

LONGBOAT'S GREAT RUN

20 MILES COVERED.

FROM LIMERICK TO KILMALLOCK.

REMARKABLE PERFORMANCE.

Our Kilmallock correspondent writes:—

Tom Longboat gave his final trial run of 20 miles preparatory to the great Marathon race, the journey being from Limerick to Kilmallock, and the thousands who witnessed the finish as Longboat swept along with a swiftness and power as if he had only covered a quarter of a mile, proclaimed their admiration in rounds of applause which Longboat acknowledged with a pleasant smile that conveyed that he, too, was satisfied with his effort. And so well he might.

Many people had come long distances, some incredulous of the great feats that had been attributed to Longboat, and now they stood convinced, amazed, and wondering. There was Longboat, the central figure in a crowd of enthusiasts who gave vent to their feelings of admiration as only the Irish can, when feats of valour appeal to their hearts, while Tom Flanagan, Longboat's trainer, looked on, beaming with delight. Longboat turned from the scene as fresh and full of vigour as if he had not compassed half a mile, and there was not one in that vast throng but would say that Longboat was capable of doing another twenty miles. The people formed into groups and discussed what they had seen. For a fact, nothing else is discussed by the man in the street, or the man in the fields, or, for that matter, by the fair sex—it is Tom Longboat everywhere, and wherever athletics are spoken of Tom Longboat's name will find an honoured place. This feeling is not alone confined to his admirers in Ireland, for the interest taken in him in Canada is deep and absorbing, as is proved by the numerous inquiries that are received daily from Canada as to his welfare. Canadians want every detail as to his practice for the great race, and they make it clear that he possesses their confidence and that they are proud of him.

When starting from Limerick, Longboat got a very enthusiastic send-off. He was followed by a motor, on which were his trainer, Mr. Tom Flanagan, and some friends, while a large number of cyclists and others on a variety of vehicles brought up the rear. The journey to Kilmallock was all uphill, and it is computed that from Kilmallock to Limerick could be covered by fifteen minutes less, at the lowest estimate, than from Limerick to Kilmallock.

Longboat soon got into that regular pace which he always adopts, and maintained it until half a mile from the finish, when, so to speak, there was a transformation scene. For 19½ miles he went at the same pace without an apparent effort, every movement was so easy and natural, with the hands turned towards the breast, but now moving except to pass a handkerchief from one to the other to wipe away the perspiration. But when entering the last quarter of a mile his previous attitude is altogether changed, his stride is increased, his arms go with a great force, his breast expands, his whole body, lungs and heart seem to go right into his work, and he dashes along with the strength and speed of a powerful machine. It was thus he finished his 20 miles run from Limerick to Kilmallock.

All along the route was lined with people who gave Longboat a great ovation. Large crowds awaited his arrival at Grange and Bruff while there were 4,000 or 5,000 people present when he reached Kilmallock.

His trainer, Tom Flanagan, is delighted with the trial. When the writer asked what he thought of Longboat's performance Flanagan replied, "It is wonderful; it is famous; he ran the 20 miles in 1 hour 57½ minutes, and they tell me it could be run in a quarter of an hour faster from Kilmallock to Limerick; don't count that at all, but count five minutes for the hills and allow five minutes for want of competition, and that would put him in competition with the fastest race he ever ran in his life; that would be 1 hour 47½ minutes."

The writer said he did not think that Mr. Flanagan was making a sufficient allowance for the hills.

Mr. Flanagan said that was so, but he preferred to be on the moderate side. He continued, Longboat's trial is entirely satisfactory; it would compare with the best run that he ever made in his life. That shows that he is in as good condition as ever he was.

How did you like his method?

Excellent. I have never seen him run with as regular a pace; he never varied; all the time he ran about 5 minutes 40 seconds to the mile. He never seemed to be the least distressed. He ran the last mile in 5 minutes and 36 seconds, which showed that he was in wonderful form. His last 300 yards were phenomenal; it would take an ordinary half mile runner to hold him.

Representative—I agree with you.

Mr. Flanagan—Two young men joined him in Bruff, and we encouraged them, and they kept alongside of Longboat, and after going 150 yards one of them dropped out, and the other kept on, and he, after some time, turned to those behind him and said: "I'll hold him (Longboat) to Kilmallock." But when he turned around Longboat was out of sight, and the vanquished, with a crestfallen air, cried out: "Where is he?" This reminded the writer of a man who had a somewhat similar experience on the occasion of Longboat's 14 mile run. He secured a view at an angle where two roads meet, so that he could see Longboat coming towards and going from him. When Longboat rounded the bend the man thought he would look for a moment at his pursuers; but said he dolefully: "When I turned around to see Longboat again he had gone out of sight."

Asked as to Longboat's stride, Flanagan said that when running at his best Longboat's stride was 1 foot 3 inches longer than his usual pace. In his usual movement his feet are three inches apart, but when he gets into his final strides his legs widen out, and he raises his feet higher. He finished quite fresh as if he could run 20 miles more.

Did he take any refreshments on the journey?

His refreshment was a quarter of an orange, just to wet his lips.

What will be the next event of interest?

I am bringing the Sporting Editor of the "Toronto Star"; Longboat will run six miles on Sunday, and this gentleman will run Longboat for the last half mile.