin, aged 19 years and seven months.

The taxes in Hamilton are 30 per cent. of the annual value of its whole real and personal property, or 6s. 5d. in a pound.

Birth—In Chatham, on Monday, the 26th inst., the wife of J. G. Pennecot, father, Surveyor of Customs, of a son and heir.

Isaac Whiting, second son of Rev. M. Whiting, was drowned in the River Thames near the Wesleyan Mission House, at Muncie.

At the commencement of the Crimean war the French government had 80,000 horses. At its termination they could only muster 10,000.

Three hundred men employed by the corporation of Montreal have been ordered to stop work in consequence of no funds in the Treasury.

In a report of the Council proceedings appears the following:—"Mr. Atkinson directed the attention of the Council to the fact that some person among the spectators was busying himself in throwing peas at the councillors."

An Ohio Court has given \$5,000 damages to a Mrs. Brush to be paid by one Peter Lawson, who sold her husband liquor under the influence of which he chopped off one of his wife's feet. The Court ruled that for injuries done by any one while drunk, the rum seller was liable.

London holds a free fair. The second free fair of the county of Middlesex was held Tuesday, April 24. The fair was opened for the sale of horses, cattle, sheep and agricultural implements of all kinds, domestic manufacturers and every kind of produce.

Mr. McKellar writes the Town Council to the effect that the Ordinance Department were willing to sell the barrack ground to the town and take in payment town debentures. A committee of three was named to confer with Col. Coffin upon the subject of the purchase of said barrack ground.

The Detroit Tribune says the Great Western Railway Company has decided upon building two large steamers to ply between Detroit and Windsor, for the purpose of carrying railway cars from one side of the river to the other, in order to save the trouble and expense of unloading and reloading.

For Sale Cheap—The Rutland House with 20 acres of land, hotel and all of the buildings thereon, gardens or chards, four good wells of water, all bricked up, grapevines, strawberry beds, gooseberry bushes, currant bushes, all in fine order. Apply to R. yesterday.

B. Parr, on the premises, or to R. Harper or S. D. Radley.

An act for the further protection of growing timber has been brought into the Legislative Council by Hon. Mr. Allen, which enacts that to cut, steal or destroy a growing tree on another person's land shall be a felony and punishable by a fine of \$400 or not more than two years' imprisonment, and any person purchasing such tree or sapling, knowing same to have been stolen, shall be liable to the same punishment.

Gone to Europe—Tuesday morning Mr. Joseph Pritchard, late Mine Host of the Royal Exchange, of this town, left for the east. For five years Mr. Pritchard has been proprietor of that well known hotel, and now that he has gone from it with his pockets well lined with the useful his presence will be not a little missed. The Royal Exchange passed into the hands of David Walker, of the Chatham station refreshment room.

Our advertisement columns show that the fast-sailing Steamer Swan will at once commence her trips between Chatham and Detroit. She has a new captain and crew; has been re-fitted and painted throughout and we are informed by her proprietor that no pains will be spared to make her in every way worthy of the patronage of the travelling and trading public. Mr. C. Harborn is agent for Chatham.

By the Essex Journal we learn that the Windsor Council have fixed the salaries for the present year, as follows—Police Magistrate \$400, Town Clerk \$100, Treasurer \$200, Town Inspector and Fire Warden \$140, two auditors, each \$20, Messengers to Council and Market Clerk \$275. The constables appointed by the March quarter sessions, for Windsor, are as follows—Capt. Forbes, Samuel Port, F. H. Brandt, Henry Mill, Alfred Muddock, Edward Glanville, David Patterson and Lawrence Curtis.

Men Who Revel in Dangerous Work

"Whenever a very high iron or steel structure is to be erected in any part of the world," said an engineer recently, "there is need for a few men who are specially expert at working on the very top, where hoisting and riveting have to be done under conditions that make it necessary for the workmen to be exceptionally proof against dizziness, to be excellent climbers, and to swing immense weights and do other hard work with very little chance to get a good leverage against anything."

"Now, while the average ironworkers all have wonderful ability to hang on high in the air, and do the most difficult jobs under the most dangerous conditions, there are experts even among these experts. These rarely do anything except the work in the most difficult and dangerous places of all."

"Such men do not usually remain in one place for any length of time. Like other specialists, they are called in when the time comes. Some of them have been all over the world, putting the finishing touches on skyscrapers in the United States, helping to bridge chasms in South America, throwing spans over quicksands in India and Africa, and working on high towers through Europe."

"They get big wages, and they work only a few hours a day. But while they work there is hardly a moment when they are not in danger. They do not mind it, however. They smoke and joke as cheerfully while they are perched on the end of a 300 feet in the air as if they were sitting placidly on the ground."

"Well," said Gassway, "if there's one thing that I hate more than another it's a long-winded bore."

"Yes," remarked Miss Knox, "it seems I've misjudged you, then."

"I always had an idea you were struck on yourself."

Forget the sorrows and anxieties of yesterday.

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