

THE INTERNATIONAL BOAT RACE.

THE DEATH OF RENFORTH.

The great return match between the St. John, or Paris, and the Tyne crews, rowed on the Kennebecassis, near St. John, N. B., on the 23rd of last month, had a most tragical termination. Deep was the interest felt in the result of the contest between the famous Paris four and the new Tyne crew got up by Renforth. It was looked upon as a possibility that the St. John men might win back the laurels of which they were stripped at Lachine last year, and expectation was high among their friends. But they have only achieved a technical victory, for death ruthlessly stepped into the boat of their opponents and ended the contest at the first three quarters of a mile upon the course, when the lithe and sturdy oarsmen were only beginning, or should have been beginning to show their mettle. The sad incident which drove the Tyne boat shoreward is made the subject of our illustration on another page, and though most of our readers have doubtless already read in the newspapers the account of the circumstances attending the melancholy event, we shall briefly recapitulate them as set forth in the testimony given at the Coroner's inquest on the body.

Renforth and his three companions, Kelly, Chambers and Percy, were up betimes on the morning of Wednesday, the 23rd of August, and breakfasted between half-past four and five o'clock at their headquarters, the Claremont House. Mr. Walton, of the Newcastle "Morning Chronicle," testified to having gone to Claremont House on the morning of the race, and to having gone in company with the deceased until twenty-five minutes past six, when Renforth went off by himself to take a walk, Walton warning him to be careful. Renforth was then in very high spirits, as was usual with him just before a race. He was absent only some twenty minutes when he returned to his room and there met Kelly, who also testified, as did the other members of the crew, that before going into the boat he was cheerful and full of confidence. The crew went to the boat, and all being in readiness, both sides responded to the word "Go," and pulled out bravely. Percy, of the Tyne crew, said in his evidence:

"We did not start as quickly as I have seen us start. I never saw Renforth looking better than he did at this time. We lost a little at the start, but when we rowed about two hundred yards we got up to them and a little bit ahead of them. We were pulling easily and not a bit out of the way. When we had pulled about half a mile we felt the boat running tremendously to the shore. I am bow boat oar, and had to steer soon after the start. I had to put the helm in Renforth's favour to fetch the boat away from shore. The helm was generally kept against Renforth, as he and No. 2 oar were stronger than the bow oars. I saw the Paris crew coming up, and heard Kelly say, "Give us a dozen, Jim." There was no response, and we began to think from this and the boat keeping running to shore, that something was wrong. Renforth seemed to be putting no weight on his oar. We had gone three quarters of a mile when I saw Renforth fall back into Kelly's arms. Kelly then said, "Row ashore," and we did so. When in the cab Renforth said to me, "Oh, Jim, this is a bad job." I said, "Never mind, we cannot stand against an accident." Renforth kept saying, "Jim, don't let them come near me," and kept rubbing his stomach. I did not think he was dangerously ill, but only in one of his fits."

It was stated that Renforth though regular in his habits of life had been subject to fits—one witness saying he knew him to have had five in five years. He had one after the Lachine race. Kelly said:—

"The first quarter of a mile, I think we were leading. During that distance I said to Renforth, "It's all over," meaning the race was in our hands. We were then not going nearly as fast as we are in the habit of going; it was no racing pace. I then saw the Paris crew gradually gaining on us. I then called upon Renforth for a dozen, meaning a succession of quick strokes, but there was no response to my call. We rowed then, I think, for another quarter of a mile even, when Renforth put his head backwards over his shoulders and said, looking at me, "Harry, Harry, I've had something!" He then doubled up, and fell forwards. I said, "Sit up, Jim," when he raised himself, and fell back into my arms. I then said to Percy and Chambers, "Row ashore as quick as you can."

