

Henley Royal Regatta

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The persistent drought at the beginning of 1921 had reduced the Swiss lakes to an unprecedentedly low level, which enabled scientists to establish new theories in the history of the culture of the neolithic lake-dwellers. The results of these recent investigations are recorded in *Nature* (July 1st) by Prof. Eugène Pittard, of the Geneva University. Nothing new has been revealed; it is, however, now definitely established that Geneva is one of the most ancient cities of the world, since man has lived on this site continuously since the neolithic period. It is also conclusively proven that our neolithic forefathers showed a preference for certain of the domestic animals; the species of which they ate most abundantly were the ox and the pig. Civilization in this direction does not seem to have made very great strides.

HENLEY ROYAL REGATTA.

On this occasion also the Swiss colours were not favoured with success at the first time of asking, and we shall probably have to become a little more modest, for, after all, this is the country where most of to-day's sports first saw the light, and the sporting scions of Great Britain still know how to hold their own at home.

Although the "Grasshopper" Rowing Club has a record of successes at home and abroad of which they can justly be proud, the "strange waters" of Father Thames must have proved too formidable to fathom successfully in so short a time. When, in addition, the health of three members of the crew broke down, necessitating the substitution of reserve men who were not equal to the strenuous task which faced them, the outlook became as bad as the weather which prevailed during Henley Week.

Particularly for the Grand Challenge Cup were the chances of the Grasshoppers' "eight" destroyed, for two men had to enter the boat under conditions which could bring but failure, and, although the Swiss crew took the lead at the start against the Thames Rowing Club, they were easily beaten by the latter in the first heat.

Hopes now only centred in the "fours" for the Stewards' Cup, and, indeed, they received a fillip when on Friday the "Grasshoppers" severely drubbed the "Leander" four, who were considered the pick of the competitive crews for the event.

So easily did our compatriots gain the victory in this heat that it was difficult to see how they could get beaten in the final by the Eton Vikings on Saturday. But, as usual in racing, the unexpected happened, and the Swiss crew was unfortunately deprived of taking home the Stewards' Cup which had seemed well within an easy reach.

"An Old Blue" reports the progress of this race in the "Daily Telegraph" as follows:—

"Both crews got away fast, rowing 41½ strokes in the first minute. Along Temple Island the Swiss led slightly, and were about a canvas in front at the quarter-mile. It was a fine race, both keeping at a fast rate, but above Remenham the Swiss could not stand the pace, and the Vikings shot away at Fawley, which was reached in 3 min. 54 sec. They had a lead of three-quarters of a length at the third signal box, and were right away at the mile. The Swiss tried a spurt above and hit the piles, but went on again. They were beaten easily."

With regard to the effectiveness and power of the style of rowing, as introduced by the "Grasshoppers" at Henley, opinions of experts differ widely. The one convincing test would have been success, and that was certainly not made easy through the misfortune which incapacitated three regular members of the Swiss crew, who were every time instrumental in gaining victories at home and in foreign waters. This quite apart from the inclement weather, which not only interfered with the training, but also with the races.

However, "Qui s'excuse—s'accuse," and there is one redeeming feature in the defeat which is that our oarsmen have not lost courage, but, on the contrary, hope to return on the next occasion, expecting to go one better, having admittedly learnt much during their first visit to Henley, which, they hope, will bear fruit in future contests on the tricky Thames course.

In referring to the Swiss crew's style of rowing, Max Pemberton writes in the "Referee":—

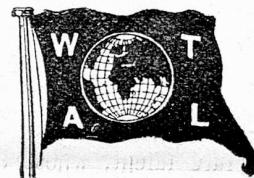
"If the new lawn tennis be more thrilling to watch than the old—which I doubt—the new rowing as witnessed at Henley this week is certainly staggering in the eyes of the ancients. We have seen lusty men picking up their boats anyhow, scrambling into them like children at a school-treat, and rowing away with hardly more swing of the body than a telegraph post in a thunderstorm. Yet their blades were a marvel of exactitude, and their arms shot out like a boxer's left, and soon he who had come to mock remained to pray—that they would crack before the post was reached. For their boats obviously travelled at a prodigious speed, and every disciple of orthodoxy upon the bank was ready to ask himself, 'Can this thing be?'"

I am not presuming to contend for a moment that British style is overdone or that it has any superior when a four-mile course is to be rowed; but I have often wondered if we could not learn something from heterodoxy when Henley is the business, and if our very long backward swing is all we think it to be."

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