Renforth was taken in a cab to his hotel frequently repeating that he had "had something," that it was "no fit," but that he would "tell them afterwards." Among his last words were, "What will they think of it in England" and, in allusion to his wife, "Oh! Annie!" He foamed very much at the mouth, apparently suffering great agony, and despite the medical aid called in died in an hour and a quarter after he was brought to the hotel. An inquest was opened the following morning at half past ten o'clock in the Court Room, St. John, Coroner Earle presiding. Much of the evidence taken was irrelevant to the question, being mainly as to the race and the rate of speed, most of the witnesses agreeing that the St. John boat was one or two lengths ahead when Renforth fell.

A *post mortem* examination was held, but the Coroner did not receive the medical testimony, as the heart and stomach had been sent to Boston for analysis on account of a suspicion that Renforth might have been tampered with. Mr. Walton, however, stated that the physicians had satisfied themselves that the state of his lungs was such as to have caused his death. Nevertheless, the Coroner acted wisely in adjourning the inquest, as the medical and analytical evidence will thus be taken together, and the last vestige of doubt as to the poor man's sudden death will thus in all probability be removed. The inquest stood adjourned from the 25th until Tuesday last.

We give below a brief account of the life of the deceased:—

JAMES RENFORTH.

James Renforth, the late champion oarsman of England, was born about the year 1843, at Rapid Banks, Gateshead, near Newcastle. His father, a very athletic man, was by profession a ferryman, engaged in the works of Messrs. Hawks & Crawshaw. While quite a young man Renforth entered the Hon. East India Company's service, and was drafted into the Madras Fusiliers. With this regiment he remained until the dissolution of the company and the transfer of the forces to the Home Government, when he, like many others, obtained his discharge and returned to England. Soon after he appeared in public athletic sports, in which he particularly distinguished himself as a swimmer. It was not until 1863 that he appeared in any public boat race, on which occasion he was matched to row the brothers, Robert and James Boyd, for £50 each, and won both matches easily. During the summer of the same year he was taken to London and took part in the Thames regatta, where, to everybody's surprise, he beat Percy, who was considered Harry Kelly's only rival. He had extraordinary strength. He would sit down low in his boat, take the water with a quick, firm stroke, and round instead of squaring his back as he bent forward. He was a formidable antagonist, and the sight of his broad shoulders, splendidly developed muscles and easy, confident air, generally told in his favour.

His first race of any note was his decisive contest with Harry Kelly, the then champion sculler of England, for £200 a side and the championship of the Tyne, the Thames and the world, which took place at Mortlake, on the Thames, November 17, 1868. A great deal depended on this race. A difficulty had arisen between Sadler and Kelly respecting the decision of the referee on their race of the previous year, which resulted in the matter being taken into the courts. A feeling of distrust among boating men was the consequence, and all looked forward to this new contest to remove the unpleasant feeling caused by the results of the last. It was a splendid race; fairly contested, fairly won, and without an attempt being made to appeal from the decision of the referee. The course was from Putney to Mortlake, Renforth winning the toss and choosing the Middlesex side. After the start the racers rowed so fast that the referee's steamer could not keep up with them, but Renforth was ahead the whole distance, never giving Kelly the least chance of winning. Renforth rowing within himself, and reserving his strength for a final dash if necessary, won with the utmost ease, in the extraordinary time of twenty-two minutes and forty seconds. At his fastest his strokes reached the almost unparalleled number of fifty to the minute.

The next great match in which Renforth was engaged was the champion four-oared race from Mansion House to Scotswood on the Tyne, November 18, 1869, between the London crew, coxwained by Kelly, and the Tyne crew led by himself. The Thames crew took the lead by a quarter of a length, but Renforth calling on his men off Red Heughbridge, they made a spurt and won easily by three lengths. The race was for £200 a side and the championship, both of which fell to Renforth's men.

Just about a year ago Renforth, accompanied by Winship, Taylor and Martin, came out to Canada to row an international match with the St. John crew for the sum of \$5,000 and the championship of the world. The race, as our readers will remember, came off at Lachine on the 15th of September, and was won by Renforth's men by six lengths in 41:10, the course being six miles.

This race, however, was the means of sowing the seeds of dissension between Renforth and his crew, despite the signal triumph they had achieved. Prior to their starting from Newcastle for the St. Lawrence, two boats were selected from which they might choose one to row in against the St. John crew, the Dunstan-on-Tyne and the Jarrow-on-Tyne. Renforth insisted that the former was his choice by right, while Taylor as strongly insisted on having a trial of the other. Renforth carried his point, and they rowed and won in the Dunstan; but it was the germ of great bitterness with Taylor, who, it is said, strongly denounced it as a piece of ill-nature and overbearing on the part of their captain. The quarrel was not developed, however, until after they had returned to England, where, after about three weeks, a general disruption of the crew took place. Following upon this, and in consequence of certain reports which had come to his ears, Renforth issued a challenge offering, with another man whom he should find, to row any pair in the world. This challenge, though couched in general terms, was really directed against Taylor and Winship, and it was at once taken up by one of their backers, a Mr. Blakely, who asked Renforth to name his partner. At that moment he was unable to name a partner, but shortly afterwards he ventured on Harry Kelly, not knowing whether he would confirm the arrangement or not. The ex-champion, however, came forward, with much manliness, and at once signified his readiness to take part in the contest. The articles of agreement stipulated that the race should be for £200 a side, and the course to be from the High Level Bridge to Scotswood Suspension Bridge on the Tyne, on the 16th of January, 1871.

On the day last named Taylor and Winship appeared in their new boat at the appointed spot, and Renforth and Kelly also came up, amid storms of wind and rain. The pairs started shortly after ten o'clock in the morning, and by the superior address of Kelly and Renforth they got off first, and maintained the lead the entire distance of four miles, passing the winning post two hundred yards in front, and performing the distance in twenty-six minutes and twenty-two seconds. As they were returning to the home stake-boat an accident occurred which not only nearly cost them the race, but their lives also. Arriving just opposite some gas works at Red Heughbridge, they came in contact with a mass of floating ice that stretched right across the stream, and they came against the sharp masses with such violence that for a time there was great danger of their frail bark being sunk. As it was it turned completely round. The accident enabled Taylor and Winship to get close up to them, but fortunately, in the nick of time, they discovered an opening in the ice and shot through, though they subsequently came to grief through the steering.

Immediately after the race had been decided, a challenge was received from the St. John crew to again test the strength in Canadian waters for £1,000 a side, and the championship of the world.

With the unfortunate results of this match our readers are already acquainted.

THE ST. JOHN (PARIS) CREW.

In vol. 2, No. 12 of the News (Sept. 17, 1870,) we gave a sketch of the Paris crew. Since the Lachine race on the 15th Sept. last, the crew has not taken part in any important contests. The challenge which led to the contest on the Kennebecassis was given immediately after the Lachine defeat, and, after considerable correspondence, was accepted by Renforth, who, however, from the subsequent breaking up of his crew, had to find three new companions to row with him. The return match was, therefore, spoiled of much of its interest, and now, from the death of poor Renforth, it has lost its whole character. The Paris crew, having trained well for the struggle, are reported to have been in splendid condition for the pull on the 23rd ult.; and they made exceedingly good time on their solitary pull over the course, having rowed the whole distance in 39 minutes and 20 3-5 seconds. Whether this time could have been beaten by the Tynesiders, with Renforth in his full vigour, can never now be known. The victory is legally with the Paris Crew; though many non-folks think it would have been fairer to have "drawn" the race.

Two of the St. John men are natives of New Brunswick, and were born in, or in the neighbourhood of St. John; one was born in Ireland, the other in Nova Scotia.

ROBERT FULTON, Stroke Oar, was born in the city and is now 27 years of age. About nine years ago he distinguished himself as an oarsman; and in the old *Harding* with trusty associates he won many victories in his own Province, and some in the United States. The great victories of the *Harding* were, however, won on the Seine in 1867, where picked crews from England, France and Germany were beaten by the St. John men, from which time they took the title of "Paris Crew." Of the contest here last year we need not speak, and since that date Fulton and his associates have been preparing for the contest of the 23rd ult.

GEORGE PRICE, the bow oar, who also rowed at the Seine Regatta in 1867, is the oldest of the crew, and now in his 33rd year. He has had 13 years of experience in match rowing, and has won many contests. He is five feet ten inches in height, and his rowing weight is 145 lbs.

SAMUEL HUTTON, No. 2 oar of the St. John crew, is a native of Coleraine, Ireland, and when about three years old came to New Brunswick with his family. He is now twenty-six years of age, with a boating record of about eight. He was No. 2 oarsman at the Seine Regatta in 1867, and had been a winner in many local contests previous to that date. He is about the same height as Price, but weighs five pounds more.

ELIJAH ROSS was born in Parrsboro, Nova Scotia, and is now twenty-six years of age. He is a light-house keeper at the Bay Beacon in St. John harbour. He commenced as an oarsman nine years ago, and holds the same position that he did at Paris, i. e., No. 3 oar. He is five feet eleven inches in height, and his racing weight 154 lbs.

THE TYNE CREW.

In our issue of Sept. 17, 1867, we also gave a sketch of the Tyne Crew as then constituted. But they were all, except Renforth, new men who rowed on the Kennebecassis. Renforth and his crew had a dispute about their boat at Lachine last year; and though Renforth carried his point at the race the dispute broke out afresh on their return to Newcastle, and Martin, Taylor and Winship parted company with Renforth, the latter forming a new crew with his recent associates Kelly, Chambers and Percy. Renforth has had several contests on the Tyne during the present year, in all of which he was successful.

HENRY KELLY was the first to join Renforth after the disruption of the old crew. He occupied seat No. 3 in the late race, and received his dying chief in his arms. He is a native of Fulham, England, about forty years old, and a waterman by trade. Nearly twenty years ago he won the coat and badge of freedom of the Thames in the apprentices' race. In 1857 he won the championship of the Thames, which two years later was won from him by Chambers, his present companion. Again in 1865 Kelly won back the championship, with a heavy stake, from Chambers. In many other contests he was victorious and ranks among the foremost scullers in England.

ROBERT CHAMBERS, who pulled No. 2 in the late race, was born at Wallsend, on the Tyne, and is about 27 years of age. He was stroke oar of the Tyne Champion Crew, which carried off the prize at the Thames National Regatta in 1868. He was succeeded in this crew by Renforth, after which he devoted much of his time to training, and on the earnest invitation of Renforth joined that gentleman for the recent matches on this side of the Atlantic.

JAMES PERCY, the bow of the Tyne Crew, is the son of a ship captain, and twenty-eight years of age. In sporting circles he first distinguished himself in racing, having won several matches in succession. Next as a swimmer, and then as a rower he achieved some distinction. Having now to race on the Tyne he was matched against Taylor of the old Tyne Crew and defeated by the latter. In 1867 he regained his laurels by defeating Taylor in a four mile race, and fully established his reputation as an oarsman. Again last year the same two had another match and this time Taylor was the winner. He has a good *physique* and weighs about 150 lbs.

Since Renforth's death the spare man of the Crew, John Bright, has been duly enrolled, and the Crew were to have tried their luck at Halifax during the carnival, their pecuniary gains going to the benefit of Renforth's widow. The intention at least was praiseworthy and deserved success. Bright is quite a young man; he was born near Newcastle, and is a waterman by trade. He was matched against Kelly in 1868 but the latter had an easy victory over him; nevertheless Renforth thought him of sufficient promise to select him as "spare man" in case of accidents.

SLEEP TALKERS.

An additional element of interest is presented in those cases in which speaking is concerned, the somnambulist either talking or hearing what is said to others. Many writers mention the instance of a naval officer, who was signal lieutenant to Lord Hood, when the British fleet was watching Toulon. He sometimes remained on deck eighteen or twenty hours at a time, watching for signals from the other ships; he would then retire to his cabin, and fall into a sleep so profound that no ordinary voice could wake him; but if the word "signal" was even whispered in his ear, he was roused instantly. Dr. James Gregory cites the case of a young military officer, going